

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Videoconference via Zoom ®
Wednesday 22nd May 2024 – 13h00 – 16h00 CEST

MINUTES

EB members in attendance:

SÖRLING Petra	President
LIU Guoliang	Deputy President
AL-MOHANNADI Khalil	Senior Executive Vice-President
MESHREF Alaa	Executive Vice-President – Finance
MAEHARA Masahiro	Executive Vice-President
NATRAN Roland	Executive Vice-President
OSHODI Wahid	Executive Vice-President
SYMONS Graham	Executive Vice-President
RYU Seung-Min	IOC Member
LIU Shiwen	Athletes Commission (AC) Co-Chair
ACHANTA Sharath Kamal	Athletes Commission (AC) Co-Chair

Staff in attendance:

DAINTON Steve	ITTF Group CEO
CALIN Raul	ITTF Secretary General

Absence:

AZEVEDO Alaor	Executive Vice-President
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1. Welcome and Opening

1.1. ITTF President's Welcome

Ms SÖRLING welcomed all in attendance reflecting on the busy calendar, with the largest Para Table Tennis event of the year held a few weeks back in Slovenia, the very successful Men's and Women's World Cup held in Macao, with very high levels of sports presentation, the Continental Qualification Events for the Olympic Games also being completed and the second Grand Smash held in Saudi Arabia having successfully concluded. Ms SÖRLING thanked all those involved in making all these events possible and with such a good level of organisation and promotion.

Ms SÖRLING also reflected on the one-year anniversary of the opening ceremony of the Durban 2023 WTTTC Finals, noting that since then, 80 development activities have been conducted in the African continent.

1.2. Roll Call

The Roll Call was conducted, and the EB noted the absence of Dr AZEVEDO.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted with the addition of the following points: 13.4 Sport Science Congress Update, 13.5 request from the Development Department about the WTT Youth Event in Sweden, update from the Macao discussions on the WTT VIK (to be included as part of the CEO Update), and 13.6 a report on the ASOIF General Assembly, SportAccord, and WADA Foundation Board.

3. Minutes of the previous Executive Board meeting

3.1. Approval of the Minutes from the last meetings (6-7 December, 19, and 25 February 2024)

There being no further remarks, the following Meeting Minutes were approved:

EB Meeting held on 6-7 December 2023 in Lausanne, Switzerland.

EB Meeting held on 19 February 2024 in Busan, Korean Republic.

EB Meeting held on 25 February 2024 in Busan, Korean Republic.

20240522-EB-01

The Executive Board approved the Minutes of the EB Meeting held on 6 and 7 December 2023 in Lausanne, Switzerland.

20240522-EB-02

The Executive Board approved the Minutes of the EB Meeting held on 19 February 2024 in Busan, Republic of Korea.

20240522-EB-03

The Executive Board approved the Minutes of the EB Meeting held on 25 February 2024 in Busan, Republic of Korea.

3.2. Business arising from the Minutes

The EB noted the update on the Business Arising from the Minutes through the Monday.com project management tool.

Dr MESHREF reflected on the pending actions from previous EB Meetings. Mr CALIN indicated that some of them are recurrent actions or long-term projects, but certainly, those recurrent should be either closed or presented in a more specific way. Mr DAINTON suggested to review in a management quarterly meeting those pending actions.

4. CEO Report / Strategic Plan

The EB noted the report of Mr DAINTON, which included an update on the Singapore Smash, which reached its third edition and counted for the first time with Para and Youth events, both very appreciated by the players. The WTT Champions event in Incheon, Korean Republic, building on the momentum from the WTTTC Finals in Busan, the World Cups held in Macao, in an iconic venue, the Galaxy Arena, probably the best-ever in which a Table Tennis event was hosted, and the Saudi Smash which with a relatively short time for implementation, was very successful.

Mr DAINTON presented the calendar with the upcoming events, including the Macao WTT Champions in September, the Beijing Smash in October, the Montpellier WTT Champions in October, and the combined WTT Men's and Women's Finals in Fukuoka, Japan. That, added to the World Youth Championships planned for November and the Mixed Team World Cup in December will result in 2024 becoming the biggest year in table tennis history in terms of the amount, level, and impact of the events planned.

Mr DAINTON also updated the EB on the current discussions with IMG around the betting revenue and the concerns raised due to the proliferation of unsanctioned events which offer betting in our sport.

Mr DAINTON also updated the EB on the ongoing discussions with a potential investor.

