



IBCA Congress
Hotel Rzeszow, Rzeszow, Poland
August 23, 2025, 17:00
Minutes

- Welcome by the President

Jörgen Magnusson, President, opens the Congress at 17:00 and welcomes all participants present in the meeting room and remotely on the Google Meet conference. He expresses his gratitude to the organizers of the World championship, the Polish Chess Federation and the Cross association, for a splendid event.

- Roll call of member countries and announcement of Proxies

Olivier Deville, Secretary, proceeds with the roll call, from a list of 76 member countries.

The following countries, represented in the meeting room, are in good standing with IBCA, and have the right to vote:

Argentina, represented by France
Austria
Bulgaria
Colombia, represented by Romania
Croatia
Czech Republic
Ecuador, represented by Poland
France
Germany
Greece, represented by Sweden
Guatemala, represented by USA
Hungary
India
Italy
Kazhakstan
Montenegro
North Macedonia
Panama, represented by Austria

Poland
Romania
Slovakia
Spain
Sweden
United Kingdom
USA
Uzbekistan

The following country, represented in the meeting room, has the status of provisional member, and cannot vote:

Kyrgyz Republic

The following country is represented by a player, without delegate rights:

Venezuela

The following countries are represented in the online conference:

Argentina
Belgium
Colombia
Kenya
Mexico
Pakistan
Serbia
South Africa

The following countries are in good standing with IBCA:

Argentina
Austria
Belgium
Bulgaria
Colombia
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Ecuador
France
Germany
Greece
Guatemala
Hungary
India
Italy
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kosovo
Montenegro
Netherlands

North Macedonia
Norway
Panama
Poland
Romania
Russia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Turkiye
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
United Kingdom
USA
Uzbekistan
Venezuela

The board proposes to grant voting rights to countries that have paid their annual fee less than 60 days before the date of the Congress. This proposal is unanimously approved by the Congress.

26 countries out of 38 countries with voting rights are present or represented. The quorum is established.

- Appointment of the election officer and assistant

The board proposes to appoint Sorin Lapadatu (Romania) as election officer, and Ewa Kazmierczak (Poland) as election officer assistant. This proposal is unanimously approved by the Congress.

- * President's report

The President's report was circulated in advance. Jörgen Magnusson believes that the IBCA has made very positive progress. Online tournaments organized via Skype or Lichess are now recognized and appear on the IBCA homepage. Following the recommendations of the 2023 Congress, development in Africa, the Americas, and Asia is progressing well. One hundred chess boards will be sent to South Africa and Kenya, and online coaching will soon be available. Jörgen thanks Marilyn Bland for her efforts in prospecting new member countries in the Caribbean, as well as the All India Chess for the Blind Association for organizing the Purple Festival in 2024. Thanks to the proposal submitted in 2023 by IBCA America, a World Rapid Championship will be held for the first time. Communication between countries on different continents has improved. WhatsApp groups are very active, and we are holding a hybrid Congress for the second time.

- Financial report

The treasurer's report was circulated in advance. Treasurer Thorsten Mueller took over the IBCA bank account in 2023 and thanks former treasurer Natasha Dalle for her excellent work. In 2023, the bank account had a balance of €26K, and airfare was a significant expense. The reduction in membership fees from €150 to €50 was offset by the introduction of tournament registration fees. In July 2025, the IBCA bank account had a balance of €37K, with virtually no expenses, which could be used to finance new projects and educational activities.

Bersan Vrioni (Italy) believes that IBCA fees should be higher for rich countries and lower for developing countries. Jörgen responds that we already had this discussion at the 2023 Congress.

IBCA does not need that much money at the moment, including from rich countries. Piotr Dukaczewski (Poland) points out that rich countries already contribute more by paying tournament registration fees. Mahendra Galani (Austria) adds that rich countries are free to donate to IBCA if they wish to contribute more. He also believes that IBCA's good financial health should be used to promote chess in Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

- Discharge of earlier board:

Sorin Lapadatu, election officer, is now chairing the meeting. He proposes to discharge the earlier board. This proposal is unanimously approved by the Congress.

