

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

JW Qianxi Meeting Room 5-6, JW Marriott Hotel, Zhengzhou, China
12th December 2019

Minutes

1. Welcome and Opening

1.1 President's opening remarks

The ITTF President, Mr Thomas Weikert, welcomed the EC members in attendance thanking them for the earlier start of the meeting due to the different activities planned for the day. Mr Weikert praised the Star Awards Gala held the previous night and congratulated all those involved in the organisation.

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
Shi Zhihao	Executive Vice-President
Alaa Meshref	Executive Vice-President
James Morris	Executive Vice-President
Zoran Primorac	Athletes Commission Chair
In attendance	
Steve Dainton	CEO
Raul Calin	Secretary General
Matt Pound	Marketing Director - Only for points 7 and 8
Vicky Eleftheriade	Competition Director – Only for points 7 and 8
Iulia Necula	CEO's Office – Projects Director
Claudia Vatheuer	Assistant to the President
Apologies	
Nestor Tenca	Executive Vice-President
Ryu Seungmin	IOC Member

2. Minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the previous meeting (20th and 21st October 2019)

The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted with the only remark of Mr Burton, who indicated that he would like to have a clearer wording on the point 15.3 of those minutes. It was agreed due to the short time from the previous meeting to adjust that wording at the EC meeting in Delhi, India, in January 2020.

2.2 [Business arising from the Minutes](#)

Mrs Sörling suggested that as the EC meeting in Zhengzhou was called with relatively short time, it would be important to ensure a detailed follow-up of pending actions from the October 2019 Chengdu EC meeting at the Delhi EC meeting in January 2020.

3. **Adoption of the Agenda**

The Agenda was adopted with the following additions:

- 10.1 WADA decision on RUSADA
- 10.2 ITTF property in Renens

4. **CEO update**

4.1 [Home of Table Tennis](#)

The CEO summarized the process taken so far due to the already mentioned larger than expected expression of interest received.

Although the process was long, it was needed due to the size and scope of the project.

The CEO wanted to thank the Secretary General, Raul Calin, and the Chief Financial Officer, Michael Brown, for the work done on the project, explaining that the "Request for Proposals" document, which latest draft was circulated to the EC members, was of high quality, as requested by the Deputy President when the discussions about this project started.

Mrs Sörling mentioned that the level of the document was very high, and that indeed, the document would be very useful for the preparation of the ITTF Annual Report. Mrs Sörling also mentioned that the information provided for the cities interested to apply to be the future Home of Table Tennis would certainly be useful for other ITTF projects, as it was a very good self-evaluation of the current situation of the ITTF.

Mr Calin indicated that there was not much to add, but simply thanking the ITTF partners on this project, Hassell, the Studio the ITTF worked with, Deloitte, which helped in the key evaluation criteria and how to create awareness on the Return of Investment for potential applicants and Withers, helping as usually in the legal part of the documentation.

Mr Morris asked whether a competition venue / show court, should be part of the Home of Table Tennis building concept. Mr Dainton indicated that the RFP document includes minimum requirements or "must have" characteristics, optional requirements or "good to have", and optimal requirements or "great to have", which overall will be considered. With very different cities eventually applying, they will present different models and the document intends to be flexible in the options to consider, and whether having included in the facilities such show court concept, or in existing facilities in the surroundings.

Mr Al-Mohannadi praised the work made on the elaboration of the documentation saying he found it very professional, and indicating this concept is what is needed for the future of the ITTF Headquarters.

Not being further remarks on the document, Mr Weikert asked then the EC members to approve the tender document and to consider which persons should be part of the Selection Panel.

20191212-EC-01

The Executive Committee approved the Request for Proposals documentation for the Home of Table Tennis project and appointed Mr Ryu Seungmin, and Dr Alaa Meshref, from the Executive Committee, and Raul Calin and Michael Brown, from the staff, to be part of the Selection Panel, with the President and CEO as ex-officio members.

On the question from Mr Al-Mohannadi about timelines, Mr Calin indicated that the week following the EC meeting a video "teaser" will be released, together with an article on ITTF.com, and that the documents will be formally circulated on 15th January to the cities expressing interest.

