

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Corinthia Hotel, Budapest, Hungary

28th April 2019

Minutes

1. Welcome and Opening

1.1 President's opening remarks

The ITTF President, Mr Thomas Weikert, welcomed everyone and reflected on the excellent development of the World Championships so far.

1.2 Roll call

Thomas Weikert	ITTF President
Khalil Al-Mohannadi	Deputy President
Petra Sörling	Executive Vice-President
Bruce Burton	Executive Vice-President
Masahiro Maehara	Executive Vice-President
Alaa Meshref	Executive Vice-President
James Morris	Executive Vice-President
Nestor Tenca	Executive Vice-President
Zoran Primorac	Athletes Commission Chair
Ryu Seungmin	IOC Member
In attendance	
Steve Dainton	CEO
Raul Calin	Secretary General
Frank Ji	Special advisor to the President
Iulia Necula	Executive Assistant to the CEO
Claudia Vatheuer	Assistant to the President
Michael Brown	CFO
Matt Pound	Marketing Director
Vicky Eleftheriade	Competition Director
Mounir Bessah	Head of WTTC
Apologies	
Shi Zhihao	Executive Vice-President

1.3 Adoption of the agenda

The Agenda was adopted by the EC with the following additions:

- 7.1 Reports for the Women Commissioner proposal
- 7.2 AGM & BoD protocol
- 7.3 Field of Play
- 7.4 Education

2. Minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the previous meeting (20th April 2019)

The adoption of the minutes of the previous meetings will be deferred to the next EC meeting.

2.2 Business arising from the Minutes

The Secretary General, Mr Raul Calin, informed that no other business arose from the Minutes other than the ones included in the Agenda.

3. **CEO Update**

3.1 Commercial tender update

The ITTF Marketing Director, Mr Matt Pound, updated the EC on the ongoing process, and reported that during the Expression of Interest phase, a total of forty companies and agencies, from different continents, expressed their interest for the Commercial Tender. All of them received a detailed Commercial Tender document, containing detailed information about the commercial opportunities, and they were offered the possibility to attend the WTTTC in Budapest and meet with the ITTF Marketing Staff / Deloitte representatives.

Mr Pound informed that representatives of nine companies accepted the offer and travelled to Budapest, which shows the interest created and how the process has stimulated the market. Mr Pound informed that the meetings were very positive and exciting and hopefully this process will result into a good final outcome.

Mr Pound explained the timelines and deadlines for the different phases of the Commercial Tender, as well as other practicalities related to the bidding process and that regular updates would be sent to the EC.

Mr Pound also updated the EC on the Future of ITTF Commercial rights workshop held on 21st April and reported that the future plans in relations to the WTT and future commercial rights were presented to everyone in a clear and transparent way.

3.2 Home of Table Tennis update

In addition to what was already mentioned in the first EC meeting in Budapest, the CEO suggested to work on an economic impact study and an overall estimation of such project.

The Special advisor to the President, Mr Frank Ji, updated the EC on the positive meeting that he helped organise in China on 10th - 12th April, with the Jilin Province authorities. Mr Ji stated that the Jilin Province representatives are well connected with the Chinese Government and that they are ready and very keen to collaborate with the ITTF at different levels.

Mr Ji suggested to schedule a meeting between the Jilin Province representatives and the ITTF President, Mr Thomas Weikert, during their trip to Europe, at the end of May, and discuss potential collaboration.

The EC suggested a presentation of the detailed HoTT tender process and an update of the timelines of each of the phases to be published as soon as possible.

3.3 Pan American confederation update

The EVP, Mr Nestor Tenca, updated the EC on the ongoing process in the establishment of the Pan American confederation.

Mr Tenca informed that the process is moving forward, and a draft of the Constitution is being circulated among the LATTU and NATTU members and representatives and Mr Burton. Mr Tenca stated that the draft is open for feedback and that the Foundational General Assembly will be held in June, during the Pan American Junior Championships to be held in Cancun, Mexico.

Mr Burton noted that the current draft addresses a number of issues and concerns that were raised during this long process and felt more encouraged. Mr Burton expected further discussions in the following weeks, and he was looking forward for the Foundational General Assembly in Cancun.

4. Athletes' Commission

4.1 World Tour conditions

As agreed at the first EC meeting in Budapest, Mr Primorac presented the proposals/request on behalf of the Athletes Commission and stated that it was very important to take decisions that show that the ITTF is taking care of the players, which are the core of our sport.

