

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Video Conference
20th September 2020

Minutes

1. Welcome and Opening

1.1 President's opening remarks

The President, Mr Thomas Weikert, welcomed everyone and started the meeting without any further remarks.

1.2 Roll Call

Thomas Weikert	ITTF President
Khalil Al-Mohannadi	ITTF Deputy President
Petra Sörling	Executive Vice-President - Finance
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
Iulia Necula	CEO's Office Projects Director
Claudia Vatheuer	Assistant to the President
Michael Brown	CFO
Gabor Felegyi	Competition Director Interim
Mounir Bessah	Member Relations Director

Absent

Shi Zhihao	Executive Vice-President
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2. Minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the previous meeting

The adoption of the Minutes of the previous Executive Committee was deferred for approval to the next EC meeting.

2.2 Business arising from the Minutes

The Secretary General, Mr Raul Calin, reported that there were no business arising from the previous meetings not covered in the agenda.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was confirmed without any additional points.

4. COVID-2019 situational report

The CFO, Mr Michael Brown, summarized to the EC the latest COVID-19 Task Force report, indicating that various international sport events were gradually resuming around the world and that the task force keeps monitoring the evolution of those events as this will be useful for the return of ITTF events.

5. CEO Update

5.1 Staff

The CEO, Mr Steve Dainton, updated the EC on the discussions held during a meeting between the ITTF President, the EVP of Finances, the CEO, the CFO and the SG regarding the future of ITTF Operations and the necessary actions to be taken in the area of HR.

Following the cost reductions measures taken earlier this year, Mr Dainton emphasized that ITTF still finds itself in a complicated financial situation, as there are many concerns and doubts in relation to the contribution to be received from the IOC in case Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games will not take place in 2021.

Based on the assumptions of the worst-case scenario, Mr Dainton recommended to adopt a conservative approach and take an early decision in order to avoid being in a difficult financial position in the future.

Although ITTF's dependence on the IOC contribution is smaller than other IF's, Mr Weikert and Mrs Sörling were in agreement with Mr Dainton's recommendation and gave him the mandate to work on the staff restructure proposal according to a conservative scenario.

ACTION 20200920#01	In charge: CEO	Deadline: 2020-11-30
The CEO to work on the staff restructure proposal according to a conservative scenario.		

The IOC member, Mr Ryu Seungmin, asked will the lack of IOC Contribution affect the ITTF Finances and how can WTT help ITTF financially.

Mr Dainton explained that the IOC Contribution will have no major impact on the commercial business and that under the new structure, WTT will pay a Licence Fee to ITTF, which will place ITTF in a much stronger financial position for its non-commercial activity.

6. Athletes update

The AC Chair, Mr Zoran Primorac, updated the EC on the discussions held with the players in relation to the 2020 ITTF #RESTART events in China, indicating that he was pleased to hear about the solutions found in order to solve some of the issues such conflicts of schedule with the ongoing club competitions / leagues.

Mr Primorac insisted to give the option to participate in the 2020 ITTF #RESTART Bubble event, to those players that already cancelled their participation due to previous club commitments in view of the new situation.

Mr Primorac also stressed the importance of organising different tiers of international events as this will give the opportunity to all the athletes to compete.

The Deputy President, Mr Khalil Al-Mohannadi, emphasized high amount of hard work needed in order to restart the international competitions in the context of COVID-19, and expressed his disappointment in regard to the recent occurrences (players' declarations against the 2020 ITTF #RESTART).

Mr Al-Mohannadi considered that as Executive Committee, it was not normal to take decisions based on the individual situation of the players, especially, as some of the players in question were encouraging other players not to participate in the 2020 ITTF #RESTART and he believed that it was necessary to have disciplinary rules against this kind of behaviours.

7. Operations program

Mr Weikert thanked Mr Al-Mohannadi for the arrangements and the possibility to host and coordinate the 2020 AGM in Doha, with key EC members and Senior Staff, in attendance, which will greatly help to ensure a good outcome of the meeting.

7.1 AGM leading videoconferences update

The Secretary General, Mr Raul Calin, considered that the AGM leading videoconferences were a success, and reported that the attendance was very good, with an average of 200+ persons registered to every session. Mr Calin indicated that the last videoconference before the AGM will be the 2023 WTTC Finals bids presentations, scheduled on Monday 21st September. Mr Calin expressed that the two bids are very strong, Düsseldorf, Germany and Durban, South Africa.

