

## Annual meeting of the ECU Arbiters' Council in Budapest

The annual meeting of the ECU Arbiters' Council was organised in Budapest, Hungary, as part of the ECU General Assembly 2024. 5 members of the Council were present and various guests attended and participated in the discussion. A few of the attendees were Hungarian arbiters who have been appointed at the 45th FIDE Olympiad and they had the opportunity to follow our meeting and be informed about our activities and system of work.

As an introduction, Geert Bailleul, Chairman of the Council, presented the composition of the Council, as it was decided two years ago with the addition of IA Frank Jaeger in early 2024. The next topic on the agenda was the annual overview of appointments in European events. In 2024, 90 arbiters have been appointed (52 IAs, 13 FAs and 25 NAs) to fill 123 positions (some colleagues have been appointed more than once). The male/female ratio 92/31 is and the local/foreigners ratio 64/59. The statistics are not complete, as the year is not over and 6 major and minor European events are still ahead of us. One of the main goals of the ECU Arbiters' Council has always been to give the opportunity to more and more qualified arbiters to officiate in European events. As the responses to our Call of Interest show, this task is far from easy, since the interest is very high and the number of events is limited. Up to today, we had the opportunity to



Caption text

appoint 20% of the Match Arbiters in each European event, as decided by the ECU General Assembly in 2019 in Batumi, Georgia. Since the General Assembly on September 19th, this quota has been increased to 30%, which we consider to be a very positive step towards the raise of the level of the events and the arbiters who take part in them.

Moving on to the arbiters' evaluation that is done by the Chief Arbiters after an event has been completed, we value the reports that are being submitted and are exploring ways to make them more concrete and precise.

Generic comments that everything went smoothly and all arbiters performed at a top level are not very helpful and, in a few cases, may not reflect the conditions of an event. We are asking the Chief Arbiters to be specific about the arbiters' skills and abilities and suggest ways to improve in an instructive way. Similarly, any arbiter may submit an evaluation for the Chief Arbiters.

We have observed that, since the system of evaluation was established, a very small number of negative evaluations has been submitted. It is possible that CAs do not wish to give such an evaluation for a colleague arbiter, even if their performance was not good, in the fear of obstructing their future career and opportunities of being appointed again.

In the ECU General Assembly that took place on September 19th, the Arbiters' Council suggested to amend the definition of the tie-break "Direct encounter" as written in Article B.6 of the European Chess Union Tournament Regulations:

"Results of direct encounters between the tied players (If all the tied players have met each other) to "Results of direct encounters between the tied players (if the tied participants have not played all the games against each other, but one of them will be alone at the top of the separate standings whatever the outcome of the missing games, that participant is ranked first among the tied participants – the same applies to the second rank when the first is assigned this way; and so on)"

The reason for proposal to amend the definition of the "Direct encounter" tiebreak is that the definition that was given in the ECU Tournament Regulations was no longer in accordance with the definition presented in the FIDE Handbook and given by the FIDE Endorsed Pairing Programs and, therefore, we suggested it to be amended. The ECU GA voted in favour of the proposal.

Attendees asked a few questions during the meeting, mostly with the purpose of clarifying specific topics on the agenda.