4.1.1 Practice schedule

The AC Chair explained the issues of practice during the events, as many players hardly gain any access to a warm-up table before their respective matches and requested that the Competition Managers need to ensure the implementation of a warm-up schedule for the entire event.

The EC decided that the Competition Department need to ensure the implementation of a warm-up schedule during the ITTF events.

4.1.2 Food quality / Players' Lounge

The AC Chair noted that the conditions in the players' lounge have been a reason of complaint for the athletes in the last years and suggested that the Competition Department should have a more pro-active communication with the LOC's, ensuring the availability of warm meals (i.e. pasta and/or rice) at the players' lounge, and include a variety of food options (vegetarian, halal, gluten free, etc) in the overall event menu.

The EC supported this recommendation.

The EC decided that the Competition Department should have a more pro-active communication with LOC and ensure the availability of warm meals (i.e. pasta and/or rice) at the players' lounge and include a variety of food options (vegetarian, halal, gluten free, etc) in the overall event menu.

4.1.3 Size of the main draws

The AC Chair stated that the majority of Athletes and AC members fully support the idea of increasing the size of the main draw of the WT events from 32 player to 64 players. The Competition Director, Mrs Vicky Eleftheriade, presented the potential playing schedule and stated that the 64-player main draw scenario is currently not a feasible option with the existing World Tour event format.

The CEO noted that this aspect might be very difficult to solve this year as all events are confirmed and preparations ongoing and suggested to look on how to increase the number of days and rounds without affecting the standard and quality of the events from 2020.

Mrs Sörling recommended to make a financial study and consider the economic impact of such an action and defer any decision related to this point to the next meeting.

The CEO stated that the proposed schedule will imply at least two extra days for the WT as it's important to take into consideration the entire structure. Mr Dainton agreed with Mrs Sörling on working in a financial study and economic report. Mr Dainton also invited Mr Zoran Primorac and Mr Ryu Seungmin to the ITTF office in Singapore in order to better

understand the event structure and the different aspects in terms of Finances, Competition, Marketing, etc.

The EC acknowledged and understands the importance of this issue but there are some concerns in regard to the organizers' possibilities to deliver. It was explained that such decision will require extra investment from the ITTF in order to build capacity, improve the events and increase the prize money.

4.1.4 Prize money distribution

The AC Chair talked about the financial investments that players have to do to cover their participation in events throughout the year and explained that, for most of the them, the only motivation to play the World Tour is the WR and the Olympic Qualification.

Mr Primorac stated that most of the players gain their income from the clubs' competitions and that it is essential to guarantee a minimum prize money for the first round in the World Tour events that will at least cover the participation costs (\$1000 USD). Mr Primorac suggested the re-distribution of the prize money, by deducting from the top positions, increasing with these capped amounts the prize money for the earlier rounds of the competitions.

The CEO didn't agree with the deduction of the prize money correspondent for the top positions but suggested to invest extra funds into the lower tier of the competitions and create a higher value base.

The Special Advisor to the President, Mr Frank Ji, highlighted that the top players should be considered stars, therefore it is essential to ensure such status by offering a decent prize money. Mr Ji stated that it not recommendable to deduct money from the top tier and it is necessary to find an alternative way to increase the prize money for the lower tier of competition.

The EC agreed that the CFO, Mr Michael Brown, will do the necessary calculations and the results of such a report will be presented in the next EC meeting.

4.1.5 Hospitality packages prices

The AC Chair informed that the players are complaining about the prices of the different events' hospitality packages and explained that the value doesn't represent the quality of services provided. On behalf of the AC, he proposed to fix a standard price for hospitality package including a four stars hotel with the three meals for a maximum price of 150 EUR (165 USD) in single room and 120 EUR (135 USD) in a double room.

The Deputy President, Mr Khalil Al-Mohannadi, indicated that with over 25 years of experience in hosting World Tour Qatar Open, he had to object such a proposal and explained the reality from the Local Organizers perspective and the impact of the hospitality costs on the event budget.

Mr Al-Mohannadi also stated that the WT Platinum Event should have the highest standard and that there should be a minimum requirement of 5* Hotels Hospitality packages.

Mr Al-Mohannadi also noted that given the current situation and with all these restrictions, probably no National Association would be willing to host and organize a WT event.