Mr Weikert mentioned that taking into consideration the time needed for the cities to elaborate their application, and the fact that from March 2020 in Busan, the next AGM is only planned 15 months after, in Houston in June 2021, where there are scheduled elections, and eventually having also in mind the necessary Governance review it would be good to consider hosting an ITTF Extraordinary General Meeting in October or November 2020, where eventually the future Home of Table Tennis would be decided and eventually any necessary reforms to the ITTF Governance could be discussed by the membership.

Mr Calin endorsed the comments of the President, stressing that those two major issues would be ideally handled in a General Meeting not having elections.

On the question of Mrs Sörling about when the EGM could be held, it was agreed to come-up with proposed dates for Delhi EC Meeting in January 2020. Mr Weikert added that ideally the ITTF should ensure a place where VISAS are easy to be obtained for all delegates.

20191212-EC-02

The Executive Committee approved to propose to the Members at the Annual General Meeting in Busan to have an Extraordinary General Meeting at the end of the year, with two main topics to be considered: The Future Home of Table Tennis and the Governance Review. For this eventual EGM, dates should be identified and proposed as early as possible.

5. Athletes' Commission

Mr Primorac indicated that, as discussed at the last EC meeting in Chengdu, the Athletes Commission (AC) discussed who should be the most suitable member to join the World Ranking group as the second athlete, and it was agreed to nominate Mr Elsayed Lashin from Egypt.

Mr Primorac also requested the EC to consider submitting a proposition to the AGM in Busan in order to grant voting rights to the IOC Member who is member of the ITTF Executive Committee.

Mr Weikert indicated being fully in favour, and the next natural step after having included the IOC member in the EC at the last AGM in Budapest.

Dr Meshref asked about the prize money of the athlete Omar Assar at the African Cup 2018, and the particular situation where being the winner of the event, the regulations state that he should only receive his prize money after competing in the World Cup, what didn't happen following a suspension from the Egyptian Table Tennis Federation.

Mr Dainton indicated that the case was handled according to the existing regulations and that from January 2020, further agreements could be made, but that the ITTF EC should respect the decisions taken. Mr Weikert also suggested that, in any actions of misbehaviour, the EC should not be making any exceptions, as indeed, it was part of Mr Assar contract that he should observe proper behaviour.

Mr Primorac appreciated the possibility to have a future agreement with Mr Assar, indicating he has certainly learnt from the issue.

6. Operations

6.1 Finances

Mrs Sörling reported to the EC members about the most updated 2020 budget, which shows a very positive progress since Chengdu. Mr Dainton reported that in one hand cutting some costs and in the other hand the extra efforts from the marketing staff are helping to improve the finances and forecast for 2020 significantly.

Mrs Sörling also reported about the 2019 accounts being improving compared to the previous forecast, and mentioned that the two Singles World Cups being held in China and the Team World Cup in Japan, plus the World Tour Grand Finals in China, helped in closing new commercial agreements in the last sixty days, as those are the strongest markets for Table Tennis.

Mr Weikert highlighted that not only Asian, but also European companies were willing to be advertised at the World Tour Grand Finals, what was very good. In addition, Mr Weikert reported about ongoing conversations about the ITTF Museum in Shanghai with the CTTA and with the Shanghai Municipal and Local Government authorities.

6.2 Governance review

Mr Weikert did an introduction to the EC members on the current situation, where Withers has been assisting in the Governance review. With the current timelines, it is impossible to consider a new Constitution being presented for the ITTF AGM in Busan. Firstly, the EC should have time to study the analysis made by Withers and then the ITTF should seek the feedback of the Members before any further consideration. Mr Weikert asked Mr Calin to provide an overview of the work done so far.

Mr Calin referred to the initial decision at the EC meeting in Incheon (December 2018) to create a Working Group to work on the Governance review. This decision was followed by further actions in terms of the Working Group composition at the EC meeting in Bangkok (February 2019), meetings with Withers between May and September, the EC meeting in Chengdu (October 2019) with the firm declaration of Mr Al-Mohannadi on the necessity to deeply evaluate the ITTF Governing system, the IPC General Assembly held in October 2019 in Bonn, where the International Paralympic Committee presented the reforms they are proposing for their

Governing system and that was an interesting benchmarking to evaluate the current ITTF situation, and an initial survey circulated to the ITTF Members to have an initial idea of their feelings.

