

Time to resign for Mr.Boris KUTIN!

The Turkish Chess Federation (TCF) has tried to show a good management style in the last 7 years. No need to explain what has happened in Turkey for chess as, I believe everybody knows. As a part of this development, we always tried to give the best service to FIDE and the European Chess Union (ECU). We were always candidate for any kind of event whether it was profitable or non-profitable.

To exemplify this, I have to mention that in Turkey we have organized the World Juniors Championships 2005, World Youth Under 16 Chess Olympiad (1998, 2003, 2006), FIDE Presidential Board (1999, 2007), World Chess Olympiad 2000.

Also for Europe, we have organized; 2002 European Club Cup for women, 2004 European Club Cup, 2007 European Club Cup, 2003 European Individual Chess Championships, 2004 European Youth Championships, 2004 European Individual Chess Championships, 2006 European Individual Chess Championships, and two times the ECU Board meeting.

I can assure everyone that a large number of these events were organized by the TCF simply as a form of assistance to FIDE or the ECU.

Only one more example, what we do for chess in Turkey: By starting next month, Istanbul Great Municipality will distribute 1 million chess sets and 1 million books to one million children. This will be done in each primary school face to face. The aim is to create a web site for training kids for chess and other subjects. Also this will go to a result opening a real chess academy in Istanbul managed by GMs for creating idols for the future. The project cost will be more than 10.000.000 USD we expect. This is not a planned project! This is an accepted project. So you may understand what happens in Turkey for chess, and how hard we try to develop chess in this country. This will make all readers understanding our sensitivity for protecting our rights.

I have given the above information, to explain we do not mind losing a candidacy for organising an event when we make bids. Who is the best host city bidding, should be granted the organisation. Considering the reason for this open letter, I had to explain this in advance.

We have sued the ECU!

It is with big sadness for me to say that we have sued the ECU in the judicial court in Lausanne on 3rd of October, for the decision taken in the last board meeting in Novi Sad on 24 August 2007.



Let me briefly explain the story. ECU declared its deadlines for bids for the 2009 European Championships, as 1st July 2007. TCF applied for three important events: 2009 European Individual Chess Championships (Men and Women – Antalya Kemer), 2009 European Club Cup (Men and Women – Antalya, Kemer) and 2009 European Youth Chess Championships (Cappadocia).

We did our best to offer the best conditions for the ECU and the participants, as it was requested by the ECU in their last circular letter. Then, we were informed that the decision will be taken in Novi Sad in August 2007. Inspectors came and checked the condition on both venues. Already, the venue of Kemer is very well known. We have shown last week the quality of the venue in the European Club Cup 2007 which was organized there.

Then I flew to Novi Sad on the 23rd August. All candidates Federation were present. I was so proud as a chess lover to see that so many candidates have made a bid to organise these events, all except the European Individual Chess Championships.

I made our presentations for the three events. I started with the European Individual Chess Championships. I explained the conditions. Our bids are attached as a 'pdf' file which you may check. When I made my presentation for the European Individual Chess Championships to the ECU Board, the first reaction came from Mr.Kutin.

He mentioned that the 140.000€ prize fund offered by the TCF is excellent for such as event. For me, given the calibre of such an event, this is normal. I have to tell all readers of this letter that the last time we had organized it was in in Kusadasi in 2006, and the financial result to TCF was a loss of around 127.000 €. However, we were so proud to organise it. Since we are earning money from other chess activities, we believe strongly it should be reinvested in events which give something back to chess.

My answer to Mr.Kutin, for his reaction, was to remind him also about the 120.000 USD that FIDE contributes to this event. So it was like sharing the same opinion and happiness remarking that together with this contribution it will have more attraction. Then he answered with a degree of regret saying that there is no more FIDE contributions to this event. FIDE has stopped support for the European Continent for European Individual Chess Championships. I was shocked! I asked if this was done for all continents. The answer was 'No!, Only for Europe!'.

Ok! What to do? I mentioned that this will affect of course the participation but at least it is an odd year and there are normally 34 places for World Cup Qualification. The answer: 'No!, We have decided to change it! It will be 23-23 qualifiers for each year' .... another shock! In the last 7 years, it was always 34-12 respectively for odd and even years. ECU Board takes a decision for the most difficult tournament to organise and nobody knows!



Can you imagine how difficult it is to organize this event? We are ready to compensate for the budget loss, but can you imagine the difference with the above decisions? I asked the ECU Board when these decisions were taken. I learned that both were taken before the 1st July, the deadline for the bids.

Then I asked them why they had not informed the bidders. The answer was 'You are right Ali!' Then I told them we would consider withdrawing our bid under such circumstances, since the main conditions had changed before bidding deadline and we had not been informed. They told me OK, we will discuss.

I want to go through these details, because they are critical in explaining the reason for suing the ECU. We had also made two other bids for Club Cup, and Youth 2009. When we made the three bids, we had planned a strategy thinking that since probably nobody would make any bid for the Individual and we would have reasonable chances for getting one of the normally, profitable tournaments, I mean the Club Cup or the Youth Championships.