The CEO insisted on his recommendation to the AC Chair on 4.1.3 to travel to Singapore Offices and interact with the different departments (Competition, Marketing, Finances etc.) to better see the overall situation.

4.2 Tournament Directives implementation

The EC decided that the Competition Department has to be stricter in regard to the Tournament Directives implementations.

4.3 World Tour grand Finals XD host quota

The AC Chair explained that the host association of the 2019 World Tour Grand Finals would have an excessive advantage if granted a host quota in the Mixed Doubles event being this a qualifying event for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games (8 entries and 4 places for Tokyo being disputed).

The EC considered that the host association of the 2019 World Tour Grand Finals should not be granted a host quota in the Mixed Doubles events.

20190428-EC-01

The Executive Committee decided that the host association of the 2019 World Tour Grand Finals will not be granted with a host quota for Mixed Doubles.

5. Operations Program

5.1 AGM report

The President congratulated everyone for the professionalism showed during the AGM/BoD meetings and expressed his satisfaction regarding the success of the propositions presented on behalf of the EC.

The Secretary General congratulated the ITTF EC for having 14 out of 14 of their proposals passed by the AGM and BOD. The CEO also thanked the EC for their strong work to defend the propositions and resolutions prior to the meetings to ensure they all passed.

In order to become even more professional, Mr Dainton recommended to invite external experts to present during the AGM. Mr Dainton suggested that preparations regarding the topics to be presented should be planned well in advance and guests to be invited should be identified.

Several practicalities, including a more professional voting system, were discussed among the EC members.

Following the 2019 Annual General Meeting decision about IOC members becoming ITTF EC members, the EC should consider Mr Ryu Seungmin, as member.

20190428-EC-02

The Executive Committee accepted the IOC member, Mr Ryu Seungmin, as ITTF Executive Committee member.

5.2 OPC / DCC report

The EC decided to reconsider the frequency of the OPC/DCC meetings as part of the Governance review project.

5.3 BoD Report

The Secretary General congratulated the EC for the success of the propositions presented during the BoD and for contributing in this way to the improvement of the sport. Given this

year's experience of high number of propositions and reforms, Mr Calin recommended a more robust preparation for future meetings.

5.4 Committees 2020 and beyond.

The Secretary General indicated that the Nominations Committee will have to be elected in 2020 and that prior to the AGM in Busan, the ITTF will have to plan the future committees, also as part of the Governance review project.

5.5 Finances

5.5.1 Remuneration Panel

The CFO, Mr Michael Brown, informed that one of the auditor's recommendation was to formalise the creation of the Remuneration Panel, which will be given the mandate to determine the honorariums and/or salaries for elected officials and senior staff.

The initial draft of the Terms and Reference of the Remuneration Panel will be circulated before the next EC Meeting.

The EC agreed to the creation of the Remuneration Panel.

20190428-EC-03

[The Executive Committee agreed to the creation of the Remuneration Panel.](#)

5.5.2 Bank Accounts

The CFO explained the necessity of opening a new bank account that will be mainly used for receiving credit cards payments online and, as per the Finance Policy, requested the approval of the EC.

20190428-EC-04

[The Executive Committee approved the opening of a new bank account that will be used mainly for receiving credit card payments.](#)

5.5.3 Approval workflow

The CFO updated the EC on the formalities related to the registration of the ITTF in the Chamber of Commerce in Switzerland and requested the EC to approve an updated signatory chart, to ensure the ITTF is in line with the Chamber of Commerce requirements.

The EC approved the new signatory chart to be in line with the Chamber of Commerce requirements, as follows:

Elected officials already registered in the Chamber of Commerce in Switzerland:

Thomas Weikert. ITTF President
Petra Sörling. ITTF Executive Vice-President of Finances and Europe Relations

Professional Staff already registered in the Chamber of Commerce in Switzerland:

Raul Calin. ITTF Secretary General

Elected officials to be registered as signatories at the Chamber of Commerce in Switzerland:

Khalil Al-Mohannadi. ITTF Deputy President and Asia Relations (addition)
Alaa Meshref. ITTF Executive Vice-President – Africa Relations (addition)
Nestor Tenca. ITTF Executive Vice-President – Latin America Relations (addition)
Bruce Burton. ITTF Executive Vice-President – North America Relations (addition)
James Morris. ITTF Executive Vice-President – Oceania Relations (addition)

Professional Staff to be registered as signatories at the Chamber of Commerce in Switzerland:

Stephen Dainton. ITTF CEO
Michael Brown. ITTF CFO
Polona Cehovin. ITTF High Performance and Development Director
Evrydiki Eleftheriadi. ITTF Competition Director
Matt Pound. ITTF Marketing Director

20190428-EC-05

The Executive Committee approved the new signatory chart to be in line with the Chamber of Commerce requirements.