The general feedback from the Members is that the ITTF should work in the separation of the different powers (i.e. legislative, executive and judicial). In addition, with the ITTF Strategic Plan adopted in 2018, it is clear that the ITTF should reconsider whether the existing Committees and Commissions are still relevant today, or if there are needed different Committees, Working Groups, etc., taking into consideration the professionalisation experienced by the ITTF in the last 2 years.

Dr Meshref highlighted it was important to separate the powers and asked whether this type of reform is good to be made before or after the elections, to ensure there is no perception of the reforms being made with political interest.

Mr Weikert suggested the complexity of this process was one more reason to have an Extraordinary General Meeting at the end of 2020, although some changes needed are clear, like removing the judicial power from the Executive Committee.

Mrs Sörling, listening the different opinions, emphasised the necessity of changes. As example, Mrs Sörling mentioned the very good gender balance existing in terms of staff within the ITTF, however in terms of elected officials, the current EC has less than 10% of female representatives.

In terms of the concerns of Dr Meshref, Mrs Sörling suggested that her strong recommendation would be not having any Executive Committee member in the group finalising the Governance Reforms to be proposed, to avoid any perception of political influence in one or another sense and she would prefer to ensure as the CEO mentioned, just seeking the best governance model.

To conclude, Mr Calin suggested that in terms of timelines, he would like to suggest hosting a workshop on Governance in Busan, similarly to what was done in Halmstad in terms of Finances or in Budapest in terms of Commercial activities, and then following the workshop with a more detailed survey in April/May with the goal to have a more clear understanding of the Memberships views before circulating the agenda for the eventual Extraordinary General Meeting.

Mr Weikert felt it was a very good idea and suggested to agree on this plan.

Update on Policies

The Executive Committee noted the two policies presented for approval:

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy

And also, the Conflict of Interest declaration to be signed by all elected officials and staff.

20191212-EC-03

The Executive Committee approved to Conflict of Interest Policy and the Child Safeguarding Policy.

Mr Calin also mentioned that further policies are to be presented at the January EC meeting for adoption.

6.3 CAS Appeal

Mr Weikert made a short summary of the case of the suspension of the Honorary President, Mr Adham Sharara. Besides the correspondence between the parties and with CAS, which was circulated to the EC members already, Mr Weikert gave a brief update on the situation about the arbitration panel, where the member initially proposed by the ITTF passed away, and the replacement was not seen favourably by the appellant, due to the fact of being working in the same lawyer firm that handled the termination contract of Mrs Faragó, who is listed as witness by the appellant. For this reason, the ITTF was given another 10 days to propose a new arbitrator.

In terms of the proposed meeting for an eventual settlement of the case before reaching CAS, as decided in Chengdu, the ITTF lawyers offered up to eight different dates for meeting to the appellant, through their lawyer. The appellant refused the meetings wanting to impose some preconditions for such meeting, which were unacceptable.

Mr Dainton commented that the decision of the EC to propose a meeting to the appellant was made following the desire of a minority of members at the AGM and BoD. In this sense, the EC did a nice gesture, as there was no obligation to do so, and the EC members should feel comfortable. However, the reaction received from Mr Sharara through his lawyer is very, very disappointing, when the ITTF EC is opening the hand and the other party comes back with illogic demands, as if the reasons for which Mr Sharara was suspended never existed.

Mr Dainton indicated in the best interest of the ITTF family, Mr Dainton still believes the ITTF should remain open for a meeting, but of course without any illogic preconditions from the appellant party, as this also could be seen as a political action as the 2021 elections are getting closer, and the integrity of this EC could be jeopardized.

Dr Meshref indicated that offering the meeting was right however, the response of the appellant was not acceptable.

Dr Meshref suggested the proposal should not come from the ITTF, but the other party should re-consider their reaction to the offer to meet from the EC. In any case, the message to be conveyed should be that the EC still offers such meeting.

Mr Weikert agreed with Dr Meshref's view and commented that with the nomination of the new arbitrator in the coming days, is not realistic to think that CAS will keep the hearing dates on 13-15 January, but this is in any case a CAS's decision.

