

FIDE General Assembly

17 December 2023

14:00 CET

MINUTES

1. FIDE President's address

Mr. Dvorkovich addresses the General Assembly and welcomes all participants. He informs that there is a quorum and thanks everyone for the work that has been done since the Chennai General Assembly 2022. He adds that the next in person FIDE General Assembly will be held in Budapest in 2024. He expresses his gratitude to everyone who participated in the FIDE Commissions meetings and appreciation for the work of the Commissions' leadership. He also informs about interesting discussions on the development level and role of zones that were held at the Zonal Council meeting. He thanks all four Continents and National Federations for contributing a lot to FIDE as well as the FIDE Council and Management Board members for their support.

Mr. Dvorkovich invites the participants to be proactive in the discussions and draws the attention to the updated General Assembly Agenda, where item 3.8 has been deleted as the ISCU withdrew their application. He thanks the ISCU for understanding.

He informs the delegates that the bidders' presentations and vote for the 2028 Chess Olympiad is scheduled for 5 pm CET that day with a prior break at 16.40 pm and suggests that the financial matters be shifted to after the Olympiad vote.

2. Obituaries

The General Assembly pays a minute of remembrance to those FIDE family members whom FIDE lost in the period since FIDE General Assembly 2022.

Mr. Dvorkovich states that FIDE will remember those who passed away and expresses condolences to the Kuwait chess family in connection with the loss of the Emir of Kuwait, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

3. Rollcall

The quorum is established, and the General Assembly is fully legitimate.

Section 1- Report of FIDE President

Mr. Dvorkovich presents his report, which is divided into three parts following three main pillars of the FIDE work, first being about FIDE official events. Second pillar is dedicated to social dimension of FIDE work, FIDE mission to make positive influence on societies around the world and make sure chess serves people. Third pillar is related to FIDE sustainability, financial and institutional, supported by recognition of FIDE in international organisations and other multi-sport events.

In his report Mr. Dvorkovich points out the following:

- Organisation of more than 40 FIDE official events at the world level. In 2023 almost 30 world events were organised, including 15 events in the last 4 months. FIDE institutional capacity has to grow and therefore, besides working with local organisers, FIDE hired more people.
- FIDE Calendar will start in April with main FIDE events.
- Information about a new project – FIDE Circuit, combining all major events and the winner will receive a spot in the FIDE Candidates Tournament, is considered a positive experiment.
- Holding of an inaugural World Schools Teams Championship 2023 and thanks Freedom Finance as sponsors of this successful event.
- World Rapid Teams Championship 2023 and thanks Sponsors of the event.
- Many social projects were organised. He thanks Mrs. Reizniece-Ozola and Social, Players with Disabilities, Women's Chess, Education in Chess Commissions for being very active on this direction.
- Financial aspect of FIDE's activities and revenues from bringing new partners for FIDE events and thanks Mr. E. Sutovsky for his work. The financial situation allowed FIDE to render all the support to the developing countries and Affiliated Organisations.

Mr. Dvorkovich then gives the floor to Mr. Sutovsky to report on the 1st pillar of FIDE's work. Mr. Sutovsky in his speech:

- Expresses gratitude to all Federations, partners, organisers, broadcasters for the support
- Calls the year 2023 the most eventful year with all top World Championships. States that the most important thing is that these events brought income to FIDE, and the amounts received were higher than the budget expected.
- Recalls three major events: World Championship match 2023 in Astana, Kazakhstan. He thanks Kazakhstan Chess Federation and Freedom Finance for the assistance. Regarding the World Chess Cups 2023 in Baku, Azerbaijan, he thanks Azerbaijani Chess Federation and Socar for their support and in respect of the Grand Swiss Tournaments 2023 successful organisation he thanks the sponsors – Sheinberg family.
- Announces new projects as FIDE never stops trying to bring new events: World Rapid Teams Championship 2023 in Dusseldorf; mentions the Global Chess League, together with Mahindra Group which has been very successful and the Women's Grand-Prix series with the number of legs changed to six events, which will provide female players with more opportunities.
- Shares new ideas to attract partnership, including the ones in the sphere of new technologies.
- Informs about the participation in e-sports events and mentions the Olympic e-sports series organised together with the IOC and Chess.com., with the final successfully held in Singapore.
- Draws the attention to another event, the World Corporate Championship 2024 – with a final part to take place in New York, for which the dates and venue will be announced shortly.
- Mentions the FIDE Circuit and adds that it is important as it allows chess tournaments to generate qualifier for the Candidates Tournament. Thanks to this, FIDE succeeded in securing a major partnership for the next year. Mr. Sutovsky thanks Mr. Dvorkovich as the FIDE Circuit was his brainchild.

- States that attracting financial resources is essential for conducting all the activities of FIDE. Expresses satisfaction that there is a very good balanced team as reinvesting in people is also important. He is proud that FIDE events are of high standard.
- Names broadcast as always very sensitive element and opines that FIDE needs to build smartly cooperation with TV broadcasters and partners.
- Thanks everyone for the trust and support.

Mr. Dvorkovich adds that all above-mentioned events are milestones and reassures that FIDE partners take negotiations with FIDE very seriously. He continues his report by mentioning FIDE working with the IOC regarding joining the Olympic Games programme and establishing of a FIDE Chess in multi-sport Games Committee led by Executive Director V. Bologan. Then he gives the floor to Mr. Bologan.

Mr. Bologan informs the delegates that a lot of steps were undertaken with the aim of getting into the Olympic Family and towards this end, it was decided to act via Multi-sports Organisations to enter more regional, continental and Olympic Games. There is a big list of tournaments which FIDE is aspiring to join so the most important is that FIDE participated in several multi-sports events, in Americas, in Asia and also very important – chess has been part of the paralympic Asian Games. He thanks Mr. Dvorkovich and Mr. Al-Mudahka for making chess part of the Ghana 2024 All African Games, where the medal programme includes only 23 sports.

He also thanks Mr. Turlej for the inclusion of chess into the European Games 2023, which has been very decently covered in media and received very positive feedback.

He also thanks Mr. Petrucci and FIDE Americas for the assistance to include chess in the e-sports Panamerican event.

Mr. Bologan is happy with the work of the Chess in Multi-Sport Games Committee members, where there are representatives of all continents, and thanks Mr. Short, Mr. Mudahka and Ms. Shovunova. He expresses satisfaction that chess is recognised by more NOCs, mainly due to the fact that chess is part in continental games.

Mr. Dvorkovich finalises his report by giving special attention to interaction with National Federations, Zones and Continents, in various ways. He appreciates direct communication of FIDE members with him and mentions his visits to many Federations during this period. He adds that he still owes the visit to Mexico, and many countries in each continent as he tries to make sure that National Federations enjoy support of their governments and NOCs after such visits.

He also thanks his colleagues who travel in various capacities, to substitute him and their enormous support: Mr. Anand, Mr. Short and Mr. Turlej. He reiterates that FIDE is grateful to the entire European Team for the inclusion of chess into the European Games.

He also introduces a video in respect of the implementation of social projects of FIDE.

Mr. Dvorkovich mentions the 100th anniversary of the Royal Dutch Chess Federation celebrated this year by organising the FIDE U-16 Chess Olympiad 2023 and three FIDE events in Italy, where the Italian Chess Federation is doing a great job in organising world-level events.

He also mentions that today new members are likely to join FIDE based on the recommendation of the FIDE Constitutional Commission.

Mr. Karyah from Liberia thanks Mr. Dvorkovich for a nice presentation which covers all activities which took place in the past year. The Libyan Federation is pleased with the work of Mr. Dvorkovich and they acknowledge all the programmes where FIDE tries to get local support and international support, not necessarily in financial terms. He asks about plans for 2024 in respect of the Development Fund and the possibility to focus on developing the capacity of players and administrators in smaller federations, especially in Africa.

Mr. Dvorkovich replies that this subject was discussed at the Zonal Council meeting and there are certain plans regarding this aspect of the activities with the Federations. He requests Mrs. Reizniece-Ozola and Planning and Development Commission to get in touch with the Libyan Chess Federation and other interested parties for the follow-up.

Mr. Hernandez from El Salvador expresses gratitude for the systematic support for the Federations from the region and adds that for the first time chess was part in the South American Games and also mentions that chess will be part of the South American and Caribbean Games.