- Proposal to permanently exclude the following member countries:
 - Canada (Braille Chess Canada)
 - Serbia

Proposal to permanently exclude Braille Chess Canada: Olivier Deville, who is familiar with the situation in Canada, points out that Braille Chess Canada has no democratic life. No meetings, no elections, not even a list of active members. Furthermore, Canadian players receive no information about upcoming IBCA events, which violates Article 2.6 of the IBCA Statutes. Therefore, the board proposes to permanently exclude Braille Chess Canada. The Congress approves this proposal by a majority vote (one vote against, no abstentions).

Proposal to permanently exclude Serbia: Jörgen Magnusson informs the Congress that the Presidential board proposes the permanent exclusion of NSSSS, Serbia's current member organization. A document outlining the many problems with this organization has been circulated in advance. In response to comments by Bersan Vrioni posted on the IBCA member countries mailing list, Jörgen deplors that Serbian players could be penalized by this exclusion. They could, however, continue to participate in individual IBCA events under the IBCA flag. Furthermore, NSSSS could reapply for membership after it has been reformed, or another Serbian organization could take over and become a member of IBCA. The problems with NSSSS are numerous: financial mismanagement, lack of respect for other member countries and IBCA officials. It is not possible to exclude a country for a fixed period; this option is not available in our statutes. Mahendra Galani (Austria) believes that exclusion is justified if Serbia really refuses to meet its financial obligations to IBCA and All India Chess Federation for the Blind. If not, IBCA could grant them additional time to pay. Bersan Vrioni (Italy) believes that a permanent exclusion is too harsh a decision; excluding NSSSS from organizing IBCA events would suffice. Vladan Petrovic (Serbia), who is present online at the Google Meet conference, apologizes to all those who suffered harm due to the poor organization of the Olympiad, partly due to the difficult political situation Serbia is currently facing. NSSSS is ready to pay any penalty, if given time to find the necessary funds. NSSSS is currently undergoing reform, and exclusion would further aggravate the organization's situation. Jörgen Magnusson states that NSSSS refunded the registration fees to IBCA after receiving at least seven reminders, which is unacceptable. NSSSS must reform itself before reapplying for IBCA membership. The refusal to grant visas to several countries has caused great disappointment in Asia and Africa, particularly in Kenya. It was not only financial irregularities that led the presidential board to unanimously propose the permanent exclusion of Serbia. Mahendra Galani sympathizes with the Serbian delegate, but believes that NSSSS has not acted in an exemplary manner and that its statements cannot really be taken into account. Mahendra thinks that Serbia should be given a chance, but adds that this is probably not going to happen. Piotr Dukaczewski (Poland) indicates that the presidential board was concerned about the difficulties encountered by several countries (Kenya, India, Uzbekistan, etc.) in obtaining their visas. The board sought help from FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich and even informed the media about the discrimination of players from Asia and Africa from the Serbian authorities. Serbia has violated several rules in our statutes, including by not encouraging the development of chess for the blind. Excluding Serbia is the only

way to resolve this situation. Ajeet Kumar (Pakistan), on the online conference, states that visas had also been refused to Pakistan for the event in Poland, despite assistance from Polish organizers. This means that countries like Pakistan will never be able to participate in IBCA events. It would therefore be better to organize IBCA events in Asia and Africa when possible.

The Congress approves the permanent exclusion of Serbia by a majority vote (7 votes against, 2 abstentions).

- Election of IBCA presidential board for 2025-29

The Nomination Commission chaired by José Maria Saponara (Argentina) published a list of nominations for presidential tickets. 7 member countries nominated the list led by Jörgen Magnusson. No other list was nominated. Jörgen Magnusson makes a short presentation of his presidential ticket:

President: Jörgen Magnusson (Sweden)

1st Vice-president: Piotr Dukaszewski (Poland)

2nd Vice-president: Nikos Kalesis (Greece)

Treasurer: Thorsten Mueller (Germany)

Secretary: Olivier Deville (France)

Sorin Lapadatu, election officer, asks the Congress to vote by showing of hands. The Magnusson ticket is unanimously elected by the Congress.