During my presentation for the other bids I clearly mentioned the situation of chess in Turkey. I believe that they were excellent bids like the other Federations made. For the European Club Cup, the prize fund offered was 45.000€ and the hotel cost in a 5 stars location were 49 € in a double and 69 € in a single.

My expectations were mixed. Because last year, when we have made a bid for the European Youth Championships 2008, there were many candidates and we were not given this either. I learned before Novi Sad, that among all the candidates for the 2008 European Youth, we had entered the last round of voting versus Herceg Novi. Just before the last round of voting Mr.Kutin has asked the ECU Board, as President, to support Herceg Novi, during voting!

Of course, the ECU Board has taken this request into consideration and given the event to Herceg Novi. The same night, Mr.Kutin changed his federation to Montenegro. This is another story.

Ok, after my presentation in Novi Sad, I left the meeting room and joined the other candidates outside, Mr.Azmaiparashvili from Georgia, and Mr.Mastroukoukos from Greece in the lobby of the hotel. There was also the delegation of FYR Macedonia. The meeting finished late in the night and Mr.Kutin came out. He approached me first and told me that we had been awarded the European Individual, Italy, the European Youth and FYR Macedonia, the European Club Cup. He has also explained that the main reason for this decision was our sole bid for the Individual.



Then he approached Mr Azmaiparashvili. The latter's reaction to Mr.Kutin, was very heated. I did not hear the conversation, but from their faces I understood that Mr Azmajparashvili was very disappointed with the decision. Then Mr.Kutin went to Mr. Mastrokoukos and his reaction was not also very happy, as candidate organizer but as a loser for the European Club Cup 2009 in Greece.

Ok, what to do? There are so many other years to try and get these events. And the federations granted to organize events were nice countries and with chess culture. I congratulated them and left for my room.

Then during the dinner at night I heard many comments. Many rumours, but I not take any notice of them. The only request of the losing candidates was to see the other bids. But somehow, the winning and losing bids, I do not know why, are top secret! Answer given by ECU, is the rule written in statute of ECU, C.2.5 . It says board members may see bids but no one else. Why? Do not ask me!

After I returned back to my country, I visited Baku, shortly after, for the 2nd International Women Tournament as a guest. There, Mr Azmajparashvili gave me some more information regarding the Novi Sad meeting. I learned that many things had happened behind closed doors as follows:

Just before the voting started, Mr.Kutin has made a motion to the board for a new decision which had never been taken before. In the minutes of Novi Sad, it was written as follows:

> *'**4.2 Bids for tournaments in 2009***
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> *Presentations were made by:*
> *Petar Gicarovski, President of Chess Federation of Macedonia, and Adriana Janevska for European Youth Championship and European Club Cup, both in Struga.*
> *George Mastrokoukos for European Club Cup in Proto Carras.*
> *Pietro Cinciripini, Agostino Scalfi and Claudio Brignocchi, Major of Porto San Giorgio, for European Youth Championship in Porto San Giorgio/Fermo.*
> *Ali Nihat Yazici for European Individual Championship, European Club Cup and European Youth Championship in Kemer/Antalya and Capadoccia.*
> *Zurab Azmaiparashvili for European Youth Championship in Batumi.*
>
> ***Boris Kutin proposed, that for 2009 no federation should be awarded more than one event. The Board agreed.***

*Concerning the results of voting on the bids it was agreed**, not to make the discussion and the results public**. Only President Boris Kutin is authorized to give detailed information.'*



The sentences underlined, show clearly that the ECU Board accepted a decision that no Federation should be awarded more than one event. The Board agreed. Then the ECU board awarded (!) us the European Individual Chess Championships 2009, and eliminated us from the other two events : European Club Cup and European Youth Chess Championships.

At no point in time during the board in Novi Sad did anyone from the Board invite me and ask me which tournament I wanted to host, given this new 'condition'. This is incredible. According to the information I have gathered, some winners for these events even called the hotels during the board meeting and questioned some issues which were not clear in their bids.

But no one came outside the meeting hall and asked me (where I was sitting about 20 meters away) which tournament, we wanted to organize. I have to tell you that even if they had come and asked me, their decision was still illegal.

Because, if you want to limit awards for any year to some federations, then why do not you declare this before the bidding procedure? As a result, the money spent for preparation of the bids, would not go to waste and could be spent for the sake of chess development.

Who may claim that, if we were informed in advance, we would still make three bids instead of a single very strong one. If I put this 140.000€ financial loss for the European Individual or even half of it into the European Youth Chess Championships, or the European Club Cup you could only imagine what a nice event would be organized. Can you imagine what is the loss for chess and for top professionals of such decisions? Can you imagine what is the damage? The damage done to TCF or any other Federation is damage done to chess.

