

Text by:
IA Marco Biagioli



CALL OF DUTY

After over-the-board chess re-started, 2021 was definitely the year of the Calls of interests.

The European Chess Union Arbiters' Council relaunched the project, which started in 2019, of the Call of Interests for the 2022 European Championships.

Noticeably, FIDE Arbiters' Commission followed ECU in this pioneering idea and started a similar project. Both calls were launched in 2021 to be operational in 2022.

However, the similarities between the two end here.

Reading the relevant Regulations, many differences between the systems can be spotted. This article aims to underline them and try to understand their purposes.

The ECU based its Call of Interests on clear regulations and, most importantly, the criteria are numerical and expressed in the Regulations' appendix (you can find Regulations on the ECU website).

Thus, any arbiter participating in the Call can potentially reconstruct his final score when he applies, assigning himself the grades to his skills or experience.

In other words, the system is objective: if any arbiter is not in his correct position, it may depend only on a mistake in assigning grades. These mistakes are promptly corrected when claimed or spotted.

On the other side, FIDE Call of Interests works on a different system.

Given a questionnaire that doesn't focus on experience and skills but rather on wishes, the "profiles" are subjectively evaluated without specific regulations and numerical parameters (Regulations can be found on FIDE website)

The consequence is that the system is much more discretionary, and nobody, when participating, can know who and how will evaluate him.

In other words, the system is entirely unpredictable: if any arbiter is not in the position he expects, there is no way to check how and why his application has been graded.

Another critical difference is that ECU Call of Interests put all participants on a graded list. Then arbiters are invited to tournaments following this list from top to bottom: again, the system is objective and does not leave any space for discretion.

On the opposite, FIDE Call of Interests divides arbiters into some "baskets" marked by different colours. Any organiser can choose among these baskets, which means that belonging to a particular basket doesn't guarantee to the particular arbiter that he will be invited or not in the future. Still, it makes sure he will not be invited if he doesn't belong to the "right" panel.

Text by:

IA Marco Biagioli

International Arbiter - IA
Attorney at Law –
ITA Calendar Commission,
ECU Arbiters' Council,
MITROPA President

-> In conclusion, the systems work the opposite way.

The ECU Call of Interests works affirmatively, creating a list to invite arbiters to participate in a tournament where approximately the first thirty positions will almost probably receive an invitation (here depending on the number of available spots), whilst FIDE Call of Interests works negatively, meaning its purpose is to exclude some arbiters from senior positions, although they would have the requirements to cover them.

However, it is also true that ECU Call of Interests is entirely managed by the Arbiters' Council and intended to appoint Match Arbiters, whilst FIDE one aims to be used to appoint Principals, albeit the process is not autonomous as it involves many other organs (President, GSC, EVE and so on). On a side, this causes a possible clash of opinions about people to be appointed and Arbiters' Commission evaluations and, on the other, puts the Arbiters' Commission in a non-responsible position of the system.

But the most critical part is that, at the end, whilst ECU Call of Interest's main aim is to focus on quality and improve the global level of the arbiters, FIDE Call of Interest does not grant that such a purpose will be reached at all, since qualitative parameters in composing the "baskets" were not considered.

Another hard-to-understand outcome of the FIDE Call of Interest is the coordination of such "baskets" with arbiters' categories.

The panels' composition doesn't reflect the arbiters' categories, thus going, on one side, against them (putting arbiters of upper categories in lower positions) and depriving them of any meaning if arbiters of superior categories are not entitled to be appointed for tournaments their category would be suitable for.

Basing on some questions received by European Arbiters, the Arbiters' Council, in fact, sent an e-mail to FIDE Arbiters' Commission to understand on what criteria they based their evaluations.



Unfortunately, it got only vague answers and it wasn't possible to understand anything more. What it can finally be said about this short confrontation is that probably FIDE Call of Interests will need some adjustments in the future, as regarding the process, which leaves too much discretionary power to the compilers, finally hitting many arbiters without a specific reason and without the possibility for them to know why they were dropped and as regarding the coordination with categories, that is currently not granted.

**Text by: IA Marco Biagioli
(IA Attorney at Law – ITA Calendar
Commission, ECU Arbiters' Council,
MITROPA President)**

Arbiters Corner
April 2022

"Call of Duty"