- Election of IBCA executive board for 2025-29

Jörgen Magnusson, new IBCA President, is chairing the meeting again. He thanks the Congress for its trust and will do his utmost to meet IBCA's expectations. He emphasized the importance of the Executive board, which acts as Congress between Congresses. Jörgen briefly introduced the proposed members of the Executive board:

Johannes Grib (South Africa), IBCA representative for Africa

Fernando Daza (Colombia), IBCA representative for America

James Infiesto (Philippines), IBCA representative for Asia

Mahendra Galani (Austria), IBCA representative for Europe

Marilyn Bland (USA), board member

Kishan Gangolli (India), board member

Harrison Nyaga (Kenya), board member

The proposed Executive board is unanimously approved by the Congress.

- Membership confirmation of new member countries

Olivier Deville, Secretary, gives a list of new member countries to be confirmed as permanent members by the Congress.

- Viet Nam

- Kyrgyz Republic

- * Pakistan

- Canada (AQJEHV)

- Barbados

These new member countries are approved by a majority vote by the Congress (one vote against

Pakistan).

* Appointment of the ethics commission until 2029

Guy Whitehouse (UK) has accepted to chair the ethics commission, if elected. The Congress unanimously approves this nomination. Two more members are needed. Several names are proposed:

Bersan Vrioni (Italy)
Ajeet Kumar (Pakistan)
Ernek Mukashev (Kyrgyz Republic)
Benito Hernandez (Mexico)

Jörgen proposes leaving the decision to the Executive board, so that every candidate would have the opportunity to present themselves. This proposal is unanimously approved by the Congress.

* Appointment of the nomination and electoral commission until 2029

José Maria Saponara (Argentina, chairman), Sorin Lapadatu (Romania), and Natasha Dalle (Belgium) have accepted to continue their mission until 2029. This proposal is unanimously approved by the Congress.

* Nomination of a new IBCA Arbiter

The Congress welcomes the nomination of David Clayton (UK) as IBCA Arbiter.

* Discussion on the facing reality for a fair and bright future document

This document, written by Jörgen Magnusson and discussed by the Presidential board and the Executive board, was circulated in advance. IBCA was founded in 1958, on the backgrounds of World War II, and was primarily a European organization. At that time, many members were blind. Many diseases that cause blindness have now been cured. Today, fewer B1 players are joining IBCA, while more B2- and B3 players are doing so. Of course, this is a consequence of healthcare, which is very positive. On other continents, the situation may be different, but the development of healthcare will ultimately have the same consequences. We haven't tested our players for years, until June 2024, during the European Championship in Romania. Five players were tested, and we have also received documents for five players from Serbia. We have now tested 20 additional players.

We want to get an idea of how much our players actually see. It seems that some players see more than what is permitted by our statutes, even though they have been allowed to play, and even welcomed.

It would be unfair to expel them outright, as they have never done anything wrong and no testing has been conducted by IBCA. On the other hand, it is natural that a B1 player might feel offended when a much more sighted player wins an important tournament. Our idea is to include players who have been with us for a very long time, even if they are B3 and B4, but award two titles, a general one and a title for B1-B2 players.

How many B1 players are in this tournament? Perhaps 15 or 20. With only B1 and B2 players, the tournaments would be very small, especially in Europe, and IBCA would gradually disappear. A title for visually impaired players and another one for B1-B2 players would be possible. It would be wise to modify one point of the statutes, in order to accept players whose eyesight is slightly better than that stipulated in the statutes, in close coordination with the Congress and in close consultation with IBCA Executive board.

Sorin Lapadatu (Romania) emphasized that team events should also be considered. One solution would be for each team to include at least one B1 player. Jörgen believes that more time is needed to formulate proposals for the 2027 Congress. Sorin adds that including women in teams, as in the FIDE Olympiad for Disabled, could also be an interesting idea.

José Maria Saponara (Argentina) suggests that players could participate in separate tournaments (B1 and B2/B3/B4), or play blindfolded, as is the case in Latin America. Jörgen replied that playing blindfolded would be too drastic for B2/B3/B4 players, and they simply wouldn't participate.

Bersan Vrioni (Italy) wonders how to definitively determine a player's category. He believes that the medical tests carried out at this championship lacked objectivity. Piotr Dukaczewski replied that we are only at the beginning of the process and we are still learning how to conduct the medical tests. Pablo Martínez Rodríguez (Spain) believes that it is necessary to include a woman in the team events.