When I learned this information, I called the General Secretary of the ECU, Mr.Horst Metzing. After some discussion I decided to formally protest and I sent the following official letter on the 7th September with the hope that the ECU Board may change their decision. Their answer came back on 14th September. And after this, we decided to sue the ECU for the decisions in Novi Sad.

We have requested in the judicial court in Lausanne:

1. *To cancel all decisions taken by the ECU in Novi Sad related to these three tournaments;*
2. *To compensate the TCF for the expenses for preparing these three bids which were not taken even under consideration due to ECU's illegal decision in Novi Sad. We are claiming 50.000 CHF.*

I am sure by respecting ECU statues C.2.4 and C.2.5 we will win this case.



But is this the reason to ask Mr. Boris Kutin to resign?

My answer is ‘yes’ but there are more reasons.

In the last two years, there has been a drastic decline in the level of leadership of the European Chess Union.

First of all, as the Turkish Chess Federation, we believe that the President of the ECU, Mr.Boris Kutin is not capable of managing this huge organization. He is subjective with his decisions, and could not show enough leadership for the best chess continent of the world. No need to say, that Europe represents around 70% of world chess, by the events, by the number of GMs, by the number of ex-world champions. As a global family of chess, of course, we admire all continents and do not seek separation, but the development of chess in Europe is a consequential benefit for all other continents and for the sake of chess.

Our eminent sport in Europe has never been so badly managed. And, I want to underline that the President is responsible for this mismanagement. When I was a board member from 2002 to till 2006, I tried to raise my voice always in the board for the sake of chess. I tried to use my vote for what I believed in, without thinking what benefits my federation could get. I know that all board members were behaving in the same way.

In the 2006 elections for ECU, Mr.Kutin declared the good news about sponsorship from MonRoi for the European Grandprix. It was, I guess, around 100.000€ per year. The idea was that the ECU would purchase MonRoi devices and use them for the European Grandprix and this sponsorship would be given annually to the ECU. However, as Mr.Kutin informed at the dinner in Novi Sad, no money actually came from MonRoi, and the ECU purchased the devices. I do not know of course the full details, but I know the MonRoi Company and that they will fulfill their responsibilities. This is one example.

The second thing is the qualifiers from Europe for the World Cup 2007. The president decided that the Under 18 Youth Champions for girls and boys would represent Europe in World Cup 2007 in Khanty Mansiysk. However, this decision was taken without any consultation with FIDE. Of course for world cup qualifiers, the FIDE rules are binding. Then the ECU cut one place from the European Individual Chess Championships organized this year in Dresden. Of course players protested about could normally have the right to go to Khanty Mansiysk. Then, FIDE intervened and decided to give the rights back to players from Dresden. Again, it is an example of mismanagement.

To talk about European Chess Union web site is another issue. For three months the website of one of the most powerful chess associations in the world, has been down, which is incredible in this day and age.



Although it is written in the ECU statute, also we cannot understand how it is possible to have two members in the ECU board from the same federation. This is another reason for asking for Mr.Kutin's resignation from presidency.

Another issue is FIDE contribution to Europe for European Individual Chess Championship prize fund in odd years. This is very important for the professional players in Europe. If we count 20% deduction from this Money, it makes 96.000 USD. With a basic calculation if this Money goes to 30 players than average lost for each top Professional in Europe is 3.000 USD. It means that not only Federations but also top professionals were negatively affected by the bad leadership of ECU. Is there any action taken by ECU President against this decision of FIDE? I learned that when this decision was given in the FIDE Presidential Board, he was silent!

I have to underline that we did not want to sue ECU. We respect all other Federations and wish that the situation of chess in Europe was managed on a professional basis as should be expected from such an organisation. However, we do not hold any realistic hope when reviewing the current ECU situation.

Also we do not understand why the bids presented in Novi Sad are hidden. This is against the basic logic of public tenders in Europe. Also it was written in Novi Sad minutes as I have underlined above.

Also we do not understand and cannot accept the change of rules during bidding procedure. Indeed there are many things we do not understand as to why Mr.Kutin is making these decisions.

I have to underline that we do not make this case against FYROM or Italy who were the host candidates who were awarded the events in question. We are sure they have given excellent bids, possibly better than us, although we were not capable to see them. But as TCF, a federation contributing a great deal to world chess and giving sterling service, we have to protect our rights for such illegal situations.

We believe in that these things have happened because of Mr.Kutin's bad leadership.

We invite him to resign. TCF Board supports the decision of Georgian Chess Federation to raise a no-confidence vote in General Assembly of ECU in Creta, Greece next month.

We hope that everyone in the world loving chess will understand our position.

Chess regards,

Ali Nihat YAZICI
President of TCF
12 October 2007



Attachments:

1. ECU Statues Bid procedure
2. Our bids (4 bids 4 pdf files)
3. TCF Protest to ECU dated on 3rd September
4. ECU answer to TCF dated on 14th September