

FMJD

Report of the President of the World Draughts Federation (FMJD)

October 2017 – June 2021

Janek Mäggi
FMJD president

Tallinn
May 2021



Dear presidents and directors of member federations of the FMJD and draughts players,

31 May, Tallinn

Introduction

I have had the great honour of serving as the president of the World Draughts Federation (Fédération Mondiale du Jeu de Dames, FMJD) since 7 October 2017. On 3 July it will become clear whether I can continue in this role with your support. On the proposal of the Estonian Draughts Federation I have decided to run for a second term, because there is still much that I wish to do with our federations and draughts players around the world to develop our field of sport.

I thank you all for the support you have shown so far – by working together we have already achieved a great deal, despite the challenging times. In particular I would like to thank **Harry Otten**, **Yuriy Chertok**, **Aare Harak**, **Daniele Macali**, **Madame Chen Zelan** and **Jacek Pawlicki**, who as volunteers have gone to great lengths to promote draughts globally. This has taken up much of their time, but it is extremely gratifying to see that our sport is starting to find its place among much bigger sporting fields – smaller than them, true, but every bit their equal. By working together we have managed to forge excellent relations with other fields of mind sport. IMSA has united us and will keep us all together going forward.



FMJD General Secretary **Yuriy Chertok** at the 2019 GA in Izmir (Turkey)

I am pleased that Harry, Yuriy and Aare are willing to remain on the management board alongside me, as this will ensure continuity and mean we can carry on working without interruption or delays. However, there will be some new faces on the management board, as neither Madame **Chen Zelan** nor **Daniele Macali** are able to continue in their positions.

Hereunder I will provide an overview of what we have achieved together in the last three-and-a-half years.

I would like to thank the Estonian Draughts Federation for its organisation (with the support of the Estonian state, the City of Tallinn and sponsors) of the World Championships in Tallinn twice in that time – in both 2017 and 2021. The federation has invested almost 350,000 euros in global draughts during that period, the majority of which has contributed to the organisation of the two tournaments. Moreover, the federation also funded the FMJD's 'makeover' – the development of its new logo and corporate identity – which we considered very important and which was approved at the last GA in Izmir, Turkey.

Circumstances over the last 18 months have been complicated due to coronavirus. Many competitions have had to be cancelled and stress levels have generally been high. That is a great shame. I hope we will soon be able to get back to normal life and enjoy being in one another's company again, playing (and winning!) the game we all love.



GA in Tallinn on 7 October 2017

Organisation of championships

Up until last spring we organised all of the major championships on our competition calendar. The 2017 World Championships for both male and female players were held in Tallinn.



2017 World Championship medal winners (male players) in Tallinn



2017 World Championship medal winners (female players) in Tallinn

The women's World Championships in 2019 took place in Yakutsk, the capital of the Federal Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in Russia. The chief organiser was former FMJD president **Vladimir Ptitsin**. The men's World Championships were held in Yamoussoukro, the capital of Côte d'Ivoire.



Women's World Championships in Yakutsk in 2019



Former FMJD president **Vladimir Ptitsin** and main referee **Airat Nurgaziyev** at the World Championships Women in Yakutsk in 2019



Men's World Championships in Yamoussoukro in 2019. Pictured centre: main referee **Frank Teer**



GMI-s **Guntis Valneris** and **Alexei Chizhov** at the opening of the 2019 World Championships in Yamoussoukro



Aleksandr Georgijev, who was declared World Champion in Yamoussoukro (Côte d'Ivoire) in 2019



The youngest and oldest players at the women's World Championships in Yakutsk in 2019

The Women's World Championship Match which was meant to have taken place last year was finally held in the Polish capital Warsaw in April-May 2021. Men's World Championship Match has yet to be organised due to coronavirus restrictions. We hope to organise it during the second half of this year.



Natalia Sadowska and **Tamara Tansykkuzhina** during their World Championship Match in Warsaw in 2021. Tansykkuzhina would go on to take the crown once again.