Mr DAINTON provided an update about 2025, touching on the new strategic calendar.

In relation to the WTT Structure and investment, Mr DAINTON thanked Dr MESHREF for his visit to Macao to discuss with the investor and concluded his report speaking about the Olympic and Paralympic Games preparation.

Ms SÖRLING and Dr MESHREF noted that with the deadline for the Audit to be completed in June, it would be good to finalise the proposed solution earlier.

4.1. Strategic Plan

Mr DAINTON reported on the progress of the evaluation of the Strategic Plan through a Monday.com board created to track each of the strategic priorities.

5. Operations

The EB noted that as part of the Operations Report, the nominations received for the Nominations Committee 2024-2026 are part of the EB document's package for consideration at the Paris EB meeting. The EB also noted a report on the work done to develop the Transgender Policy and the review of the Terms of Reference for the different committees by Messrs MAH and OSHODI.

5.1. Transgender Policy

The EB noted the latest draft of the Transgender Policy presented for EB's consideration. Dr MESHREF appreciated the work done by the different persons involved to develop the comprehensive policy presented to the EB.

The EB thanked the persons involved in the development and agreed to set the implementation date as 1st October 2024.

20240522-EB-04

[The Executive Board approved the Policy on Eligibility in International Competitions for Transgender Athletes¹.](#)

5.2. Finances

The EB agreed to review the Finance Report in the coming days as it was received a short time before the meeting. Dr MESHREF reflected on the very small headcount in the Finance Department, suggesting attention is put to this area to ensure operations can run with normality.

Mr DAINTON echoed Dr MESHREF and expressed his concern about the low retention in that department with a few staff leaving the organisation.

5.2.1. Integrity Board Finance Policy

The EB was presented with the proposed Finance Policy for the Integrity Board, in a similar way as it already exists for the ITTF Tribunal.

20240522-EB-05

[The Executive Board approved the Travel Policy for the ITTF Tribunal and ITTF Integrity Board².](#)

Before moving into the next section, Ms SÖRLING reminded about the Remuneration Committee, which was agreed to be incorporated as a good governance element, to ensure that they consider the different allowances and potential remuneration for the EB in line with what other organisations within the overall sports movement do.

5.3. HR

The EB noted the report of the Human Resources Department.

¹ With 1st October 2024 as the effective date of implementation.

² With 1st January 2024 as the effective date of implementation.

Mr DAINTON added that with the heavy calendar in 2024, it would be important to ensure the staff workforce is enough to be able to run all planned events and activities.

5.4. Communications

The EB noted the report of the Communications Department.

6. Athletes

The EB noted the report of the Athletes Commission presented by Mr ACHANTA, who highlighted the full calendar, the contributions of the Athletes in the WRWG, the appreciation by the players to the presence of a physiotherapist in the events, the great conditions at the Singapore Smash, with the mentioned presence of Youth and Para players.

Mr ACHANTA also mentioned the two meetings organised for the athletes at the Singapore and Saudi Smash, the second one counting with bigger attendance, and the queries made about the issues raised with two athletes affected by different situations.

The EB noted the disappointment of the players due to the changes in the technical conditions of the tournaments, such as changes in balls and its procurement, so as to have them available for practice.

Mr ACHANTA also encouraged ITTF/WTT to ensure the calendar for 2025, at least for the first half, would be released as soon as possible, and to reconsider the number of mandatory events, while also announcing them at least with six months' notice, for player's planning.

Dr MESHREF expressed his concern about the voice of the athletes not just being listened, but more importantly to ensure actions are taken to remediate the situations and particularly to implement the decisions taken at the EB level.

Ms SÖRLING echoed Dr MESHREF, suggesting the Entourage Working Group is also there to provide support and protection for the athletes, hoping that the new position of a WTT player's relations will produce results in the relationship with the athletes.

Mr DAINTON expressed his hope that Ms CEHOVIN, being a former player herself, will achieve the goals put on her hiring for such a position, commenting that she is also at the moment in Brazil, together with Mr DAINTON, so being a good opportunity to discuss the way forward.

Dr MESHREF suggested the Steering Committee activation and the provision of a tool to Mr Kamal ACHANTA and Ms LIU Shiwen for their communication with athletes, as priorities where he would appreciate seeing some progress.

7. ITTF Events

The EB noted the written report of Mr BESSAH.