Mr. Wanjala from Kenya thanks Mr. Dvorkovich for a very good presentation. He praises the work done by the President and his team. He comments on the Corporate Championship and says that he hopes that Kenya will be able to participate. He suggests continental qualifiers for the event.

Mr. Jeng from Gambia thanks Mr. Dvorkovich and comments that the visit to West African assembly was very effective. He adds that this visit was analysed afterwards, and many new things are planned for the future. Such visits are very important for Africa, especially because of the fact that the governments learn more about chess.

Mr. Wijesuriya from Sri Lanka thanks Mr. Dvorkovich and the team for all the efforts in all fields to support development of chess. He requests as it is difficult to have online FIDE Congress since disconnections happen often, that an in-person Congress once a year should be held. He also mentions that Sri Lanka Chess Federation wants to be more active but there are visa problems in respect of various FIDE events, e.g. their players could not get visas to Mexico to participate in the World Junior Championship 2023. He requests respective FIDE officials to take care of the visas' issues, as it is important for young players to attend world youth and cadet events.

Mr. Dvorkovich concurs that these requests are important. He agrees that FIDE will do its best to conduct in presence General Assembly in most cases. Regarding visas, FIDE is involved in discussions with respective National Governments to assure the maximum participants may participate. He adds that it is one of the requirements for all bidders to present guarantees for visas for all countries.

Mr. Abundo from Philippines comments that he is one of the oldest delegates of FIDE, who has served two Presidents before, Messrs. F. Campomanes and K. Ilyumzhinov. He thanks Mr. Dvorkovich for his energy and work that brings FIDE to new heights. Mr. Dvorkovich reciprocates by thanking Mr. Abundo for his great job and all contributions to FIDE, during all these years.

Mr. Sanusi from Malaysia thanks Mr. Dvorkovich and the FIDE leadership and says that the Malaysian Chess Federation does a lot in terms of chess training and working with the Historic Committee. In respect of the World School Teams Championship 2023, he opines a pilot period for all new tournaments in the FIDE calendar is necessary. He also mentions the Malaysian Chess Federation is interested in Corporate Championship and the possibility of Malaysia being part of it.

Mr. Dvorkovich suggests that the questions on tournaments to be discussed under the FIDE Tournament section.

Mr. Qureshi from Pakistan comments that Pakistan has been out of the game for a long time and now the Federation is back, and the Pakistani players participate in all events. The Pakistani chess community is grateful for Mr. Dvorkovich, Mrs. Reizniece-Ozola and Mr. Short for the great help. He adds that currently 15 Pakistani children are participating in the Asian Youth Championship and invites Mr. Dvorkovich to visit Pakistan. Mr. Dvorkovich replies that the invitation is accepted, and the trip will be scheduled.

Mr. Dvorkovich says that the FIDE Council adopted nearly 100 decisions in between GAs and the work is on-going and reminds all delegates that they are welcome to contact him and the FIDE Council and Management Board members, if necessary.

Mr. Kim from South Korea apologises to FIDE for a surprising withdrawal from the organisation of the FIDE World Cups 2023 but confirms that the Federation needs constant support from FIDE and promises that the chess background in South Korea will be improved.

Mr. Dvorkovich thanks Mr. Kim for his comment and will be happy to visit South Korea.

Mr. Sutovsky thanks the President of the South Korea and confirms that there are no bad feelings in respect of their withdrawal from the organisation of the FIDE World Cups 2023 and adds that FIDE welcomes continued work with South Korea Chess Federation and looks forward to holding some FIDE events in South Korea. As for World Corporate Championship 2024, FIDE will welcome a team from South Korea in this event.

The General Assembly notes the FIDE President's report.

Section 4- Administrative matters

4.1 Constitutional Commission's report

Mr. Rivello presents his report.

He highlights the most important points and explains them:

- The list of the Federations with a right to vote.
- The list of delegates from Federations with a right to vote.
- Two Federations that do not vote – South Africa and Bulgaria. South Africa Federation was suspended by their National Olympic Committee, and a reverse delegate was appointed. As For Bulgaria, the current FIDE member, Bulgarian Chess Federation 1928 asked to be expelled as they are not representing the chess activities in Bulgaria.
- No complaints were received about the list of the Federations to vote.

- Regarding South Africa and Bulgaria Chess Federations there are some further issues to be discussed later in the Agenda.
- Flexibility regarding the list of delegates. He mentions information regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina Chess Federation from the ECU but as there is no problem about right to vote, the Bosnia and Herzegovina delegate is allowed to vote.
- FIDE Council approves to change the order of today's General Assembly Agenda, as the decision about expulsion and admission of Federation should be made before any other points of business. Expelled Federation won't be able to vote, but a newly admitted Federations will be able to vote immediately.
- After the decision of the Council, about "preconditions for admittance", only the application submitted by the Bulgarian Sports Chess Federation can be voted, as a potential new Member Federation for Bulgaria.
- Brings attention to the voting procedure.
- Explains rules for the expulsion of a FIDE member-Federation.
- Mentions appeals received in respect of decisions of the FIDE Council and the opinion of the Commission on them.
- Explains the proposal of the Lesotho Chess Federation.
- Mentions the requests to change Article 18.12 of the FIDE Charter which will be voted. It was noted that Costa-Rica Chess Federation withdrew their proposal.
- Mentions the request of the Norway Chess Federation, and that the suggested formulation for voting was kindly accepted by the Norway Chess Federation.

He asks the General Assembly to approve the Constitutional Commission's report.

Mr. Dvorkovich asks if there are any legal questions to Mr. Rivello.

Mr. Abundo from the Philippines requests to know the list of the delegates present and suggests the list should be sent to all delegates.

Mr. Tanko from Cameroon asks if the votes are secret.

Technical representative says the system captures the votes anonymously.

Mr. Tanko requests the explanation on the South African situation.

Mr. Rivello provides an explanation in French.

Mr. Howie from Scotland points that everyone can see the list of the delegates and participants by clicking "participants" button.

Mr. Maggi from Italy requests to guarantee a secret vote in respect of the bids for the Chess Olympiad 2028, as many delegates are gathered in one place.

Mr. Dvorkovich hopes everyone will preserve the integrity of the secret ballot while voting.

The General Assembly approves the Constitutional Commission's report.

*The voting took place after the voting regarding the items 3.1.3.1, 3.1.3.1.1.,3.1.1 and 3.1.2.

Section 3- Federation and Membership issues

3.1 Admission of new member federations of FIDE

3.1.1 The Tonga Chess Federation applied to become a member federation of FIDE

3.1.2 The Vanuatu Chess Federation applied to become a member federation of FIDE

The Vanuatu representative Mr. Hinton addresses the General Assembly and informs of the basis for forming the Federation. He adds that there is a dedicated group of chess enthusiasts and there were small competitions organised and expresses the hope within the next years FIDE will organise official chess activities in Vanuatu.

The General Assembly approves the admission of the Tonga Chess Federation as a new Member Federation of FIDE.

The General Assembly approves the admission of the Vanuatu Chess Federation as a new Member Federation of FIDE.

Mr. Dvorkovich welcomes the new FIDE members.

3.1.3 Bulgarian Chess Federation

3.1.3.1 The expulsion of the current member federation and admission of a new member federation.

Mr. Dvorkovich mentions that it is a technical subject as this Federation as a legal entity, sent an official letter confirming that they agree on their expulsion, to give a way to another Federation from Bulgaria to become a member.

3.1.3.1.1 The Bulgarian Sports Chess Federation applied to become a member federation of FIDE

Mr. Dvorkovich introduced Ms. Stefanova who sends a short video-address for the attention of the General Assembly on behalf of the Bulgarian Sports Chess Federation. He said that the matter was considered at the FIDE Council and pre-approved for the ratification by the General Assembly.

Ms. Stefanova says that the process of its establishment was very successful, and a great team has been elected to work for the sake of the Bulgarian chess, where, immediately, a women's team from Bulgaria has been allowed to participate in the European Women's Team Championship and they won gold medals, after 7 or 8 years of not-participating. She also thanks Mr. Azmaiparashvili and the ECU for this opportunity.