Mr Burton, Mrs Sörling and Mr Primorac agreed also with Dr Meshref's view.

20191212-EC-04

The Executive Committee decided not to accept the preconditions of Mr Sharara's lawyer for a potential meeting, however, to keep the door open if Mr Sharara reconsider his position. Alternatively, to proceed with the CAS case.

6.4 Anti-Doping Hearing Panel

Mr Calin reported on a meeting held in October together with Mr Weikert with Mr Brent Nowicki, Managing Counsel of the Anti-Doping Division of CAS, who offered their services.

As background, Mr Calin explained that since the decision of the EC in December 2016 in Doha, the ITTF had an anti-doping hearing panel composed by five persons that eventually never needed to meet, what is positive, as there were no cases to be handled in these three years.

With the recommendation also in the area of anti-doping to separate the powers, a first step was made in 2018 when the ITTF agreed to sign with the International Testing Agency (ITA) for them to handle the ITTF anti-doping programme implementation.

The next step required is now to ensure having an arbitration division, separated from the ITTF administration, and also from the ITA management of our anti-doping program, hence the recommendation to sign with the CAS ADD, which also has very competitive service fees.

20191212-EC-05

The Executive Committee decided to adopt the Anti-Doping Division of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS ADD) as the ITTF arbitration division to resolve anti-doping disputes as a first or sole instance.

7. Competitions

7.1 Paris 2024 Table Tennis Program

Mr Weikert gave an introduction on the work made by the working group created following the last OPC meeting in Budapest to deal with the Paris 2024 Olympic Program.

The EC noted a presentation of Mrs Eleftheriade on the outcome of the meeting, and also the letter received from the IOC, which outlines the principles and key objectives for any eventual events to be added to Paris 2024 programme.

The EC noted the importance to keep any proposals within a range of athletes, officials, sport facilities and in general requirements that would not support a burden for the Organises, plus the importance of having "proven" events which the IF's have already in their own competitions calendar.

Based on the analysis of the IOC documents and the meeting discussions, the EC proposal to the ITTF OPC first and to the IOC later, would be to include the Men's and Women's Doubles,

for what the ITTF could consider shortening the matches, either in number of Games, or in number of Points per Game, plus also considering introducing changes to the regulations, i.e. having the Games ending when the player or pair reaches eleven points, without a difference of two points.

Mr Weikert added that the ITTF should explore all possibilities within these seven events, and eventually checking whether an event could finish within one day.

Mrs Sörling and Mr Primorac praised the initial work, and Mr Primorac suggested to circulate these proposals to the Athletes a.s.a.p., so eventually having their feedback before the meeting in Delhi, then once discussed, formalizing as EC proposal and circulating it to the OPC and in turn, to the IOC.

Mr Calin indicated that the deadline to present the ITTF proposal to the IOC is 28th February 2020.

8. Marketing & Promotion

The EC noted a report from Mr Pound on the Marketing and Promotion areas of the ITTF in the last two months.

Following the meeting in Chengdu, World Table Tennis (WTT) is finalising the cooperation agreement with the preferred partner (from the Tender Process) together with Withers. The process takes time because it has to be done properly, but significant progress has been made. In terms of sponsorships, the ITTF had a very good end of the year, and certainly having the Men's World Cup, Women's World Cup and World Tour Grand Finals in China and Japan helped improving the figures.

For 2021, there are good conversations with a North American company for being the eventual title sponsor, what shows the importance of bringing the World Championships to North America for the first time.

Last but not least, in terms of Promotion, Mr Pound reported on the fantastic event the previous night, the Star Awards. An event in which the Marketing and Promotion staff worked very hard, but that is showing results, as every year is getting is growing and becoming more valuable.

Mr Weikert thanked and congratulated Mr Pound and his Marketing a Promotion staff, and the same he did with Mrs Eleftheriade and the Competition staff for presenting these events in such high level.

9. ITTF One hundred years celebration in 2026 ¹

As introduction, Mr Dainton suggested that taking into consideration the foundation of the ITTF in 1926 in England, and following the idea of the Deputy President, Mr Al-Mohannadi, when celebrating the 90 years anniversary of the ITTF in Doha in 2016, a small working group has started to discuss what actions could be made to ensure a proper celebration of the first ITTF centenary.

