

Text by:  
IA Marco Biagoli



## The new Arbiters' evaluation

A few years ago, together with call of interest's launch, the ECU arbiters' council started an ambitious project to implement a comprehensive system of evaluation of the arbiters' performances. Back that time, the idea was that a system of appointments could only work together with an assessment of the arbiters' performance in any single event, with the final purpose to include these evaluations as a part of the grades allotted in the Call of interests.

That was one of the key factors for the Call of Interests to be one tool to improve the overall quality of our arbiters. For the first year, we used a paper formular, that was afterwards changed into a web form.

Both the paper and the web forms contained several items to be evaluated by the chief arbiter. The Council also implemented a second form, where the deputy chief arbiters could evaluate their cooperation with the chief arbiter, as we believed that everyone should be assessed, not just to "give a number", but to highlight strengths and weak spots, and finally help him to improve.

Reading the assessment reports that came in the first three years of implementation gave a lot of useful information not only regarding the evaluated arbiters, but also about the ones who filled in the evaluations, and in general to assess the effectivity of the system itself.

Basing on these information, with the new term, the Council decided to create a new evaluation form, also using the experience of the arbiters' supervisors who worked during the Olympiads in Chennai.

We hence invited to our meetings Mr Takis Nikolopoulos, who was the supervisors' chair and is also an ECU president's advisor, to help us to creating a new evaluation form which is now in place and will be used for the first time in Serbia and Montenegro.

The new form includes a significant news: a very long introduction which makes it clear what is the purpose of the evaluation. Even if you don't plan to be, one day, the Chief Arbiter of one European event, you should definitely take a look to it, since it explains the philosophy of the whole system and gives some guidelines of how the evaluator should act. For the working of the new system, in fact, the Chief Arbiter's job of evaluating the staff is crucial.

We really wanted to underline that the evaluation is not a moral judgement or an act of friendship. By saying an arbiter didn't perform at the expected standard for one European Championship, the Chief Arbiter is not hurting him, but helping them enhance their future capabilities.

One of the biggest problems we noticed in the past was that some evaluations were clearly biased by the will to appear "nice" or not to hurt the staff members.

### ECU Arbiters Council

ECU Arbiters' Council publishes monthly articles in the ECU Newsletter. All the articles can be found on the ECU Arbiters Council website.

ECU AC contact:  
ecuarbiterscouncil@gmail.com

ECU Arbiters Council website:  
<https://arbiters.europechess.org/>



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But such way the evaluations were not useful to engage the arbiters to improve their weak spots. What we ask to an evaluator is to be objective and evaluate to the best of his knowledge and experience rather than his personal relationships with the arbiter: only this way the system will help us, the evaluated arbiters and the European movement in general.

You can clearly see this change since now we ask to comment briefly on each grade to let us understand why the Chief Arbiter gave a particular evaluation and not only in case of a negative mark.

Also the marks themselves changed and they are now reduced to two options which would probably make the job easier.

The two things go together: when the choice is between two options, the comment is vital to understand it, and it has to be a real motivation, not just something added to fulfil the form. "They were excellent" or "they were bad" are not sufficient comments: a real one shall be specific and refer to particular facts that occurred during the event and persuaded the Chief Arbiter to give that evaluation.

We finally ask also to put a general comment on the arbiter's job, preferably highlighting possible weaknesses and how to improve, as long as the specific good qualities that the arbiter showed: a generally well-performing arbiter, in fact, can have a weak spot that can be improved.

It is important to stress that our purpose is not to remove "bad arbiters" from the scene or glorify "very good arbiters". We wish to have a clear picture of the arbiters' level, to build some specific training and improve their qualities, and to understand in what function the arbiter do their best: the evaluation helps the arbiter, it is not against him!

Our global plan is to examine the forms after each event and assess them in the Council, contact the arbiters who underperformed and help them to grow. Such way, we will also learn if the system works as we expect or not, and how to improve it. If this system will work, we will all grow together.

And in case we will receive some random or trivial assessment, well, we will not know anything about the evaluated arbiter but we will learn a lot about the evaluator!



**Text by:**

**IA Marco Biagioli,  
Attorney at Law,  
ECU Legal Advisor**