The EC confirmed the minutes of the ITTF Asia Pacific Ltd AGM, and in doing so endorsed a change in auditor, and agreed to accept Mr Zoran Primorac as a member of the organization.

20190428-EC-06

The Executive Committee approved the change of auditors to Mazars SA in the International Table Tennis Federation Asia Pacific Ltd.

5.6 Advanced Referee Project update

The EVP, Mr Bruce Burton, updated the EC on the 2nd Advanced Referee Project workshop held from 22nd to 24th March, where eight additional Referees have been qualified.

Mr Burton reminded that he will cease in his duty as EVP in charge of the URC following the conclusion of the World Championships in Budapest and recommended to the EC to endorse Mr Richard Scruton as the facilitator of the Advanced Referee Project.

20190428-EC-07

The Executive Committee decided to endorse Mr Richard Scruton as the new facilitator of the Advanced Referee Project.

5.7 Equipment updates

5.7.1 Ball quality

The Equipment Manager, Mrs Claudia Herweg, indicated that there were some issues with the ball quality at the Japan Open (DHS) and Qatar Open (DHS), but mentioned that there was no problem with the balls at the 2019 WTTC in Budapest. (Butterfly).

Mrs Herweg pointed out that the main issue is the inconsistency of the balls' quality and highlighted the necessity to discuss with the ball suppliers. Ms Herweg recommended to

increase the random testing and to ensure proper quality controls for the ITTF events, but at the same time, to determine the most appropriate testing procedure.

The Equipment Manager informed that she would like to personally collect the balls intended to be used for Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and will carefully check the quality before delivering them to the event.

5.7.2 Rubber dismantling testing

The Equipment Manager updated the EC on the rubber dismantling testing pilot phase and explained that the reason for doing it is to guarantee fairness among the players and to ensure that the rubbers are according to the regulations.

Mrs Herweg made a demonstration of the testing procedure using the measurement device and mentioned that during the pilot phase there will be no consequences for any of the players, and the rubbers will be returned to the players immediately after the testing.

Mrs Herweg mentioned that in other sports it was absolutely normal for the Athletes to hand their equipment for testing, therefore it should be no issue in that regard. She also noted that the testing will be mandatory for the selected players, and all results will be kept internally, collecting data to be used for information purposes.

Dr Alaa Meshref stressed that the current measurement methods should be accurate.

The Equipment Manager talked about the stages and timelines of the pilot phase (until 31st December 2019) and noted that the results will be presented during the last EC meeting of the year.

Mr Herweg suggested the following selection of events for Rubber dismantling testing:

- 2019 ITTF Challenge, Croatia Open
- 2019 ITTF Golden Series, Hong Kong Cadet & Junior Open
- 2019 Team World Cup in Tokyo

The Equipment Manager clarified that the event list is open for revisions and the report of the first event might determine the direction of the testing. Ms Herweg highlighted that there will be no rule change leading up to Tokyo 2020, ensuring that any new racket control rule will be implemented only after the Olympic Games.

The EC suggested that the Equipment Department should choose the next event as part of this project.

5.7.3 Equipment professionalization

The Equipment Manager updated the EC on the ideas discussed with the CEO to continue the professionalization of the Equipment management within the ITTF.

The CEO then proposed to the EC to open a new office in Cologne, Germany and to start discussions with Mrs Emese Barsai to be relocated to Cologne, so she can work closely with Mrs Claudia Herweg in the new offices. At the same time, the CEO announced that a new position within the department will be open for hiring in the coming months.

20190428-EC-08

The Executive Committee approved the establishment of a new office in Cologne to continue the professionalization of the Equipment management in the ITTF.

5.8 CAS Appeal

The President updated the EC on the CAS appeal, informing about the full case brief that was received in the previous days. Details of the case were discussed among the EC members. Mr Weikert reported that the deadline for a response was extended and recommended to follow the advice of the ITTF lawyer, Mr Antonio Rigozzi.