Ms. Stefanova adds that it is not difficult to restore Bulgaria to the world map of chess and already in a very little time a lot has been achieved, the main thing is the change in the opinion of the Bulgarian society where now people talk about chess with respect again. They keep receiving appreciation and enjoy support from the Prime-Minister, Minister of Sports and the Parliament.

Mr. Howie from Scotland expresses concerns about this issue, due to the communication over the last few days from the Bulgarian Chess Federation 2022 who want to appeal the decision of the FIDE Council, and which is the only one that has the sports licence for chess in Bulgaria.

He opines that this complicates the situation as it has been removed from the General Assembly Agenda only two days ago and had to be sorted earlier. He is not sure that a decision can be made that day for a danger of the other organisation to go to CAS. He personally believes that this issue should be postponed to the next General Assembly until it is sorted out.

Mr. Pein from England responds that at the last ECU Meeting where Mr. Howie was not present, the overwhelming majority gave support to the admission of the Bulgarian Sports Chess Federation after extensive deliberations and no issues are seen by the FIDE Council. He expresses support to the admission of the Bulgarian Sports Chess Federation to FIDE.

Mr. Dvorkovich explains that to deal with the subject of the multiplicity of the bodies who intended to represent chess in Bulgaria, FIDE established a special procedure and appointed a Special Envoy who is a member of the FIDE Constitutional Commission, Mr. Florea and also there was an ECU representative Mr. Dervishi. They visited Bulgaria and communicated with the local chess community and opened an opportunity for all interested parties to participate in the integration process to unify Bulgarian chess. All parties participated in this open process, established by FIDE and the ECU, except for one, mentioned by Mr. Howie, as that party rejected the participation in this open procedure, which resulted in creating the Bulgarian Sports Chess Federation presented by Ms. Stefanova.

Mr. Dervishi from Albania comments that he is glad that FIDE is finalising the Bulgarian chess issue, which has been a long process of one year, supervised by Mr. Florea and himself as the ECU representative, since February 2023 following the decision of the FIDE Council. He thanks Mr. Florea for great cooperation and all the work done. He has the pleasure to work with Bulgarian chess colleagues where chess is loved and they have great chess results in international competitions, and chess personalities, e.g., Mr. Topalov and Ms. Stefanova as World Champions. Chess is very popular in this country with great players, trainers, and great young talents and there is great potential and great opportunities for chess in Bulgaria that is why FIDE was trying to give an end to the issue of seven years. Mr. Dervishi chooses not to mention the reason why this had happened but comments that there were different steps of this process: a joint round table first, with all parties invited, Provisional Committee was formed with seven members, where dominant part of chess shareholders and clubs participated, on the 24 September and the result of these fair, transparent elections was the creation of a new leading team, with Mr. Vasilev as President of the Federation and Mrs. Stefanova as Honorary President and FIDE/ECU delegate of the Federation and all Board are respected people from the Bulgarian chess community representing its dominant part. He thanks FIDE Council for the support of Mr. Florea and himself on all the steps via its different decisions of February, April and July 2023. He finishes by saying that the FIDE and ECU Envoys succeeded to bring together the dominant part of the Bulgarian chess community, and based on the results of elections there is a new team which will be collaborating with ECU and FIDE for many years.

Mr. Florea from Romania comments that he is very proud of this collaboration with FIDE and Mr. Dervishi and all Bulgarian stakeholders. He underlines that the Bulgarian Federation 2022 which threatened to go to CAS, does not have legal standing as their board resigned and they have a new board which has been elected on 13th December 2023, and is not legally registered in the legal register of Bulgarian Registry Agency. He calls this a trick as this Federation was invited but they did not want to participate the process and when they realised that FIDE and ECU do not want to deal with those people who brought this unfortunate situation on Bulgarian

chess eight years ago, they are trying to mislead FIDE. He is happy with the work done in Bulgaria, the comprehensive report is presented, and the correct decision is to let the newly elected Bulgarian Sports Chess Federation to be a Bulgarian representative in FIDE and ECU.

Mr. Dvorkovich names these comments exhaustive, and everyone can make his/her mind on this matter.

Mr. Azmaiparashvili of the ECU thanks the FIDE Council and Mr. Dvorkovich for the support of the application of the Bulgarian Sports Chess Federation and adds that for seven months ECU and FIDE have sent their best experts to Bulgaria and underlines that the big majority of chess community joined the process in Bulgaria and the door was opened until the last moment as everything was done properly, and the delegates should vote to include the Bulgarian Sports Chess Federation into the FIDE family and ECU will also admit it accordingly. He wishes great success to this new Federation and Bulgarian chess and is sure they will become a very active member of FIDE family.

The General Assembly votes to permanently expel the Bulgarian Chess Federation 1928 from FIDE.

The General Assembly approves the admission of The Bulgarian Sports Chess Federation as a new Member Federation of FIDE.

Mr. Dvorkovich welcomes the three Federations and informs that they are full members and have a right to vote.

3.2 Admission of a new Affiliated Organization of FIDE

3.2.1 The New Caledonia Chess Federation applied to become an Affiliated Organisation of FIDE.

Mr. Dvorkovich proposes to support this application in accordance with the FIDE Charter.

The General Assembly approves the admission of the New Caledonia Chess Federation as a new Affiliated Organization of FIDE.

Section 5- FIDE Calendar

5.1 FIDE Chess Olympiad 2028

Following the bidding procedure which ended on November 7th 2023, the following valid bids have been received:

- Abu Dhabi, UAE
- Genoa, Italy

Mr. Maggi comments that all delegates vote with open camera and personal computers so not to be considered biased.

Mr. Dvorkovich says FIDE should trust the integrity of the delegates, and everyone will vote independently.

The representatives of the Abu Dhabi bid address the General Assembly.

Mr. E. Al Marzooqi presents the bid of Abu Dhabi and gives the floor to the Abu Dhabi General Secretary of the Sports Council who welcomes the delegates and expresses conviction that Abu Dhabi encapsulates all necessary elements to host this important event. He adds that Abu Dhabi has all diversity and infrastructure, and the Abu Dhabi organisers will welcome all of the Federations with opened arms. He continues to inform of their great experience in hosting international events and assures that all aspects will be taken care of, including visas. He underlines that the Abu Dhabi Sports Council's partnership with International Sports Federations is well-established and they are committed to financial safety as he invites all to Abu Dhabi. Abu Dhabi is also ready to host the FIDE Chess Olympiad for people with disabilities as it has previous experience, and the facilities are carefully designed to accommodate people with disabilities. He mentions that Abu Dhabi has a record for fostering unity and tolerance and underlines the same values are also important for chess. He says the decision will be not only to choose the venue for 2028 but invest into future of chess. He implores the delegates to vote for Abu Dhabi and says their choice will not be only best decision but opportunity to provide the people with disabilities to flourish. He thanks the delegates for their attention.

Mr. Al Marzooqi reiterates that Abu Dhabi is the best choice.

President of the Asian Chess Federation, Sheikh Sultan bin Khalifa al Nahyan, addresses the delegates and reminds that the UAE hosted one of the memorable Chess Olympiads in 1986 so Abu Dhabi want to set the bar higher in 2028. He informs that the UAE is home for more than 200 nationalities and promote tolerance and equality. He says they are eager to show best hospitality and reminds that Abu Dhabi a very safe and secure destination so they are looking forward to hosting the event.

Genoa bidders make the presentation.

World-wide renowned tenor Andrea Bocelli welcomes the delegates. He loves this project and loves chess since his childhood and adds that together with Mr. Mogranzini they did their best to try to bring the Chess Olympiad to Italy. He hopes that this will be possible and promises to perform at the opening ceremony.

Mr. Biagioli addresses the General Assembly from the NOC of Italy Honorable Hall. He presents Mr Siniscalci, the Sports Department Head of the Italian Government to introduce the bid. Mr. Siniscalci welcomes everyone and passes the greetings from the Italian Minister of Sports to the delegates. He adds that the Ministry is proud of the candidacy of the city of Genoa, which offers modern infrastructure, culture and adequate budget. He confirms that the bid is supported by the Government of Italy and the regional government as he looks forward to seeing everyone in Genoa.

