

The Dress Code Dilemma: A Fine Line Between Rules and Expression

Introduction

If you ask me to come up with regulations about dress codes, I simply cannot write one, but I can think of how to break wrong dress code regulations! Dress is more than just clothing—it is a form of self-expression, because the way a person dresses very often reflects their views and values, which can be a part of their culture and identity. Knowing this fact, it's no surprise players resist a strict and inflexible dress code.

The Unique Nature of Chess: Does It Even Need a Dress Code?

Chess is a sport of the brain, and this factor alone distinguishes chess from all other physical sports. However, one question still remains: does chess need a dress code?

I believe this comparison with other sports can be fairer in team events, and we still may need a dress code in chess events for the sake of professionalism.

Diversity and Inclusion: The Core of Dress Code Reform

The keywords that need to guide us are: "diversity" and "inclusion."

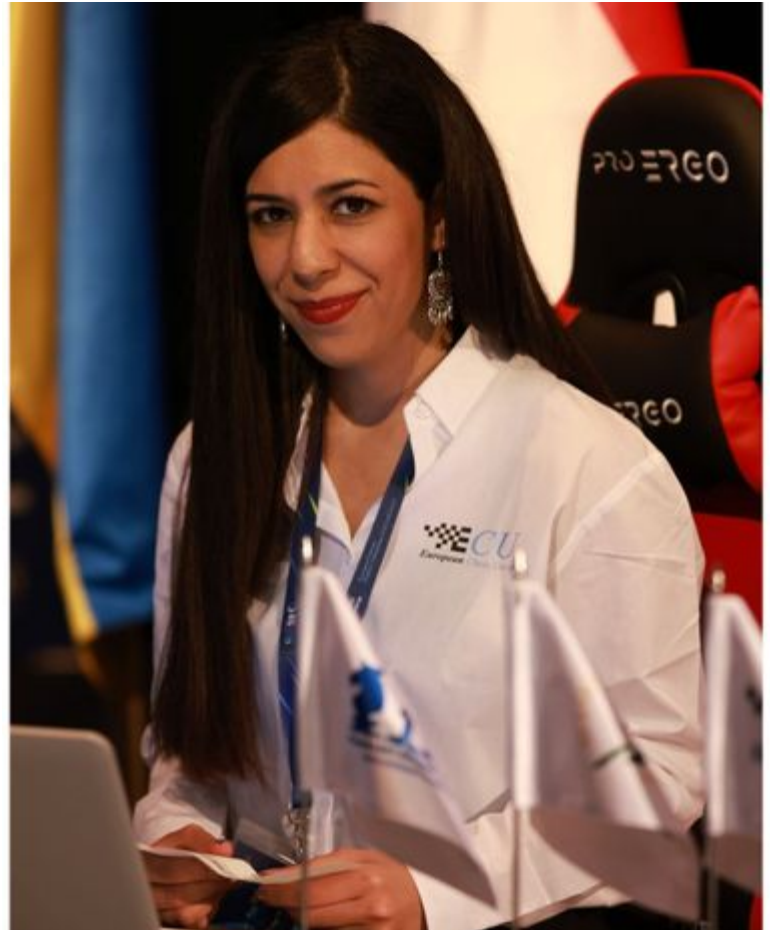
- Diversity is about recognising, respecting and celebrating each other's differences. A diverse environment brings together people from different backgrounds and mindset, which helps creating an innovative and creative culture.
- Inclusion is about making sure that everyone feels welcome and valued. This can only be achieved when we are more conscious of our unconscious biases and learn to manage them.

My friend, Grandmaster Pontus Carlsson, once brought this to my attention: choosing a single colour such as "dark blue" is not suitable for the FIDE dress code, because it has not been designed for diverse skin tones.

Why Dress Codes Are Controversial in the Chess Community?

The first step in writing dress code regulations is to understand our community.

The game of chess is an international one, where players belong to different cultures and backgrounds, all with their different sets of expectations and norms. This simply means that something which is highly valued in one culture might be viewed differently in another.



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Sometimes, even a minor change can represent someone wrongly, and it counts as a "limitation to freedom of expression." As someone who was forced to wear a mandatory headscarf for years, I can tell you how deeply sad this issue can be, because sometimes being misrepresented feels like you are losing a part of your identity.