



## EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

MINUTES OF THE  
OF THE EBL GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
Held at 10.15 a.m. on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2008  
at Palais Beaumont, Pau - France

Present:	Gianarrigo Rona	President
	Yves Aubry	1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President
	Radek Kielbasinski	2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President
	Panos Gerontopoulos	Honorary Secretary
	Marc De Pauw	Treasurer
	Sevinç Atay	Executive Committee Member
	Jens Auken	Executive Committee Member
	Jean-Claude Beineix	Executive Committee Member
	David Harris	Executive Committee Member
	Micke Melander	Executive Committee Member
	Guido Resta	Executive Committee Member
	Armand Trippaers	Executive Committee Member
	Pim Vaders	Executive Committee Member

Also present:	Bill Pencharz	Honour President
	Anna Maria Torlontano	Honour Vice-President
	Jaime Ortiz-Patiño	Honour Member
	Nissan Rand	Honour Member
	Marina Madia	Secretary to the President

And the Delegates from the following 31 National Bridge Organisations having the indicated number of votes, according art.24 of the Statutes:

Belgium	3	G. Bertotto - proxy	Malta	1	M. Dix
Bulgaria	1	J. Stamatov	Monaco	1	G. Bertotto
Croatia	3	N. Sver	Netherlands	7	A. Trippaers
Cyprus	1	D. Ballas	Norway	5	H. Stanghelle
Denmark	5	O.V. Veje	Poland	4	S. Latala
England	6	P. Stocken	Portugal	2	J. Passarinho - proxy
Finland	2	M. Henningsen - proxy	Romania	2	M. Radulescu
France	7	O. Audouard	Russia	3	W.Y. Zakopletov
Germany	6	H.G. Haeseler	San Marino	1	F. Palma - proxy
Greece	4	F. Skoularikis	Scotland	4	D. Liggat
Iceland	2	H. Jensen - proxy	Serbia	1	D. Culič
Ireland	3	T. Roche	Spain	4	E. Molero
Israel	4	Z. Ben Tovim	Sweden	5	L. Persson
Italy	6	G. Resta	Switzerland	3	R. Mucha
Lebanon	1	P. Vanhouttel - proxy	Turkey	4	A. Aydin
			Wales	2	P. Jourdain

The President welcomed the Delegates to EBL General Assembly to discuss the following Agenda:

1. Confirmation of Roll Call
2. Confirmation of appointment of the Assembly Committee
3. Approval of the Minutes of the General Assembly, Antalya 2007
4. President's Report
5. Approval of the President's Report
6. Treasurer's Report - Balance-sheet 2007 & Auditors report
7. Approval of the Balance-sheet 2007
8. Indexation of the membership-dues and Budget 2009/2010
9. Approval of the indexation of the membership-dues
10. World Mind Sport Games, Beijing October 2008
11. Bridge & University
12. Varia

## **1.Roll Call**

The Honorary Secretary, Panos Gerontopoulos, took the Roll Call of Delegates which showed the presence of the above mentioned NBOs. The Hon. Secretary certified the presence of 31 NBOs on a total of 46 having right to vote and of 103 votes on a total of 121

The President, according to the art. 20 of the EBL Statutes, declared validly constituted the Assembly and opened the works, saying:

*First of all it is my pleasure to report to you the message which I received from José Damiani: "Dear Gianarrigo, as you know it is for me a great pity not to attend the EBL General Assembly. I would have loved to meet so many friends of mine on this occasion and congratulate the EBL Executive for what I already see as a great championship. You may read this letter to the EBL members as well as a short report I made on the WBF activities. You have been as Vice President of the WBF, associated with the main action and decision-making and can comment and answer to any question. If my health allows me to join you for the end, no doubt I will do it. Please forward in the meantime all my best to all the people present in Pau. With my kindest regards. José Damiani". I am sure I will be speaking for all of us when I send José our thanks for his message and our best greetings and wishes, hoping to have him here with us for the closing ceremony. Of course we will examine José's report later. But if we are sad because José could not attend this meeting, we are very happy that Jimmy Ortiz-Patiño, WBF President Emeritus and EBL Honorary Member, is here with us. As all of you know, Jimmy has been the father of the modernisation of the structure and organisation both of EBL and WBF; under his guidance new policy and rules, today still surviving, were introduced and bridge has had an impressive development throughout the world, becoming a true sport discipline able, later, to be recognised by the Olympic Committee. With his presence Jimmy honours and enriches our meeting and our championship, confirming once again his support and his friendship. Thank you Jimmy for coming and especially for your leadership and guidance and for everything you did and are still doing for bridge. I will be very happy if you want to address the assembly.*

Mr. Ortiz-Patiño thanked the President for the invitation and said that he was very pleased to attend the General Assembly. He congratulated the EBL and the NBOs for their activity and results achieved, underlining that EBL is the most important Zone of the WBF not only because of the number of members which is about the 50% of the total, but also for the activity done in managing, organising and developing bridge. He said that the EBL has been very lucky because it had very good President in José Damiani, to whom he wishes a quick recover, and now in Gianarrigo Rona. Mr. Ortiz-Patiño concluded saying "I'll keep supporting you"

## **2.Appointment of the Assembly Committee**

On the proposal of the President, the General Assembly unanimously approved to nominate Mr Dimitri Ballas as President of the Assembly Committee and Dejan Culič and Marina Madia as members.