Mr. Maggi addresses the President and delegates. He confirms that the bid is prepared well and the Italians promise a18-mln euro budget to provide exceptional support to all participants, in the Olympic spirit, to give equal rights to everyone from all continents. He adds that they offer an additional one mln euro for the development of chess, with more courses for arbiters, trainers and technical preparation of Olympic teams. He states that if Italy wins the bid, this will be a great opportunity for the chess community as Genoa is prepared to welcome everyone.

Mr. Biagioli presents further details of the Italian bid and explains the choice of Genoa. He hopes that FIDE delegates will vote for Genoa as it offers history, heart and culture and it is a city with good infrastructure, where everyone will enjoy their stay.

Mr. Maggi welcomes all delegates to Genoa.

Mr. Dvorkovich presents the team of inspectors: Mr. Bologan, Mr. Turlej and Ms. Balashova.

Mr. Turlej presents the inspection reports. He underlines that there are two strong bids and that the full inspection reports are attached to the Agenda. He gives an analytical description of the key points of both bids.

Mr. Dvorkovich welcomes questions from the delegates to both bidders.

Dr. Battikh from Morocco congratulates both bidders for impressive quality of the bids, especially Genoa. He requests guarantee that Schengen visas will be granted easily for everyone who would like to come to Genoa, especially for African countries.

Mr. Wijesuriya from Sri Lanka reiterates the question about visas. He congratulates both bidders for good facilities, and Government support to the bid. Regarding visas, he gives an example of 2018 Chess Olympiad when the visas to Georgia were received two days before the start of the Olympiad. FIDE should make a condition about visas and deadline for its issuance.

Mr. Biagioli responds that the Italian bidder realise that this is a major issue and they submitted two letters, from Ministry of Sports and one from the NOC of Italy, as a part of their bid related to the visa issue. He adds that visas process will be centralised through the Organising Committee and directly arranged by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He specifies that this is the same procedure which will be used for Winter Olympics 2026 in Italy.

Mr. Sallam from Yemen specifies that it is not easy to get a Schengen visa for the Yemeni. He opines that the Organiser should do more to help with the visas as he claims that the organisers of some FIDE events did not respond well to this problem, e.g. in the Netherlands, for the World Chess U-16 Olympiad 2023.

Mr. Dvorkovich says the question has already been asked and the reply has been given and he asks not to repeat the question.

Mr. Al Marzooqi comments that regarding visa, the Abu Dhabi bidder does not need any more clarification as they are currently hosting a very successful Asian event and no one has problems with visas.

Mr. Mammedov from Azerbaijan asks about the timing of the Olympiad and says if FIDE is considering summer season, including September, he is afraid the temperatures in Abu Dhabi will be too high and no one will be able to walk outdoor. He says that if FIDE looks to hold the Olympiad in this season, his preference is Genoa.

Mr. Al Marzooqi invites Mr. Mammedov to Abu Dhabi Festival which they organise for more than 15 years to see the weather in the summer. He believes that it is not about weather, it is about facilities and says that heat wave is difficult in any country. He adds that all public transport is air-conditioned and underlines that if they win, they will organise the proposed event during the period advised by FIDE. He reiterates Abu Dhabi organises a lot of events and

so everyone is invited to come and participate in their current chess events in coordination with the UAE Chess Federation or the Abu Dhabi Chess Club.

Mr. Dvorkovich says the proposed time for the Olympiad is late October or November in case of the bid from Abu-Dhabi.

As for Genoa bid, Mr. Biagioli responds the dates are from 16 to 29 October, the temperature is 20-25 degrees and never goes below 18 degrees Centigrade during this period.

Mr. O'Connor from Ireland asks Abu Dhabi representatives, given the history of the Dubai 1986, when the Israeli team did not participate and assumes the Abu Dhabi government will allow the Israelis to participate.

Mr. Al Marzooqi responds that even Israelis can respond that the UAE is open and all countries of the world are welcome and there is an Israeli Embassy in Abu Dhabi now.

Mr. Habib from Lebanon wishes good luck to both bidders. He says that Genoa is not Montesilvano but recalls that during the World Youth Championship 2023 their Federation faced hotel problems and hopes that in Genoa there will be no such problems. He mentions that in Montesilvano it has rained for two days and the Organisers had problems to arrange taxis there.

Mr. Biagioli responds that public transportation is premium level in Genoa, the 6th largest city in Italy, and also that all public transportation will be for free for the Olympiad participants. He adds that the 4 and 5 star hotels were inspected and FIDE is sure about their quality. He refers to the issue in Montesilvano and says that the Olympiad Organising Committee will have a dedicated assistant for every delegation for any request or question.

Mr. Al Marzooqi thanks the chess community and again reiterates on behalf of the Abu Dhabi bidder, that they are looking forward to commit to any requirements.

Sheikh Sultan once again thanks everyone and wishes best of luck to both bidders and assures that Abu Dhabi is working on having best conditions, not only for 2028 but for decades to come and they want to showcase chess in a way it deserves. He hopes to see everyone in Abu Dhabi.

Mr. Biagioli concludes by saying that Italians do not promise but show facts, they show commitment of the Italian Government, the experience of the Italian Chess Federation and the experience of the organisers and Italian hospitality. The documents are signed by the Government and the city of Genoa and is a real project from where all will benefit. Gens Una Sumus.

Mr. Maggi thanks everyone for attention and hopes to see everyone in Genoa.

Mr. Dvorkovich replies to Mr. Herbert's question about spectators, that facilities are spacious and have room for spectators and side events, both in Abu Dhabi and Genoa. He adds that there are many facilities outside to be visited by spectators. He opines that there are two very strong bids. He says Abu Dhabi is a modern place, with modern history and modern experience while Italy has huge cultural heritage living through centuries, and very particular culture. He adds he wishes FIDE could have two Olympiads in both of these destinations and hopes that FIDE will have major FIDE events in both Italy and the UAE.

Voting results: Abstentions: 1; Abu Dhabi , UAE 96 ; Genoa, Italy 60

The General Assembly awards the organization of the Chess Olympiad 2028 to the city of Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Mr. Dvorkovich congratulates both bidders for strong bids and congratulates Abu Dhabi as he hopes everyone will enjoy the hospitality of the Organisers of the Chess Olympiad 2028.

Section 4- Administrative matters

4.2. The Federations' proposals regarding Article 18.12 of the FIDE Charter.

Mr. Ramirez from Mexico presents the proposal for voting. He comments that the Federations believe it is important to have continuity not only to the current administration but in general to have an appropriate management. He opines that the two presidential terms are not enough, and the incumbent has a very good team, and their work should not be limited to two terms. The proposal was discussed among the Federations, and it was decided to present it. It is proposed to eliminate the restrictions regarding the number of the presidential terms.

Mr. Celi from Uruguay comments that together with this proposal related to the elimination of restrictions regarding the number of the presidential terms, the South American Federations discussed a project that FIDE has planned in Americas, but unfortunately it was suspended because of the covid-19 pandemics. He adds it is not convenient for FIDE Federations to have only two terms for the President as FIDE should work with a long-range perspective. The federations discussed different options and possibility for FIDE countries to express opinions and came forward with this proposal.

Mr. Priest from the USA says the FIDE President campaigned on this change in 2018 and suggested having two terms. He adds that one can agree that there is some disruption in the process as the Charter revision was adapted in 2020 only and there was no time to see how well reforms work. He opines, that generally people in positions of power want to hold on to it but nobody is irreplaceable. He agrees there have been very good reforms and changes in FIDE so far. However, he calls the proposed amendment non appropriate and premature saying that the power of incumbent to get re-elected is very strong. He encourages delegates to vote against the withdrawal of limitations of terms.

Mr. Azmaiparashvili of the ECU comments that when Mr. Dvorkovich was running in 2018, it was his project to limit the terms to two periods and Mr. Azmaiparashvili had been against it then and he is against it now. FIDE has a good President that is doing a good job and all the efforts are visible and everything is transparent. FIDE is not a superpower country and should not have these limits in the number of presidential terms. FIDE needs the best possible President and he believes that Mr. Dvorkovich is the President who should continue his tenure if he wishes.

Mr. Malikguliev from Turkmenistan comments that he is relatively new to the administrative section. He was asked to transform chess in Turkmenistan based on his experience in corporate world previously. He confirms that the Turkmenistan Chess Federation receives amazing support from FIDE, and he sees a professional team and a system working, with attention to specific needs. He says all is the result of the visionary strategic planning, and chess community enjoys the FIDE support.