Mr Calin informed that in general a lot of positive feedback has been received from the Member Associations about the videoconferences and invited the EC members to share their impressions regarding the AGM leading videoconferences.

The EC congratulated Mr Calin and the entire team for the work done in the last weeks, for the professional management and technical operation of each of the sessions, but also for educating the members on how to register and participate in online meetings.

7.2 Preparations and Resolutions – Final review

The EC noted the final review of Propositions and Resolutions to be presented at the 2020 AGM.

Mr Weikert informed the EC about the letter received from the Swiss Table Tennis requesting the postponement of Proposition 1 regarding the segregation of the judicial powers, based on the argument that such decision should not be taken during an online AGM, but only in a presential/physical meeting. In addition, Mr Weikert also mentioned letters received from several National Associations that were in agreement with the Swiss Table Tennis proposal.

Mr Calin reminded the process following the Constitutional reforms approved by the AGM in 2018 and the work done in relation to the Governance review which included further steps to be taken, as well as the next steps which are necessary to be taken prior to the 2021 elections. Mr Calin also reminded that during the EC Governance session in June, it was agreed to postpone the revision of the parts of the Constitution affecting the Executive Committee and the Board of

Directors, but it was agreed to go forward with the separation of the judicial power and the establishment of an ITTF Tribunal in 2020, as recommended by the IOC and the ASOIF.

The EC noted that the Swiss Table Tennis letter did not point out any specific reason nor addresses any question regarding the proposition itself, and only requested the postponement of the proposition until a presential/physical meeting was possible.

Mr Weikert stated that based on his understanding, the concerns raised by the Swiss Table Tennis Associations were about taking a decision suspensions and sanctions against Member Associations by the Tribunal and not by the AGM.

Based on this presumable rationale disclosed by Mr Weikert, the EC members debated about the possibility of an amendment of the Proposition 1.

Mr Dainton sustained that it was not an example of good governance if the EC was playing the role of the judge and the jury at the same time in term of juridical decisions and actions against any ITTF member.

Given the extended timelines of the process, the EVP, Mr Bruce Burton, believed it was very odd to receive such letters one week before the AGM, especially the members were given the possibility to address this matter during the Governance videoconference session held earlier in the month. Mr Burton suggested to go ahead with the original proposal.

Mrs Sörling believed that there were more opportunities than ever to raise any concerns regarding the propositions, and from her perspective, receiving such argument from European Associations just a few days after the new ETTU President and Executive Board were elected through a virtual meeting with online voting was not congruent.

The EVP, Dr Alaa Meshref, expressed his opposition as well to any amendment of the proposition one week ahead of the AGM, and in his opinion, it was the AGM who has the right to decide. Dr Meshref indicated that the EC already agreed to the Constitutional changes proposed by the professional staff and legal bodies, and the fact that the EC decided to give away the decision power in judicial matters to another independent body is a very transparent and very ethical action in line with the good governance practices.

Mr Al-Mohannadi was in agreement with the EC colleagues and considered that the EC should not take decisions based on letters from a minority group of members.

The EVP, Mr Nestor Tenca, added to his colleagues and mentioned that the ITTF worked very hard in the last year on these Constitutional reforms which will bring a significant improvement to the institutional management. In his view it is normal for these changes to cause some adverse reactions, however, regardless of the nature of the meeting (physical or digital) the ITTF should not consider making changes one week before the AGM, and give more weight to the majority of the countries that haven't pronounced themselves against the proposition.

Based on the discussions, it was confirmed that the position of the EC has not changed, as they are still very committed to good governance and to take the necessary reforms in the best interest of the sport.

Consequently, the EC decided not to make any amendments to Proposition 1 and present it in its original format.

7.3 BoD Dates (tentative 19th November)

Mr Calin confirmed the relevant timelines leading up to 2020 BoD. Looking at the #RESTART calendar, it was proposed to host the BoD on 19th November 2020.

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The Executive Committee decided to host the 2020 BoD on 19th November 2020.

7.4 Eligibility case Norway

Mr Calin updated the EC on the eligibility case of Ms Sonja Obradovic, from Norway, presenting the facts and the background of the case for their interpretation.

Based on the evidences and with the recommendation of the Technical Commissioner and the Rules Committee Chair, the EC, in their capacity of Eligibility Commission members (with the previous agreement of Mr Sporrer), decided that Ms Obradovic is eligible to represent Norway with immediate effect.