7.1. Review system for the Olympic Games

The EB noted the work done in the last few weeks in relation to the possible implementation of a Review System for the Olympic Games. Several options were considered. It was agreed to push it forward, understanding the time constraint and the limitations of not being the Olympic Games under the direct organisation of the ITTF.

20240522-EB-06

The Executive Board approved implementing a video review system for edge balls and nets at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games³, with tests being made at a major WTT event beforehand.

³ Provided Technology can facilitate such revisions.

8. World Table Tennis

The EB noted the report on WTT being part of the already presented CEO Report.

9. Development

9.1. Innovation

The EB noted the written report.

10. ITTF Foundation

The EB noted the report of the ITTF Foundation.

Ms SÖRLING congratulated the ITTF Foundation for the delivery of the World Table Tennis Day, and their fifth anniversary.

11. Governance

11.1. Members issues

The EB noted the ongoing disputes in the leadership of different Member Associations, and the specific situation of an athlete with his own Member Association in his race to qualify for the Olympic Games. The EB hoped for a resolution of the case.

Dr MESHREF asked about the Indonesian athletes and the possibility for them to compete internationally.

Mr OSHODI suggested fast-tracking the recruitment of a staff with legal expertise to replace Mr Dylan MAH.

11.2. Sustainability

The EB noted the report received.

11.2.1. Sustainability Committee Co-opted Member proposal

The EB discussed the possibility of adding expertise to its committees by incorporating the relevant table tennis persons seated in IOC committees and commissions into the different committees.

20240522-EB-07

The Executive Board co-opted Ms Mayssa BSAIBES and Mr RYU Seung-Min to the ITTF Sustainability Committee.

20240522-EB-08

The Executive Board decided to consider co-opting table tennis members of IOC Commissions to the equivalent ITTF Committees.

11.3. GEDI

The EB noted the report received.

11.4. Nigeria TTF Appeal

The EB considered the appeal received from the Nigerian Table Tennis Federation concerning the penalty imposed on Mr Quadri ARUNA for his no-show at the Busan 2024 WTTTC Finals and the subsequent late submission of documents for the appeal.

After reviewing the facts and communications around the sanction imposed, Ms SÖRLING recommended removing the penalty due to the medical reasons stated and reviewing the current timelines to appeal such decisions.

Dr MESHREF agreed to the proposal of Ms SÖRLING.

Mr ACHANTA asked why the players are penalised for the no-show of the Association. It was explained that in such an important event as the WTTTC Finals, the match of Nigeria vs Japan in the Men's Team could not be played, due to Nigeria not able to present its team. This caused the disappointment of spectators and TV rightsholders, and a formal complaint was received from one of the right holders.

After a debate on the matter, there was a consensus that if a Member Association do not have enough players for the initial lineup, it should not be considered the fault of the players, but of the Association itself.

20240522-EB-09

The Executive Board accepted Quadri ARUNA's (NGR) appeal and removed the WR penalty due to his non-show at the WTTTC Finals Busan 2024.

20240522-EB-10

The Executive Board decided to review the timelines for appeals to sanctions for WR matters.

20240522-EB-11

The Executive Board decided to establish a mechanism to ensure Member Associations are accountable for their absences at ITTF Major Competitions without advanced notice.

11.5. Continental Para Events Sanctioning Body

The EB noted the increased interest from the Continental Federations in organising the Continental Para Table Tennis Championships.

A proposal was tabled for the EB to allow the Continental Federations requesting it to be in charge of the organisation of the Continental Para Table Tennis Championships from 2027 onwards, having 2025 as a transition event.

The EB agreed to such a proposal.

20240522-EB-12

The Executive Board decided to initiate the transfer of Governance of the Continental Para Table Tennis Championships to the respective Continental Federations, provided they formally request it, with a starting date in 2027.

11.6. AIN

The EB noted that despite the initial reluctance of the host association of the Mixed Doubles World Qualification Event, the pair of athletes with Belarusian nationality registered was able to compete as AIN. The EB noted the important support received from the IOC, the Czech Olympic Committee President, and the host association itself once their initial concerns were cleared.

The EB also noted with appreciation the collaboration of the Belarus Table Tennis Federation in the entire process and the fact that the U13 players from Belarus will also compete at the European U13 Championships.

The EB also noted the ongoing investigation by the Integrity Unit of two alleged violations of the additional conditions of participation imposed on athletes from RUS and BLR.