Mrs. Johnson from Trinidad and Tobago commends and endorses the work of Mr. Dvorkovich and the team on behalf of the Trinidad and Tobago Chess Federation and says she has been fortunate to be part of this team. She expresses her concerns aligned to the opinion of Mr. Priest, and does not think FIDE should remove the Article regarding two presidential terms. She invites everyone to remember that FIDE is a global organisation and FIDE needs to align to global standards saying that if everyone keeps referring to the IOC, what the IOC have done within their Constitution, is ask people to have two terms. She adds that FIDE can be more flexible and say if FIDE wants the third presidential term, it can be approved and we can say we are moving to sustainability but at the end, FIDE has to preserve its President first of all and show it has strong governance and wants to expand the list of sponsors and partners. In her understanding this condition is one such companies look for.

Mr. Wijesuriya comments that FIDE appreciate what is done by Mr. Dvorkovich, but this proposal is not personally for Mr. Dvorkovich, it is for anyone. He does not see any harm in changing this provision and lifting the limit.

Mr. Abundo adds that FIDE should leave it to the General Assembly to decide whether they want anybody or not as President for more than two terms. FIDE cannot say in 2023 that they cannot vote for the person they would want to be the FIDE President in 2026.

Mr. Shiyan from Maldives comments that the two terms is not enough for good leadership and opines that the General Assembly should decide that the existing leadership should be given chances. He supports the two previous speakers as this is a democracy to give members a right to decide on this matter.

Mrs Lauterback from Germany supports the opinion of Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Priest, that the provision about two terms was proposed as a democratic change and now there is a wish to take it back. FIDE does not depend on one single team and a strong team should be able to have a strong leader so FIDE should not depend on one single person. She asks not to take moves back.

Mr. Lputian from Armenia comments that two terms is everywhere considered a standard, and eight years is enough to do something and make necessary changes. Some Presidents work very well and have great respect and believe they can do more, so in such cases FIDE should consider keeping the President for another term and there should be a possibility to give a person a chance to continue to serve as a President, if many Federations agree. He believes that such candidate should get at least 80% of votes. He emphasises that he is in favour of two terms, but if somebody is willing to serve the third term, he should get 80% of the votes.

Mr. Mammedov from Azerbaijan comments that he agrees with Mr. Azmaiparashvili and reminds that the delegates should remember that Covid-19 imposed undesired disorder in planned activities, including the activity of FIDE management. He supports the idea of extension of the number of the presidential terms.

Mr. Turlov from Kazakhstan comments that Mr. Dvorkovich is a great leader who did a lot for organisation and a real chess lover strongly committed to democratic procedures. Under his leadership FIDE does great, and he is well-known in chess community. He is personally committed to values of FIDE community. Mr. Turlov is in favour of having Mr. Dvorkovich as FIDE President fully committed to the organisation.

Mr. Nguem Ebile from Equatorial Guinea comments that he does not know what is the purpose of limiting the presidential terms for such a type of organisation. He is in favour of voting this out and chess federations should be able to vote for President who is doing a good job. Limiting presidential terms is a trick for such a big organisation and when FIDE looks at European democracies, most of them do not have limited presidential terms. If Mr. Dvorkovich is doing a good job, Mr. Nguem Ebile will vote for him or whoever does a good job in the future. He opines that two terms do not allow President to carry out all planned activities.

Mr. Hernandez says that in 2018 many countries did not vote for Mr. Dvorkovich but in 2022 these countries unanimously supported him and he is in favour of cancelling the limit of terms as he believes that Mr. Dvorkovich should continue being FIDE President. He believes that this proposed change is not about the person, it is about the work and efforts.

Mr. Sychuk on behalf of the Belarus Chess Federation, comments that he would like to support the initiative and not to limit the number of presidential terms.

Mr. Gradev from Bulgaria first thanks for support to Bulgaria and concurs with Mr. Azmaiparashvili. He says he has been working for 20 years in sports law, in FIFA and UEFA, and is aware of the same situation. FIDE as an international organisation, linked very much to the top manager, and it will be a real loss if after two terms a new person has to take over. If an organisation has a President who abuses power, it is a different situation. He opines that if Mr. Dvorkovich is most valuable, it is easy to keep him and re-elect and if he is not working properly, FIDE should undertake necessary procedure and elect another person. He invites all delegates to vote in favour of deleting Article 18.12. from the FIDE Charter.

Mr. Iashvili from Georgia comments that the Georgian Chess Federation fully supports the amendment of unlimited presidential terms.

Mr. Chikuze from Zambia comments that FIDE should support the motion to remove the limitation of presidential terms on the basis of democratic principles and speak more about credibility of elections as people should be able to choose the leader of their choice. He adds that in Zambia they support the forthcoming plans, regarding the inclusion of chess in the All Africa Games and Chess Olympiad 2024.

Mr. Mohammed from Nigeria supports the removal of the presidential term limits.

Mr. Nam Khoa from Namibia is in favour of the removal of the presidential term limits.

Mr. Herbert from Barbados comments that this is a very emotional topic. He does not support the motion for many reasons given, but he supports it for one reason, that it was a bad decision in 2018, but in 2023 now the Congress is applauded for being mature enough for seeing this in hindrance, to have a say on who should lead us. He supports the removal of the limit of the number of the presidential terms and thinks the change of the Charter was a mistake in 2018. The Chess Federation of Barbados does not support presidential term limits, not because of who is incumbent, not because the incumbent has done a great job, but because FIDE needs to have a choice and elect the President who they want. If President does the job he is set, he or she will get the support of the Assembly.

Mr. Makropoulos comments that himself and Mr. Abundo served three different Presidents, and his knowledge and experience can count. He says he has always been against the limits of the terms for President for simple reasons, that FIDE is not the USA and FIDE does not have

presidential system, where it is logical. FIDE system is more parliamentary, where Prime-Minister can be elected or re-elected, and FIDE is an organisation where President is like a Manager, and FIDE finds a good manager, FIDE does not change him or her. Mr. Makropoulos comments that Mr. Dvorkovich is aware that Mr. Makropoulos considers changes in FIDE as positive. He does not see any other candidate who can do something similar. FIDE has not succeeded to establish a stable situation within these changes. FIDE need someone to work for many years in the way Mr. Dvorkovich has been planning and everyone accepts this. He explains why it is not democratic to stop somebody from running for another presidential term. He adds that it is democracy when delegates decide who they want to be President. He is against the limits of presidential terms, and against the ideas of imposing certain percent as a condition for victory. He opines that FIDE should not have presidential limits and follow the person FIDE believes in.

Mr. Dvorkovich apologises that the comments will be stopped, and voting will take place.

Mr. Dvorkovich comments that this is not an election year, and the proposal is not about electing somebody now, it is about changes in the Charter. He adds that the opinions on both sides were expressed clearly and delegates will vote accordingly.

He reiterates that first the voting for the proposal to remove the limits of the Presidential terms and against other proposals will take place, in case the decision is 2/3 majority, there will be no further vote. If not, then the proposal is voted for 4 terms and so on.

The General Assembly approves to delete Article 18.12. of the FIDE Charter.

4.3 The Lesotho Chess Federation's proposal regarding Article 17.6 of the FIDE Charter

Mr. Dvorkovich explains the proposal of the Lesotho Chess Federation.

Mr. Motloheloa from Lesotho adds that they propose to close the loophole in the FIDE Charter by amending the existing Article by removal the part that says "or at least one year experience of office holder of a member Federation" and explains the logics behind this proposal.

Mr. Dvorkovich informs the delegates that the FIDE Council's members as majority were in favour of this proposal as FIDE is aware of a few examples where this option was used not in a very transparent manner.

Mr. Motloheloa from Lesotho cites Article 14.6 of the FIDE Charter. He comments that Lesotho is not proposing restrictions since FIDE has another article that allows foreign individuals to enter General Assembly as appointed to the Federations representing it when they do not reside and when they do not have citizenship of such country. So, FIDE proposal clearly prohibits such situation.

Mr. Herbert from Barbados wants to understand how Lesotho Chess Federation interprets this Article and the one-year term and why it is seen as a danger.