Jörgen proposes that the Executive board appoint a group to discuss with member countries and examine possible tournament arrangements over the next two years.

* Vote on the modified statutes

The proposed modified statutes were circulated in advance. The changes are very difficult to summarize. Congress participants are invited to express their opinions on this document.

Bersan Vrioni (Italy) believes that allowing more than one organization per country, in order to allow more players to participate in IBCA events, is a good idea, but the proposed modified statutes pose several serious problems. First, it encourages separation rather than unity. Second, the vote count is incorrect: each member organization should have the same number of votes. Third, the vote count may breach the anonymity of the vote. A committee should be appointed to address these issues. Piotr replied that the Executive board has discussed the issue extensively. In some countries, we have multiple organizations. In other countries, conflicts arise. In the latter case, players are excluded from IBCA competitions due to these conflicts. Regarding the vote, it would remain anonymous, as the number of votes would be multiplied. This change in the statutes will resolve problems in some countries where certain players are excluded or even discriminated.

Swapnil Shah (India) believes these new statutes could pose problems in countries where everything goes well, particularly for team events. Players should not be excluded. To this end, individual events could remain open and all entries accepted. India suggests allowing only one membership per country and, for the Olympiads, allowing only a member country to send a team.

Bersan Vrioni believes that the new statutes will not guarantee the anonymity of voting and attempts to demonstrate this with an example. Jörgen replies that this example is wrong. Moreover, the new statutes do not encourage the creation of more than one organization per country, the text specifies: in special cases, that is, when all other means have been exhausted, and to avoid the exclusion of players.

José Luis Morales (Mexico) believes that allowing more than one organization per country would benefit IBCA itself, because it will allow IBCA to receive more annual fees. This new rule will create disorder. It would be much wiser to monitor existing organizations to ensure they comply with the IBCA's statutes. Mexico disagrees with this change to the statutes.

Josef Polnar (Czech Republic) disagrees with the rule that voting rights would be shared in the event of multiple organizations per country. Jörgen Magnusson replies that all countries would retain the same number of votes. According to Polnar, anonymity will not be guaranteed.

Jörgen Magnusson, President, proposes voting on the modified Statutes, as suggested by the Executive board, without dividing them into smaller parts. As there are no objections, we proceed to the vote. Four member countries vote against the modified Statutes, and no abstentions are recorded. More than two-thirds of the represented member countries approve the new Statutes; they are therefore adopted by the Congress.

* Upcoming tournaments

Jovan Milovic (Montenegro) presents Montenegro's bid for the next World Team Championship, scheduled for April 17-28, 2026, in Petrovac. The tournament will be open not only to the top 16 teams of the Olympiads, but to all countries. The event will be organized in close collaboration with the Montenegrin Chess Federation, the Paralympic Committee, and Montenegrin associations for the blind. Jovan has organized many high-level chess events in the past and promises that accommodation, transportation, etc., will be of high quality. The Montenegrin government is very liberal when it comes to visas, and the organizers have excellent relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sorin Lapadatu adds that IBSA held its last World Championship at the same venue and hotel, and the conditions were perfect. The Congress unanimously approves Montenegro's bid. IBCA recently received a bid from North Macedonia for the 2027 European Team Championships. The Executive board will work on this bid as soon as possible. The 2026 European Individual Championships will probably be held in Greece. The same year, we will also have the Junior and Women's World Championships. IBCA will announce the date and venue for this event in less than a month. The bid for the next Olympiads in 2029 has not yet been opened. Romania will submit a bid to host this event.

- Miscellaneous

Josef Polnar (Czech Republic) announces that he had submitted a bid for the 2026 European Individual Championships. Jörgen answers that the Executive board has discussed this bid and concluded that IBCA must ensure the stability of the Czech organization. The return of Czech players to IBCA competitions is excellent news, but for now, we have decided that Greece will host this event in October 2026.

- announcement of closure of congress by the president

The President thanks every participant for all contributions, and closes the meeting.

Olivier Deville
Secretary IBCA