Cooperation with federations

The FMJD currently has **79** member federations. New members continue to join, with the most recent hailing from the Basque region in Spain. Increasing our membership base is one of the FMJD's priorities. As things stand, **35-40** member federations have paid all of their membership fees and have voting rights as at **1 June**. Not all of our members are active or send players to take part in tournaments.

One of the most important reasons behind new member countries emerging is that draughts players are emigrating to countries where the sport is not otherwise played and they have started teaching locals (primarily children) how to play the game. A number of countries have become active for this very reason: they boast a large number of young players with good prospects.

However, there remain few federations which are willing and/or able to take on the financial burden of organising major championships. This requires effective cooperation with the state and local governments in the country in question to ensure that there is interest in supporting the sport. Organisational abilities are also needed, since arranging events demands a great deal of effort.



Women's World Championships in Yakutsk in June 2019: Interlude ahead of the grandmasters' game

Among the major contributors to the sport I should highlight China, which has done significant work in developing big tournaments and mind sports in general. The country has also contributed much to the financing of draughts and in providing material support for mind sports.



IMSA Elite Mind Games in Huai'an (China) in 2017





IMSA Elite Mind Games 2017



FMJD Director of International Relations and IMSA Vice-President **Harry Otten**, FMJD President from 2009-2017



Men's World Championships in Yamoussoukro in 2019

The 2019 GA in Turkey was a success, but unfortunately we have been unable to meet face to face with the heads of many of our member federations due to coronavirus.



FMJD AGM in Izmir (Turkey) in 2019

I hope that as restrictions are lifted we will be able to talk more to find additional host countries and come up with ideas that will help popularise our sport. The more coverage our field gets, the easier it will be to find sponsors and raise the overall level of the sport.



Draughts club in Abidjan, 2019

Work in international sports circles

The FMJD is a member of the Alliance of Independent recognised Members of Sport (AIMS) and the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF). We are petitioning to be recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), for which we have done a lot of hard work. Coronavirus has drawn the attention of the IOC elsewhere, but we hope to gain the committee's recognition before long. We have done all of our homework to make sure this happens.



FIDE President **Arkady Dvorkovich**, IMSA President Madame **Zelan Chen** and IMSA Chief Secretary **Geoffrey Borg** on the Gold Coast (Australia) in 2019. SportAccord 2019 was the most recent event in the series to have taken place.

The FMJD is also a member of WADA, which is why doping checks and sports ethics are so important to us. Although both of these issues are somewhat different in the world of mind sports, I would like to shine the spotlight on the head of our medical committee **Renato Capurro**, who has worked hard not only to ensure that the FMJD follows all WADA rules and that all preparations have been made to fulfil them, but that we are also recognised and accepted by WADA for doing so.



EDC President **Carlo Bordini** and the FMJD's Head of Medical Committee **Renato Capurro** at the GA in Izmir (Turkey) in 2019



GAISF President **Raffaele Chiulli**, a representative of the organisers, **Janek Mäggi**, **Harry Otten** and former UN Secretary-General **Ban Ki-moon** at the 2019 GAISF GA on the Gold Coast (Australia)

The FMJD's corporate image and reputation

At the FMJD's most recent AGM, held in Turkey in autumn 2019, the federation approved its new corporate identity. The way the federation presents itself visually is important in international work, where we are aiming to achieve a level of recognition similar to that of other fields of sport.

FMJD

FÉDÉRATION MONDIALE DU JEU DE DAMES

Official new medals



The FMJD's reputation among the IOC and international sports organisations is very good. We also belong to the International Mind Sports Association (IMSA, http://www.imsaworld.com/wp), which has seen an increase from five members (bridge, chess, draughts, go and xiangqi) to seven with the inclusion of the Mahjong International League (in 2017) and the Federation of Card Games (in 2018). IMSA's president is Madame **Zelan Chen**, who to date has also served as the FMJD's vice-president.

IMSA's vice-president is Harry Otten, and I myself are members of IMSA's management board. IMSA's executive director is **Geoffrey Borg** from Malta, a strong supporter of draughts. IMSA is a key partner to the FMJD and plays a very important role in boosting the integration of draughts with other fields of mind sports.