Mr. Dvorkovich responds that in some Federations people are appointed as Vice-Presidents without even visiting the country, remotely and this is the rationale for this amendment. Federation officials should know local life and be involved in daily activities of this Federation, in order to represent these Federations. He adds that unfortunately, FIDE saw opposite examples. There is a core rationale in the proposal in line with prohibiting proxies, but some people might opine that such individuals could still be useful to the National Federations.

4.4 The FIDE Council's proposal regarding Article 13.7 of the FIDE Charter.

Mr. Dvorkovich presents the proposal of the FIDE Council and enumerates the proposed action.

Mr. Chikuze from Zambia asks if a reverse delegate is a representative of a President or a Federation must vote for a reverse delegate.

Mr. Rivello replies that "FIDE reverse delegate" is not a representative of the Federation and cannot vote as a delegate for the Federation, is a representative of FIDE who can take decisions concerning ordinary business, as regards relations between the Federation and FIDE, in the interest of national players, arbiters and organisers, liaising with national authorities; this is something that FIDE applies already. So far, the Charter has only two solutions if a Federation does not fulfil its obligations: to expel or to suspend such a Federation, and these are very strong measures, too strong for minor violations. He adds that the idea is to clarify that the Council should have some powers to help Federations and take less severe measures.

Mrs. Murphy of the US Virgin Islands refers to point 4.10 of the FIDE Charter that FIDE has strict neutrality regarding the business of Federations and asks for clarification of "minor violations".

Mr. Rivello responds that minor means less serious violations. He refers to Article 11 of the FIDE Charter regarding Obligations of Federations. The Council proposes to avoid misunderstandings, to clarify the matter, because these measures are all been being applied and there is a need to indicate the limits and the possibilities of intervention of the Council.

Mr. Makropoulos comments that there is a principle in FIDE that FIDE should not interfere in internal business of the Federations, only when FIDE sees a very serious problem. Delegates might be afraid that FIDE will try to interfere, but FIDE has cured its past mistakes. He opines that the proposed amendments for Article 13.7. of the FIDE Charter, might result in Federation's reservations that with such regulations in force, even for minor problems in the Federations, FIDE will start to regain control in Federations.

Mr. Dvorkovich replies that most of the proposed solutions are already implemented. He adds that there is a list of obligations set for Federations and if some of the said obligations are not fulfilled, FIDE do not to expel or suspend, because many of these things can be corrected. FIDE will always start with recommendations and mediation. FIDE had the practice of special envoys, as he gives an example of Special Envoy in the Bulgarian case which is a great instrument that helped to remedy the situation in Bulgaria. He also mentions a Reverse delegate as another great tool which has helped in several Federations. He understands that Federations might be afraid of FIDE gaining control inside Federations, but this proposed amendment will serve fuller transparency.

Mr. Chikuze from Zambia proposes to postpone the issues about minor breach, as he opines this point has to be worked out. He refers to Mrs. Murphy's question about what constitutes a minor breach and says that FIDE must not interfere with Federations.

Mr. Priest wants to clarify that the prior speaker asked about reverse delegate and if it is right a reverse delegate does not vote.

Mr. Dvorkovich confirms that and reiterates that FIDE is not creating anything new, but clarifying what exists already. He suggests that the voting should start.

The General Assembly does not approve Lesotho Chess Federation's proposal regarding Article 17.6 of the FIDE Charter.

The General Assembly approves the proposal of the FIDE Council regarding Article 13.7 of the FIDE Charter.

Section 2 – Financial matters

2.1 Report of the FIDE Treasurer

Ms. Zhu presents her report. In her report she outlines the main points:

- Financial results of 2022 financial year and its highlights.
- Difference in the income for FIDE between the years in FIDE Calendar when major events are organised and not organised.
- Explanation of 2024 as a good financial year for FIDE and 2025 as not good financial year in terms of income for FIDE from FIDE events.
- Development Fund lower than budgeted for 2022. The development budget for 2024 is kept at 2 mln euro. She hopes that Federations will be submitting projects for the Development Fund allocations.
- Update of 2023 financial year, with a cash balance more than 6 mln euro.

Mr. Dvorkovich thanks Ms. Zhu for her report.

The General Assembly approves the Treasurer's report.

2.2 Verification Commission's report

Mr. Mazouz summarises the report. He states that FIDE has provided financial statements and all required paperwork and at the end of June 2023 the report of Ernst & Young was received and the Commission reviewed everything. The FIDE team of Ms. Zhu and Mr. Volzhin met with the Commission, and they were later joined by Mrs. Reizniece-Ozola and Mr. Freyd. The Commission made some recommendations to the FIDE Financial team and checked if they were implemented.

He adds that the Commission is making new recommendations for the General Assembly to look at and notes good working relations between the Commission and the FIDE Financial team.

Mr. Priest provides the details of the report. He mentions several key points:

- This year the Ernst & Young provided a timely report. They found no material errors which were not corrected and they made some suggestions, mainly to move some events from 2022 to 2023.
- The Olympiad 2024 contract was discussed to finalise outstanding issues.
- New entity in FIDE – for profit subsidiary to do joint ventures with other organisations.
- Ernst & Young made many comments about FIDE accounting system, and FIDE is adopting a new accounting system since January 2023 which has all the controls.

- Credit cards expenditures lacked approval which is a recurring problem. There is a positive change but still there are areas which needs to be improved.
- Some recommendations were not completed in 2023 and are mentioned in the Commission report: all contracts to be in English; Swiss VAT; unwritten bonus policies etc, and it was recommended that 22 bonuses should be indicated in the FIDE budget.
- The Commission wants to see change in the cash flow.
- New for profit subsidiary should be audited
- Further cooperation with FIDE financial team in terms of change of the accounting system which will result in modification of the Verification Commission work.
- Easier access to the Federations in need of assistance which has to be finalised by Planning and Development Commission.
- Banking restrictions in Russia due to current geopolitical situation. FIDE has a number of employees in Russia, who need to be paid in Rubles so there is a need to develop other approach in order to pay these employees.
- Imperative and critical that FIDE is collecting receipts for money that FIDE spends. Credit card holders should be more systematic, and a system should be in place in order to collect receipts.
- Comments on comparison of the FIDE budget throughout the years. Important numbers are net figures, and they increased, this caused by the increase in staffing.
- General donations go down as the focus changed to having sponsorship.
- Thanks to the FIDE financial team and Mr. Dvorkovich for the assistance in the Commission's job.

Mr. Dvorkovich thanks the Verification Commission and the FIDE Financial team for excellent recommendations and asks for the full support of the General Assembly for the report.

Mr. Howie asks if the system Letconquer should be used to obtain receipts.

Mr. Priest replies that FIDE discussed mechanisms to get receipts, one of the problems is the follow-up provider mentioned, requires several steps and this could be one of them.

2.3 Discharge of the Treasurer.

2.4 Budget 2024.

Presentation of the Budgetary framework for 2024-2025

Ms. Zhu presents the budget for 2024 and 2025.

She outlines the main points:

- Budgetary provisions from 2023 to 2025, regarding the income from the FIDE events drop in 2025 which results in the drop of FIDE income for 2025.
- Development Fund remains on the same level.
- The rest of budget entries stay at the same level.

Mr. Dvorkovich comments that this is a conservative basis for budgeting and FIDE has a very balanced situation. He underlines that the most of the entries in the budget are stable, but within particular items there are some changes, and the one related to the Development Fund, was discussed at the Zonal Council meeting, however, the total number is still the same.

2.5 Reappointment of External Auditor for annual audit of FIDE accounts for 2023

Mr. Priest comments that it is hard to find another external auditor. He recalls that Mr. Volzhin had recommended looking for another auditor but since then, Ernst & Young improved its work, and the Verification Commission is comfortable with this recommendation.

2.6 Update of the Financial Rules regarding the tournaments' fees

Mr. Iashvili comments on the reasons for the change in bid fees.

The General Assembly approves the Verification Commission's report.

The General Assembly discharges the Treasurer from the responsibilities for the financial year 2022.

The General Assembly approves the FIDE budget for the year 2024 and provisional FIDE budget for the year 2025.

The General Assembly reappoints Ernst & Young as External Auditor for the annual audit of FIDE accounts for 2023.

The General Assembly approves the update of the Financial Rules regarding the Bid Fees and Deposit Fees for Organization of FIDE Events and amend Articles 4.2 and 5.2 accordingly.