Mr Thomas Weikert, reminded everyone about the statement made during the AGM, and noted that the option of a "without prejudice" meeting with predefined topics and guidelines is still available.

6. Competition Program

6.1 World Championships Update

The Head of WTTC, Mr Mounir Bessah, updated the EC on the WTTC progress, reporting some issues at the beginning of the event, due to the new Online Entry System.

Mr Bessah noted a successful rate of Schengen visa approvals which led to 103 participating countries and 137 country representatives at the AGM.

Mr Bessah expressed his satisfaction with regards to the 2021 reform, explaining that it is extremely difficult to implement an acceptable playing schedule for players under the current format. He then mentioned the tough working schedule with very long days and very short nights.

He also highlighted the positive effects of the World Ranking and its effects on the Event Draw.

The Deputy President, Mr Khalil Al-Mohannadi, congratulated everyone for an excellent WTTC but made an observation about the VIP accredited seats which were not representing the standard that such status requires. Mr Al-Mohannadi stressed that it is very important to implement a higher standard for VIP and VIP services at the 2020 WTTC in Busan, and of course even excel more in this area from 2021 onwards.

The AC Chair, Mr Zoran Primorac, stated that the players were happy with the playing and training conditions, and the general feeling was positive. Mr Primorac mentioned that the only issue was the playing schedule in the first days.

Mr Dainton explained that the reason for most of the problems is the fact that the WTTC is a very condensed event with a huge number of matches (over 800) scheduled in such a short period of time (8 days). Mr Dainton noted that the characteristic and requirements of such an event limit the organizers capabilities.

Mr Dainton added that in the future, some of the issues will be solved due to the new WTTC, system but admitted that there are still a lot of areas which the ITTF does not currently control, and this makes it more difficult to find solutions.

6.2 Future World Championships

The CEO mentioned the preliminary meetings held already with the bid winners of 2021 World Championships (Houston) and 2022 (Chengdu).

Mr Dainton again mentioned the great opportunity to host the WTTC in a new potential market for the first time since 1939.

6.3 Team World Cup

The CEO updated the EC on the classification criteria for the 2019 Team World Cup and reminded them of the case of the Unified Korea Team, that won the bronze medal at the 2018 WTTC Halmstad.

Following the discussions regarding the current situation between the two countries, Mr Dainton recommended that in the case of a non-successful registration as a Unified Korea team by the time of the given deadline, the members of the teams should be considered as two separate Associations.

20190428-EC-09

The Executive Committee decided that in the case of an unsuccessful registration on a Unified Korea team by the time of the given deadline, the two teams will be considered two separated National Associations.

7. Any other business.

7.1 Gender Commissioner proposal.

Mrs Sörling, updated the EC on the Gender Commissioner proposal about forming a Women Working Group.

Following several meetings held by the ITTF Gender Commissioner, Mrs Hajera Kajee, with the Athletes Commission and with the ITTF Foundation Staff, Mrs Kajee expressed to Mrs Sörling her desire to create a Women Working Group.

Mrs Sörling suggested that instead of a traditional committee, which in the past existed but didn't generate the outcomes desired, perhaps it would be better to create a *Think-Tank* group that will exchange ideas on how to increase the women's participation in Table Tennis and recommended that someone from the HPD Staff could take the lead on this project.

20190428-EC-10

The Executive Committee agreed with the creation of the Women Working Group.

7.2 AGM & BoD protocol

Mr Morris recommended to establish a clear AGM voting protocol, and to define the roles of the delegates representing National Associations during the AGM.

7.3. Field of Play

Mr Maehara brought into attention some inconsistencies and technical errors in the sport presentation and related elements in field of play during the 2019 WTTC in Budapest. He insisted that ITTF should have more control on all the event operations and specially on the sport presentation and related elements in the field of play.

7.4 Education

It was discussed that more resources and effort need to go to the Education department in order to modernise the way our Education modules are delivered. The SG and CEO should meet with the Development Department and especially Mr. Ramon Ortega, to discuss and formulate a plan to ensure it.

8. Next EC meeting

To be decided in the following weeks.

9. Adjournment

Without further subjects, the meeting was adjourned on 28th April at 11:30.

Thomas Weikert
ITTF President

Date

Raul Calin
ITTF Secretary General

Date