One of the ideas being considered would be bringing the World Championships 2026 to England, eventually to London, what would require a decision from the Annual General Meeting.

¹ This presentation was made in the afternoon, during the meeting of the EC with the Continental Presidents.

Mr Al-Mohannadi added that even if it may be perceived to be too early, time goes fast, and it is important to start preparing properly whichever activities the ITTF wants to carry on of its 100 years celebration.

On behalf of ETTF, its Chair, Mrs Sandra Deaton, thanked the opportunity to attend the Star Awards and to be able to present ETTA's ideas for the 100 years celebrations of the ITTF to the EC and to the Continental Presidents.

The ETTA hopes these celebrations can be bring to England, especially in these times in which ETTA has improved in terms of performance, particularly of its Men's Team, and also in terms of Organisation of Events, with the Team World Cup successfully held in London in 2018, following the Olympic Games in 2012.

The EC noted also a visual presentation of Mrs Sara Sutcliffe, ETTA CEO, including the foreseen methods of funding for the activities. It is expected to receive support from the City of London, from UK Sport and other entities. Mrs Sutcliffe explained ETTA's vision to make an inclusive celebration, including a Para Event within the activities.

In terms of proposed venue, the Wembley Arena, used at the 1954 WTTC, and also as the Badminton venue for the London 2012 Olympic Games, has been identified as the preferred option.

The EC also noted the report from Mrs Sutcliffe about the Major Events Strategy which aims to transform England to be a regular host of international events. In the opinion of Mrs Sutcliffe, this strategy fits very well on the overall plans, as ETTA would not like just to host the ITTF 2026 World Championships but aims to become a regular organiser of table tennis events.

In that sense, ETTA would be pleased to work together with World Table Tennis and the strategic partner to work in an innovative joint venture, investing together and creating assets. The plan could eventually start with some Challenge, Challenge + events, progressing through World Tours and reaching the World Championships in 2026.

The plan would not only involve England but Great Britain in general, organising events around other UK territories and creating momentum on the lead to 2026. On that point, Mrs Sutcliffe reinforced the idea of hosting "not just" the ITTF 2026 World Championships, but a true celebration of the 100 years of the ITTF, hosting eventually a Para Event, a TTX Festival, an ITTF Gala Dinner, etc., eventually bringing the World Veterans Championships also to London.

Mr Weikert praised the strategy outlined in the presentation of Mrs Deaton and Mrs Sutcliffe and Mr Dainton suggested that as the next step, a presentation could be made in Busan at the ITTF AGM, purely as "information" and then at the AGM in 2021, the ITTF could eventually ask the Members if they agree to allocate the ITTF 2026 World Championships to London, what would provide a five years lead for preparations.

10. Any other business

10.1 [WADA decision on RUSADA](#)

Mr Calin updated the EC members on the WADA Compliance and Review Committee (WADA CRC) recommendation on the RUSADA case and the WADA Executive Committee (WADA EC) decision to endorse such recommendation.

In addition, the ITTF did direct consultations with the IOC and with the WADA International Federations Relations department, and both confirmed that the process will take some time, as if eventually RUSADA appeals the decision, it will go to CAS.

In any case, and for what concerns the European Olympic Qualification Tournament planned to be held in Moscow, Russia, in April 2020, WADA confirmed that is not affected by their decision, as the Continental Qualification Events for the Olympic Games are not considered "Major Events".

This information was shared with the ETTU in view of their concerns.

10.2 Sell of the property in Renens

Mrs Sörling indicated that following discussions with the CFO the previous day, she wanted to raise this point at the EC meeting, as the company initially targeted, CBRE, will not take the task if the ITTF would not agree on a lower price than the agreed in Chengdu. Mrs Sörling considered that an agreement can be reach, where the ITTF still keeps the option of not selling under a certain amount.

Mr Weikert suggested to agree with Mrs Sörling's proposal ensuring the ITTF has the final decision to sell or not.

11. **Adjournment**

Without further subjects, the meeting was adjourned at 11h30.

Thomas Weikert
ITTF President

Date

Raul Calin
ITTF Secretary General

Date