Section 3- Federation and Membership issues

3.3 Federations issues

3.3.1 South African Chess Federation

Mr. Dvorkovich informs the South Africa presents appeal on the decision of the FIDE Council to appoint the Reverse delegate and facilitate the organisation of the elections within the Federation. He says that in May 2023 the member of the FIDE Council Mr. O. Adeyemi was appointed as a Reverse delegate after seeing internal problems for many years and because previously no solution has been reached and adds that now after the elections, there is an appeal.

It was noted that Mr. Lamey will present the appeal to the General Assembly on behalf of the Appellant and Mr. Martynov will present the statement of the FIDE Council, which is an Annex in the Agenda.

Mr. Lamey addresses the delegates on the substantial issues and procedural issues and some other issues raised by Mr. Martynov in his opinion as the FIDE Legal Director pertaining to authority. He introduces himself as an attorney of High Court of South Africa instructed by a high firm of attorneys (barristers, not solicitors). He refers to their appeal circulated to the delegates and says that the relief sought in this internal appeal by CHESSA, is to revoke and declare invalid the decisions of the Reverse delegate and election commission and the FIDE Council and to set them aside and not to recognise the results of the elections held on 25 November and declare them invalid. They request, on behalf of CHESSA, the General Assembly to direct the FIDE Council to liaise and support to their appeal to ensure that democratic elections of the provincial members in CHESSA first be conducted in terms of the

provincial constitutions of CHESSA with the Constitution of CHESSA prior to election of the President and Executive Board of CHESSA. He explains a very important aspect for purposes of proper democratic elections. He reiterates that once proper legitimate democratic elections in provincial structures are held, the elections of Board and President of CHESSA can follow. He further comments that the delegation of FIDE as nominated by FIDE Council, consults with the current Board of CHESSA for purposes of the following: the appointment of members of an independent election Commission for purposes of conducting of provincial elections and that such elections be conducted in terms of requirements and procedures of the Constitution of CHESSA and the Constitutions of provincial members of CHESSA. He opines that should the General Assembly decide not to grant this relief, then the recognition of these elections held on 25 November should remain suspended pending the outcome of appeal in the Court of Arbitration for Sports as provided in Article 35.1. of the FIDE Charter.

He summarises important aspects on the grounds of appeal which is under the Heading “legal provisions” and provides a number of details, claiming that the sports Federations in South Africa are regulated and defined by the South African Sports Act and it defines a national governing body of a code of sport or recreational activity in the Republic recognised by the International Controlling Body as the only authority for the administration and control of the relative code of sport activity in the Republic. He states that FIDE is the International Controlling Body for chess but what is stated in the South African law is in line with the FIDE Charter. The only authority in respect of sport of chess in South Africa is, similar to other sports Federations in South Africa, like Cricket SA and netball SA and this emphasises the autonomy of CHESSA. He adds that the FIDE Charter endorses inter alia the universal human rights Declaration and states in Article 8 “everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent National tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted to him by the Constitution or by law”. He adds that in South Africa there is a constitution, and the rule of law which everybody must respect, he also refers to the FIDE Charter Article 4.10. “FIDE observes strict neutrality in internal affairs of its members that has a right to evaluate compliance with FIDE principles and their obligations”. He states further in paragraph six of the appeal that “at no stage has FIDE communicated to ex Executive authority of CHESSA following the court judgment in 2022, any non-compliance of CHESSA with principles or obligations of FIDE, or non-compliance with FIDE rules and regulations. He then refers to Article 9.1. of FIDE Charter which says “member federations or National Chess Associations and corresponding organisations that have principal authority over the chess activities in their own countries” and further more Article 11.c, d, l, q of the FIDE Charter.

He says that the Executive Board of CHESSA further dealt with the provisions of the South African Constitution and provisions of the various provincial Constitutions and gives the background of the composition of Chess South Africa, where first comes the National Federation and underneath nine provinces as well as the players’ Commission. All the nine provinces are separate juristic persons that have their own Constitutions, but all linked to South African Constitution. So if there is an election to take place, of the national executive body as well as its President, there must be compliance by the provinces of their own Constitutions and of their own elections. He asks how it is possible to have proper democratic election, if provincial elections were not held first. Once FIDE together with the Executive bodies is sure that the provincial good standing requirements are in place and that they have held proper elections, which have been monitored, then the elections of the executive board and president

must follow. He claims that the FIDE Council through the Reverse delegate and the Election Commission intervened in the elections process in CHESSA. Thereby the autonomy of the Executive Board of CHESSA as CHESSA is not respected by FIDE and therefore, that is why the appeal is submitted. He claims it started with the appointment of the Reverse delegate. He says that that the FIDE General Assembly Agenda included a point in respect of an amendment to the FIDE Charter, to introduce for the first time the power to appoint a reverse delegate; that provision wasn't in place, when the Reverse delegate was appointed with all these powers. He informs that the CHESSA Executive Board finds itself in a very difficult position and there are historic reasons for that. The Court has declared this dispute finally in 2022 by which the Executive Board came into place and legitimised by the Court and therefore it got the authority by the court to govern. The last year they also indicated that when CHESSA Executive Board wanted their members to comply with for purposes of elective conference, they were non-compliant, they ignored them. So the Executive Board of CHESSA has this very difficult situation, that despite the rule of law in South Africa, despite the court order, the members do not respect the Constitution, He says they find themselves in an impossible situation, where your provincial constitutions do not despite order, they are non-compliant, they ignore and they do not recognise and by doing that they are undermining the South African law, which FIDE Charter says, must be respected. They are asking FIDE, its Council and structures to help CHESSA to first conduct provincial elections with properly compliant members and then the national elections can be held. If one moves rapidly, this can all happen in 2024, but one cannot override and ignore the provincial constitutions and their requirements as well as the CHESSA Constitution.

Mr. Martynov responds on behalf of the FIDE Council. He refers to the Annex which expresses the full legal position of the FIDE Council.

He indicates the most important points:

- FIDE never interferes in internal affairs of Federations.
- FIDE only provides assistance in connection with appeals from such Federations.
- In the past, FIDE appointed Reverse delegates for Morocco, Pakistan and South Africa Chess Federations. In the current case concerning the South Africa Chess Federation, FIDE received many appeals from South Africa, including provincial representatives.
- When it was clear that the South Africa Chess Federation is in a danger from suspension from the SASCOC, which is a very important point, a Reverse delegate was appointed. The appellants themselves wrote in spring 2023 (the letter is attached) that they would only welcome if FIDE acts as an election officer. They further provided FIDE Constitutional Commission with the information that the new elections would be in July 2023 but no elections were organised and only when all deadlines passed and considering many appeals from chess community of South Africa, FIDE decided to help organising elections.
- Elections were not only supported by the local NOC (SASCOC), but also attended by 8 from 9 provinces from South Africa who are real electors according to the Constitution.
- FIDE never challenges independent status of the Federation and never interferes in the affairs of it and its day-to-day management.
- Specifies important procedural details and adds that the appeal was logged in December 2023 by a Legal firm, but without the Power of Attorney provided. The minutes of the Board were provided later, where it is written that two members of the Board had abstained and also these two members wrote to FIDE and their letters are attached, that they did not support the

appeal and they did not vote in its favour. Without these two members quorum cannot be reached.

- Gross violations in the quorum of the meeting which is referred to in the appeal. The appeal is filed by several people who do not represent the entire CHESSA, de facto.
- The Council requests to reject the Appeal of the CHESSA.

Mr. Dvorkovich reiterates that the FIDE Council has considered the case and recommended to reject the Appeal of the CHESSA, given the arguments as presented by Mr. Martynov.