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The Executive Committee, with the previous agreement of Mr Sporrer, on their collective capacity as Eligibility Commission, decided that, based on the evidences, Ms Sonja Obradovic is eligible to represent Norway at World Title events with immediate effect.

7.5 Conflict of Interest

The EC noted the email received by Mr Weikert from an individual complaining about the fact that the AC Chair, Mr Zoran Primorac, was supporting one of the candidates running for the elections of the Italian Table Tennis Association.

Following the discussions held about this matter after the revision of the case by the ITTF Legal Counsel and Ethics Commission Officer, Mr Dylan Mah, it was emphasized that although the ITTF regulations do not precisely refer to the EC Members interference in member associations elections, it is recommended that the EC members should not be involved in such activities.

The EC also noted that following the request of the Swiss Table Tennis and German Table Tennis Association (DTTB) during the Governance videoconference, the propositions related to conflict of interest presented to the AGM are referring explicitly also to the ITTF staff.

Mrs Sörling outlined that the conflict of interest clause was already included in the employment contracts of the staff for many years, and didn't see the necessity to include in the Constitution

clauses that are referring to the Staff, however, Mrs Sörling considered the new COI policy was essential for the elected, appointed and honorary officials, who are not subject to contracts.

8. Competition Program

8.1 Bubble

The Competition Director, Mr Gabor Felegyi, updated the EC on the progress and the work done leading up to the 2020 ITTF #RESTART, informing about the special requirements, the strict timelines and the expedited registration process of the participants due to the procedures related to COVID-19. Mr Felegyi highlighted some of the challenges, mentioning that the following weeks will be critical in terms of visa applications, especially as the majority of Chinese embassies are closed during that period due to National holidays. However, Mr Felegyi informed that the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC), the Chinese Table Tennis Association (CTTA), and Shanghai Government Officials are committed to handle the situation accordingly.

Mr Felegyi also updated the EC on the progress made, and the discussions held with the relevant stakeholders in order to find solutions and solve some of the issues regarding the schedule conflict with the ongoing club competitions and leagues.

The EC noted the report presented by Mr Felegyi in regard to the current participation list of the 2020 Men's World Cup informing about the request received by the Competition Department from the DTTB, the Slovenia Table Tennis Association and the Croatia Table Tennis Association to re-enter Mr Dimitrij Ovtcharov (GER), Mr Darko Jorgic (SLO) and Mr Tomislav Pucar (CRO) after they previously cancelled their participation.

Mr Felegyi explained the entry registration process deadline and procedure following the cancellation of the players, indicating that the vacant spots have been filled by the next reserve players, Mr Liam Pitchford (ENG) and Mr Mattias Falck (SWE) who accepted and confirmed their participation.

However, in light of the announcement of the 2nd arrival date and the positive results achieved during the negotiations with the different stakeholders regarding the clubs competition schedule, Mr Dimitrij Ovtcharov (GER), Mr Darko Jorgic (SLO) and Mr Tomislav Pucar (CRO) have reconsidered their position and decided that they wish to participate in the event, what eventually led to a situation where the number of participants, if accepted, will exceed the Men's World Cup quota.

Based on these factors, Mr Felegyi asked the EC to make a decision and confirm -if necessary- any change in the regulations that would eventually grant an extension in the total number of participants at the relevant events, if required.

The EC thanked Mr Felegyi and the competition team for the work done especially given the complexity of the matter.

Mr Weikert reminded everyone about the reaction and the letter received from some of the athletes about the participation to the 2020 ITTF #RESTART and asked to find a solution for those players that expressed their intention to re-enter the events.

In reference to the letter received from the players, Mrs Sörling mentioned that this approach goes against the principles of the discussions held earlier in the year with some of the European Member Associations regarding the rights that the Member Association has over the players and the registration of players to international events. Especially as the reactions came from the players and not from the MA's.

Mrs Sörling also drew the attention about the campaign led by those players, the negative message and language used in public statements made in the media and different communication channels which made everyone (including all the other players that weren't involved) feeling very uncomfortable.

Moreover, Mrs Sörling referred to the discussions and negotiations held with the DTTB as LOC of the 2020 MWC, and the compensation provided to DTTB for the relocation of the event to China, and their refusal to help the ITTF regarding the German players participation.

Although not in line with the process and the decision-making process, given the fact that we were living extraordinary times, Mrs Sörling believed that the players should have the opportunity to compete and was in favour to allow all the players to participate.