12. IOC Members Reports

Ms SÖRLING reported on her onboarding as an IOC member which occurred in recent weeks. Ms SÖRLING added that it was a good opportunity to get to know the different key staff of several key departments.

Mr RYU reported on the most recent IOC meetings related to Human Rights and AIN athletes. Mr RYU thanked the collaboration of all the EB members during these years when his term is coming close to an end at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

13. Other Business

13.1. ITTF Museum

The EB noted an update in the existing agreement about the ITTF Museum with the Municipality of Shanghai and the CTTA. Mr CALIN indicated that by 31 December 2024, the ITTF has to review the terms of the Equity Guarantee.

13.2. Appeal to CAS from AUS athlete

The EB noted the recent decision of the ITTF Tribunal in the appeal presented by Ms Yangzi LIU (AUS), and the subsequent appeal to CAS by the athlete.

The ITTF Tribunal Chair, Mr IBARROLA, will be representing the ITTF in CAS.

13.3. Paris 2024 Olympic Games

The EB noted Mr CALIN's progress report on the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games preparations, which included details about accommodation, travel, visa procedures, and the latest venue updates.

Mr DAINTON added that considering the different options available to highlight our sport's social presence at the Olympic Games, such as VIP lounge upgrades, customisation, added services, etc., given the Paris 2024 exercise of optimisation (which resulted in lower standards compared to previous editions of the Olympic Games), after a careful study, the ITTF decided to host a Table Tennis evening during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games where the Table Tennis stakeholders and representatives from the Olympic Movement, other IFs and ITTF and WTT sponsors and partners would be welcomed. More information will be circulated in due time.

13.4. Sports Science Congress update

Mr MAEHARA reported on the progress made with the QTTA in preparing for the Sports Science Congress, which will be held on 15-16 May 2025.

13.5. Development Department request for the WTT Youth event in Sweden

The EB noted the request from the ITTF Development Department to put forward to the WTT Board a request to reconsider the refusal by WTT Management of certain entries of ITTF scholarship holders aged under 15, who are currently travelling in Europe funded by the ITTF.

Dr MESHREF expressed his disappointment with the WTT Management feedback about "not having business reasons" to accept such a request of ITTF Development for an exception.

Dr MESHREF stated that Development is certainly an important business for the ITTF and wanted the EB to consider elevating this matter to the WTT Board.

Mr DAINTON suggested that the EB raise an appeal to the WTT Board on this matter. The EB agreed to such a proposal.

20240522-EB-13

The Executive Board decided to put forward for WTT Board consideration an appeal against the refusal by the WTT Management of certain entries of athletes under 15 years of age, funded by the ITTF as such refusal is detrimental to the sport.

13.6. ASOIF General Assembly, SportAccord, and WADA Foundation Board.

Mr DAINTON updated the EB on the attendance to the ASOIF General Assembly, where for the first time the delegates were Mr DAINTON and Mr CALIN as Ms SÖRLING was attending in her capacity as ASOIF Council Member.

Likewise, Mr DAINTON reflected that the attendance together with Mr CALIN, Ms CHO, and Mr COWAN as the ITTF delegates to all different meetings and forums during the SportAccord week where Ms SÖRLING was present as well in her different capacities as SportAccord Executive Committee Member or ASOIF Council Member, was indeed very good to show the strength of our sport, with representatives in the institutional, political, and business and commercial areas.

Ms SÖRLING reported on the latest emergency meeting of the WADA Foundation Board about the appeal from one country concerning swimmers from another country and the process taken.

Ms SÖRLING passed the word to Mr LIU to conclude the meeting.

Mr LIU thanked Ms SÖRLING, Mr DAINTON and Mr CALIN for conducting the meeting, and considered that in the short period of three hours, a lot of positive discussions were held across different areas such as Development, Olympic Games, and future events. Mr LIU appreciated the different contributions made in a very fair and transparent manner, adding that WTT and ITTF are part of the same family which works together for the betterment of the sport, particularly the athletes, highlighting the importance of the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

14. Next Meeting

It was agreed the next EB meeting will be held on Saturday 3rd, and Sunday 4th of August 2024.

15. Adjournment

Mr DAINTON thanked the entire technical team for their support, being a public holiday in Singapore. Ms SÖRLING thanked also all the EB colleagues for their contributions and wished Mr DAINTON a successful WTT event in Rio de Janeiro. The meeting was adjourned at 16:10 CEST.

Petra SÖRLING
ITTF President

Date

Raul CALIN
ITTF Secretary General

Date