The FMJD enjoys excellent opportunities to communicate with other sub-federations and their heads via SportAccord. As president I have taken part in all of the SportAccord events that have taken place during my time in office: in Lausanne in Switzerland, in the Thai capital Bangkok and on Australia's Gold Coast. Last year's SportAccord event, which was to have been held in Beijing in China, was unfortunately cancelled due to coronavirus.

The work of the FMJD's management board

To date, the management board of the FMJD has worked on a voluntary basis. This has set limits on how much time the members of the board can dedicate to their work alongside their regular jobs. Since our field is so small, we have no full-time employees on salary. The management board are simply motivated by their love for draughts and their desire to do something for the sport.

Nevertheless, the board's workload has been substantial, and all of its members have done their best to develop the field, to enable tournaments to be organised and to ensure good relations with the international sports community.

For the most part, management board meetings have been held once a quarter. The majority of the board's work has been done through the daily exchange of e-mails. The board members have not come together in person in the last 18 months: instead they have met virtually, which has proven to be an effective way of discussing key issues and making decisions.

Here I would like to thank **Rimma Tsertok**, who has been taking care of the FMJD's office and paperwork and made a very good job of it. Ensuring that everything is in order behind the scenes is as much the responsibility of the management board as organising championships, developing regulations, promoting the field and integrating with the international sports community. Rimma has shown great dedication in this regard.



Carlo Bordini from Italy was elected as the new president of the European Draughts Confederation (EDC) in 2019. Pictured are three EDC presidents: **Janek Mäggi** (2007-2017, Estonia), **Ingrida Drukteinyte** (2017-2019, Lithuania) and **Carlo Bordini**. The FMJD and the EDC work closely together.

Online draughts – a new section

The pandemic has led to the explosive growth of online draughts. For this reason the FMJD has established an online section, headed up by **Alexander Kandaurov.** A lot of work remains to be done in developing this section, but the first important steps have been taken.

Of course, this does not mean that face-to-face games will disappear: rather that the online version will create new opportunities, especially for those whose ability to travel and compete is limited.

Our HQ – Paul Keres Chess House

The offices of the Estonian Draughts Association on Vene Street in Tallinn have also served as the physical headquarters of the FMJD since 7 October 2017. Known as Paul Keres Chess House, the venue is familiar to draughts players around the world, since it has hosted numerous international tournaments, including the 2017 World Championships.

The building is of great symbolic value, embodying and passing on the best traditions of draughts both in Estonia and globally. The headquarters are linked to the country of origin of the sitting president of the FMJD, which is otherwise legally based in the Netherlands.



The headquarters of the FMJD in Tallinn (2017-present)

Summary

The next four years, which the new management board will seek your assent to preside over, will bring with them a number of challenges it may not prove all that easy to face.

• Our finances have taken a significant hit due to coronavirus: with tournaments being cancelled, we lack permanent and sufficient cash flow. We need life to return to normal as quickly as possible.

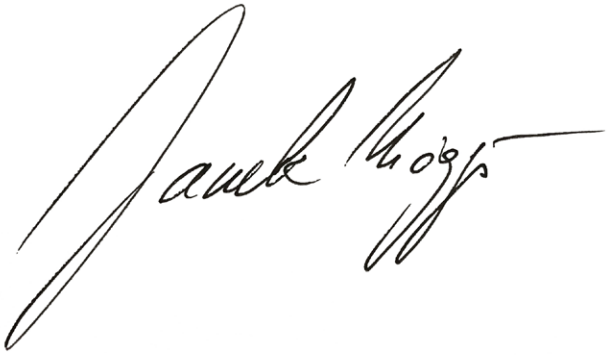
• We need the recognition of the IOC, which will enable many sub-federations to obtain more funding and thereby organise tournaments in their own countries.

• We need new members – because the more active members we have, the more support we will be able to obtain from the international sports community, from sponsors, from the countries our members are based in and from local governments.

• We need strong tournament organisers who are able to find the funding and the people they need to popularise and gain more coverage for the field, thereby cementing draughts' place not just as a mind sport, but also as a fully fledged member of the global sports community.

• We need to foster cooperation between confederations so that championships are held to the same level on different continents.

Regards,



Janek Mäggi
FMJD President