Mr Al-Mohannadi was in agreement with Mrs Sörling and insisted that the athletes should use the official communication channels through the ITTF AC, and not contact directly the ITTF and expect preferential treatment from the President or CEO. Similarly, the MA's, as a core Members of the ITTF, should be addressing this matter through the official channels.

Mr Dainton was of the opinion that due to the extraordinary circumstances caused by COVID-19, the players made a rushed decision to cancel their participation which was understandable under the current pressure caused by the leagues schedule and the international calendar.

Mr Dainton recommended to find a reasonable solution and accept a compromise to re-enter those players that changed their mind, without affecting those that accepted the replacement after the initial cancellation.

In light of this, the best solution proposed was to extraordinarily extend the number of participants in the MWC from 20 to 21.

Although an acceptable solution in the current circumstances, Mr Morris, quoted the Technical Commissioner, Mr Graeme Ireland, cautioning that a change in regulations of the World Cups might set a dangerous precedent.

The IOC Member, Mr Ryu Seungmin, supported the initiative in these uncertain circumstances, which showed the tremendous effort and support from the ITTF side. Despite not following the official communication channels and addressing certain issues without the involvement of their respective MA's and the ITTF AC, Mr Seungmin considered that it was important for the ITTF to listen the voices of the Athletes.

The CEO's Office - Projects Director, Ms Iulia Necula, emphasized that regardless of the decision taken regarding the players participation in the 2020 ITTF #RESTART, the inappropriate

behaviour showcased by some of the top players in the recent weeks was not in line with the principles of fair play.

In Ms Necula's opinion, it was the responsibility of the EC and staff to protect the image of ITTF and expressed that it was necessary that those players that spread negative messages across the different channels and made false accusation regarding the integrity of ITTF, should publicly apologise.

Mr Weikert interrupted Ms Necula as he believed that it was not the appropriate moment to discuss this item again.

The EC agreed that the image of the sport was important, and although the favourable decision made was a compromise in benefit of those players, the inappropriate behaviour and methods used by some players were unacceptable and it should be clearly communicated.

Mr Ryu Seungmin stated that he was not aware of the topics raised by Ms Necula and emphasized that fair play should play a fundamental role.

Based on the discussions held and according to the current regulations, the EC decided to accept the re-entry request of the three players and made an extraordinary decision to extend the number of participants from to the 2020 WWC and 2020 MWV from 20 to 21 players.

On a discussion on whether this should be a decision only for Men's or for both Men's and Women's, the EC preferred to take a decision for both events.

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The Executive Committee agreed to make an extraordinary extension of the number of participants for the 2020 Women's World Cup and 2020 Men's World Cup from 20 to 21 players.

8.2 Calendar plan

Mr Felegyi updated the EC on the 2020 calendar, indicating the current status of the ITTF events based on the conversations held with each of the LOC's:

- 2020 Challenge Plus Belgium Open, De Hann – 27-31 October - Cancelled
- 2020 World Tour Platinum Austrian Open, Linz 10-15 November - Postponed
- 2020 World Tour Swedish Open, Stockholm 3-8 November – Postponed
- 2020 Challenge Plus North American Open, Vancouver 1-5 December – Cancelled

A further update and a final decision regarding the situation of the two WT events will be made at a later stage following the discussions with the relevant LOC's.

The EC noted that an ITTF / WTT Calendar videoconference session will be held on 25th September, with the purpose of presenting the five years strategic calendar to the ITTF stakeholders, including Member Associations, Continental Representatives, Leagues and Club representatives.

8.3 World Junior Championships 2020

This point was deferred to the next EC meeting to be held on 30th September 2020.

9. **Member Relations**

9.1 Continental Congress

The ITTF Member Relations Director, Mr Mounir Bessah, updated the EC on the successful organisation of the first ever Continental Congresses / Annual General Meetings and elections held in a digital format during the last weeks with particular reference to:

- ETTU Congress – with the election of Mr Igor Levitin as ETTU President and the new Executive Board
- ITTF Oceania AGM – with the re-election of Mr Anthony Ho as President of ITTF Oceania
- ATTU General Assembly
- LATTU General Assembly

10. **Any other business**

There was no further business.

11. **Next EC meeting**

The next EC meeting to be held on Wednesday, 30th September 2020 at 13h00 CEST.

12. **Adjournment**

Without further points the Executive Committee Meeting was adjourned at 16h00 CEST.

Thomas Weikert
ITTF President

Date

Raul Calin
ITTF Secretary General

Date