

ECU AC, the strange and unbelievable story of 2020.



Allow me to quote mr. Theodoros Tsorbatzoglou, the secretary general of ECU, in his small reaction on Facebook: "It was an epic and historical year 2020 for the whole world!". I fully agree! In many ways, maybe it was a year we should forget as soon as possible. Or maybe not?

Compared with 2019, 2020 was a totally different year! No one doubt that Covid 19 was the biggest cause.

In 2019 ECU organized 13 OTB tournaments during which 168 arbiters were appointed. However in 2020 no OTB tournaments were organized!

They were all postponed and after a few month they were even cancelled.

It was a year in which ECU had to adopt in the new global situation digitizing all services and events.

The internet became an even more important tool then the previous years, not only for the organization of tournaments but also to organize meetings and seminars.

This was a huge challenge for ECU as well as for the ECU AC.

With great proud and pleasure ECU announced the birth of "the European Online Chess Championships".

It offered the possibility to all chess players to still practice their favourite hobby.

Five championships were organized in close cooperation with the ECU AC and a few national federations: The European Online Individual Chess Championship 2020, The European Online Youth Chess Championship 2020, The European Online Corporate Chess Championship 2020, The European Online Women's Club Cup 2020 and the European Online Blitz Championship 2020.

To guide these championships in the right direction and to make sure everything went smoothly, many arbiters (97) were appointed for these online championships.

At that time, ECU AC realised that there was a strong need for the training of arbiters to be active during online tournaments. ECU AC realized that what we ask to an online arbiter is not what we need from an arbiter who is active in a standard tournament. ECU AC has learned along the tournaments that being an arbiter in one online competition is by far different from being an arbiter in an over the board event. For that reason, and with the approval of ECU Board, ECU AC has set up an online training program for "Online Arbiter".

This certification, which will be mandatory to serve as an arbiter in European Online Championships, will certify that a particular arbiter has some special skills for online tournaments and confirm the ability of an arbiter to work in online events.

The first online training will be organized in the second half of January. Further information can be found on the ECU AC website.

ECU AC also organized a FIDE Arbiters Seminar which was, also forced by Covid 19, held online.

The FA seminar started on Monday May 4th with 41 participants out of 27 federations. For the first time the test which was used for the exam, was a standardized test in close cooperation with FIDE ARB, which should be a norm in the future for other FA Seminars. 9 participants passed the test.

Text by:

**IA Geert Bailleul,
Secretary of the ECU
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Prior to the FA seminar, on Sunday May 3rd, there was also a workshop for all ECU arbiters, organized by the ECU Arbiters' Council. During this workshop the members of the ECU Arbiters' Council explained what they have been doing during the 2 years since they have been appointed.

The large number of participants (77!) shows that there was a need to organize such a workshop.

The attending arbiters received a clear overview of the system of appointment, the evaluation of arbiters during ECU Events, an extensive chapter about GDPR, the reporting procedure, all kind of reports etc... Also the necessary information was given about the ECU Arbiters' Council website; what can be found on the website and where this information can be found.

Based on the comments and suggestions which were given during this online workshop, ECU AC made some changes on their website.

A new page was created where everyone can find all the articles from the past two years as well as links to the all E-magazine issues.

Every month there is an article in the ECU Magazine, written by one of the members of the ECU AC.

Also other arbiters are invited to write an article if they feel the need to do so.

They can send their article to the secretary of the ECU AC.

Even fun was provided with a riddle and a crossword.

Also the possibility is created to the arbiters to subscribe to our website. In that way, every arbiter doesn't have to miss any of the articles in the future, He/ she will also be informed of other announcements and events of the ECU Arbiters' world.

The ECU AC can always be in touch with them.

Other changes on our website were related to our reporting procedure. All forms for reporting procedure and for evaluation are now available online.

Other online workshops were also organized such as an ECU Arbiters' Council Online workshop for Arbiters in Online Chess, which was organized together with FIDE Arbiters' Commission.

Chairman Tomek Delega (ECU AC) and chairman Laurent Freyd (FIDE ARB) were the hosts.

More than 500 arbiters attended. The video on Youtube was watched for more than several 1000 times.

In addition a webinar about cheating in online chess tournaments was organized in cooperation with David Cordover, the founder of Tornelo, and a FIDE Arbiters Seminar for ladies.

And last but certainly not least the ECU AC decided during their online meeting on December 7th that the list of arbiters which was made after the "Call of Interest" at the beginning of this year, will be used for the appointment of arbiters in ECU Events in 2021. The arbiters which were appointed by ECU AC to be active during the first (cancelled) OTB tournaments of 2020 will be appointed first for the OTB tournaments in 2021.

When you are reading this article, 2020 will already be a bad memory, for most people to be forgotten as soon as possible.

Therefore, on behalf of the ECU AC, I would like to wish all our colleagues and chess friends a prosperous, healthy and happy New Year!

Stay safe, stay happy, stay healthy!

ECU Arbiters Council

IA Geert Bailleul, the author of the text is the Secretary of ECU Arbiters Council.

More articles can be found on ECU Arbiters Council Website.