Mr. Lamey agrees that FIDE only wanted to assist the CHESSA and its Executive Board, but he draws the attention to the FIDE Council Resolution in which they appointed a task team as well as the election commission unilaterally. He adds that if you allow the CHESSA Executive Board to convene the elections, then the powers of the CHESSA should be to appoint an elections officer. He says that what Mr. Martynov mentions is if there was some proper arrangement and agreement between FIDE and CHESSA Executive Board, in terms of which FIDE would be appointed by Executive Board, as the elections monitoring Commission, that would be a different situation, but if you look at the letter of announcement of 6 October, it says FIDE decided to hold elections for leadership under its auspices on the following conditions. It is FIDE that set all the conditions for these elections, all the procedures, and they take it over of the hands of the Executive Board. Next is the so-called authority that Mr. Martynov refers to in the documents before this Assembly, there is a resolution that Mr. Martynov wrote to us and says "I'm missing the resolution". And we went back to the attorneys to chess SA Board and said "please provide us with the resolution". The resolution is part of the document and you will see that seven Executive Board members who have voting rights, co-opted, and that there are other members who do not have voting rights in the CHESSA Board. Seven were informed of the Resolution for the majority of the seven voted in favour of this resolution, and this resolution is proper in terms of the Constitution of CHESSA and therefore Mr. De Toit was mandated in terms of this resolution and also ratified the decision to appeal. Mr. De Toit was mandated to do everything necessary, and he signed the appeal. Mr. Lamney continues that Mr. Martynov also mentions in this written presentation that he does not know who the witnesses are, but in terms of South African law, a single mandate by the President is enough, as the witnesses are not legal prerequisites. It is standard to have witnesses and these witnesses are not false, they are properly signed witnesses to this Power of Attorney. He claims that Mr. Martynov was a member of election commission and also presents a legal opinion on behalf of FIDE, and he thinks there is a healthy distance between independent legal advice as well as somebody who is intricately involved in this process that separation of function is not here in place, with greatest of respect.

Mr. Khoa from Namibia comments that he was in communication with some of chess community in CHESSA, and the situation is that players are seeking refuge in other countries, in order to pursue playing chess. He thinks the situation has to come to resolve, and no further appeals should be made.

Mr. Wanjala from Kenya adds that the issue of the South Africa affects the chess situation in the African continent as it is one of the biggest chess nations in Africa and has been missing for a long time from chess scene as the suspension by SASCO negatively affects everything. The members of election Commission tried their best to normalise the situation. He underlines that the elections were held so that the Federation and players could move forward. He calls on

the delegates to reject the appeal and confirms that the appealing parties did not participate in the elections.

Mr. Dvorkovich comments that he has heard numerous times from the appellants that elections will be held in the next six months, but the dates shifted numerous times further. The opinion of the SASCO should also be considered and repeats that the FIDE Council recommends voting in favour of rejecting the appeal.

The General Assembly rejects the South Africa Chess Federation's appeal.

3.4 Other matters

Mr. Dvorkovich congratulates the Cote D'Ivoire Chess Federation on the championship they are organising these days.

Section 5- FIDE Calendar

5.2 FIDE Calendar 2023-2025

Mr. Dvorkovich comments that very soon the World Rapid and Blitz Championships 2023 will start in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. The next year, FIDE will organise Candidates Tournament and Women's Candidates Tournament 2024 in Toronto, Canada, as well as FIDE Chess Olympiad 2024 in Budapest, Hungary. He informs that the World Championship matches will be organised in 2025 and the hosts for the matches will be finalised after the Candidates Tournament 2024 is finished.

He adds that the events under the umbrella of the Events Commission will be also organised next year. He welcomes Federations to see bidding possibilities for 2024 and 2025 as he draws the attention to changed criteria for events organisation and new titles for Events Organisers.

Mr. Dvorkovich underlines that there will be new events in the FIDE calendar in 2024-2025.

Section 6- Continental Associations

6.1 Report of Continental Association for Europe.

Mr. Azmaiparashvili thanks all delegates who have voted for the Bulgarian Sports Chess Federation. He is in communication with the newly accepted Federation already and they want to organise very good chess events in Bulgaria.

He is a bit disappointed that Italian bid did not win and hopes that FIDE will consider a possibility of organising an important FIDE event for Italy. He congratulates Sheikh Sultan and the UAE Chess Federation for winning the Chess Olympiad 2028 bid, as he is sure that this will be a good memorable event.

Regarding the ECU events 2023, he mentions the European Club Cup 2023 and thanks Mr. Dervishi and the Albanian Chess Federation for the great organisation and a record participation. He also thanks Mr. Carlsen who came to play for his club there. Mr. Azmaiparashvili also names the Montenegro Chess Federation as one of the leading organisers in ECU, and the Croatian Chess Federation that has organised a great European Rapid and Blitz

Championship 2023. He also congratulates GM A. Sarana and GM D. Navara for winning Rapid and Blitz European Championships 2023 respectively and points out that GM Sarana won all European titles this year.

6.2 Report of Continental Association for Americas.

Mr. Enrique Celi presents the Continental Report. He announces that the Continental Board has been elected since October 2022 and in 2023 there were 27 continental and regional tournaments organised. He mentions that several Commissions were also established at the Continent and started their work.

He informs that there were two Continental Assemblies organised, in Dominican Republic and in Panama, with very active participation, and Planning and Development Commission had a meeting there with Mr. Bologan's participation, while in Panama Mr. Dvorkovich took part in the meeting remotely. All goals have been achieved and the Continent is working for the best in 2024.

6.3 Report of Continental Association for Asia.

Mr. Al Taher presents the Continental Report. He informs that there was a Continental Assembly the previous day in Al Ain and mentions that chess was included into multi-sport competitions in Asia, and next year will also be present in Thailand in Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games. He informs that all events were organised according to the Asian Chess Federation Calendar.

6.4 Report of Continental Association for Africa.

Ms. Lopang presents the Continental Report. She informs on the Continental events and a visit of the FIDE Executive Director V. Bologan to several African countries. She mentions that the Zonal Council discussed the issue of redistributing zonal assistance. She hopes next year will be even more successful for ACC and FIDE.

Mr. Dvorkovich thanks the Continents and Continental Presidents for their work and looks forward to their cooperation for FIDE 100th anniversary.

The General Assembly notes the Continental Reports.

Section 7- Miscellaneous

7.1 The Norway Chess Federation's proposal

Mr. Dvorkovich explains the proposal of the Norway Chess Federation and mentions that the Regulations in question were adopted two months ago. He points out that there are no restrictions to the participation to transgender players in any FIDE-rated events around the world, besides the World Championship cycle events. This has to be clearly understood and that is why media response was a bit one-sided based on the lack of this understanding. He adds that FIDE is committed to monitoring the situation in this regard and if any problem occurs, then the regulations will be reviewed.

Mrs. Vestby from Norway addresses the General Assembly and explains their reasons for submitting the proposal.

Mr. Dvorkovich reconfirms that FIDE believes that there should be no restrictions, which were introduced only for the World Championship cycle based on the experience of other sports.

Mr. Dvorkovich continues to state that based on its discussion, the FIDE Council recommends to the General Assembly to reject the proposal of the Norwegian Chess Federation. He adds that the FIDE Council will continue monitoring the situation.

Mr. Jalling from Sweden asks about the participation of transgender persons in the Chess Olympiads. Mr. Dvorkovich replies Olympiad is not included in the Transgender Registration Regulations, only the events of the World Championship cycle.

The General Assembly rejects the proposal of the Norway Chess Federation regarding the Transgender Registration Regulations.

7.2 FIDE 100 Years Anniversary

The delegates note the video in respect of the FIDE100 Anniversary.

7.3 FIDE Awards

Mr. Dvorkovich reads the names for FIDE Honorary Members : Mr. Gelfer (ISR), Mr. Mazouz (ALG), Mr. Abd Hamid Majid (MAS) and Mr. P. Spiller (NZL).

Mr. M. K. Stalin from Tamil Nadu province, the Main Organiser and host of the 2022 Chennai Olympiad, who saved FIDE, is awarded the Most Esteemed Friend of FIDE.

Shrikant Madhav Vaidya (India) – CEO of Indian Oil is awarded the title Friends of FIDE.

The General Assembly approves the FIDE Awards.

7.4 FIDE Congress 2024

The event will take place in Budapest, Hungary in September 2024.

7.5 Other matters

Mr. Dvorkovich thanks Mrs. Reizniece-Ozola and especially Ms. Stoisavljevic and all FIDE staff for the preparation and great work during the Congress.

He thanks the FIDE Management Board, all Continental boards and adds that he feels a lot of support. He also thanks Mr. Martynov for his legal expertise. Mr. Dvorkovich wishes season's greetings to all the attendees and great 100 anniversary in 2024 as he looks forward to seeing all in Budapest.

Closure