## **3.Approval of the minutes of the General Assembly, Antalya 2007**

The Assembly unanimously approved the minutes of the General Assembly held in Antalya on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2007.

## **4.President Report**

The President made the following report to the General Assembly:

*Mr. President Emeritus of the WBF, Jimmy Ortiz-Patiño, Mr. Honorary President, Bill Pencharz, Mr. President of the French Bridge Federation, Yves Aubry, dear EBL NBO Delegates, dear colleagues of the EBL Executive Committee, Ladies and Gentleman, my dear friends, good morning to all of you and welcome to Pau and to the General Assembly of the European Bridge League. Before starting my report I want to say some words to remember the many friends of bridge who have now passed away. Friends who dedicated their passion, and enthusiasm to the development, organisation and management of bridge. . As representatives of all of them I am honoured to mention two extraordinary persons: Marc Hodler, who was for many years Vice President of the IOC and President of the Swiss Bridge Federation whose name is linked forever to the recognition of bridge by the IOC, and Paul Magerman, who was President of the EEC Board and of the Belgian Bridge Federation, and member of the EBL Executive. Please stand for a moment's silence in their memory. Thank you.*

*Dear Friends, one year passed since our assembly in Antalya where the new legislature of the EBL started with the election of the new board, and I am pleased to report to you about our work since then and our plans for the future.*

### **Membership & Registered Members**

*Nowadays EBL has 46 affiliated countries in good standing, following the suspension of Armenia and Ukraine, who have not fulfilled their obligations in accordance with the Statutes. The Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia – FYROM – and Montenegro requested information about affiliation and we are in contact with them to start the procedure. The number of members registered in the different Federations as of December 31st, 2007 is 393,551 with a 965 unit increase compared to the previous year.*

### Meetings

*In 2007 the Executive Committee had two meetings in June in Antalya, after the General Assembly, and in September in Madrid in occasion of Celebration organized by the Spanish Federation in honor of Juan Antonio Samaranch, Past President and Honor President for life of the IOC. The Presidential Council had its meeting in November in Wroclaw in occasion of the Champions Cup rather than during May as is usual. On these occasions the other various EBL Committees were also able to hold meetings. In 2008 the meeting of the Presidential Council was held in May in Lucignano, Tuscany, at the estate of Filippo Palma di Fratianni, Vice-President Vicarious of the Italian Bridge Federation and member of the EBL Championship Committee. As I reported in the previous assemblies the EBL is hosted for free, having therefore no other cost than the travel expenses.*

### Seminars & Courses

*Many times in our meeting we agreed about the importance of having periodical contacts and close relationships with our members, organizing meetings, congresses, seminars and courses. As I reported to you last year, in 2007 the EBL NBO Officers Seminar was held in Rome in the premises of Giulio Onesti's Olympic Centre and you all, I believe, attended this event. In 2008, just three weeks ago, the 30th and 31st of May, in Telecittà, the Seminar of the EBL TDs was held, to examine and discuss the New Laws of Bridge, approved by the WBF in Shanghai, October 2007, and to be adopted by the NBOs before on 1st October 2008. The Seminar, organized and managed by the EBL TDs Committee, was very constructive much appreciated by all the TDs in attendance. I take the occasion to thank Jean-Claude Beineix and his colleagues of the Committee Ton Kooijman, Antonio Riccardi, Max Bavin, Maurizio Di Sacco and Bertrand Gignoux for the impressive job done. All the documents concerning the Seminar will be published on the EBL web.*

### Championships

*In June 2007 in Antalya the 3rd European Open Bridge Championships were held with great success both in organisation and in participation and I want once again to thank the Turkish Bridge Federation and my dear friends Ata Aydin and Sevinç Atay who really did an impressive job, together with the Championship Committee, led by Jean-Claude Beineix, Micke Melander and Ton Kooijman. The event was also very successful from a financial point of view, as you can see in the 2007 balance-sheet. In July in Jesolo the Youth Teams Championship was held was again very successful thanks to the Italian Bridge Federation and the Organizing Committee who worked in a superb way, investing considerable financial resources together with an enthusiasm, a professionalism and a dedication. I am pleased also to underline the impressive job done in managing the competition by the Youth Committee, led by Panos Gerontopoulos. In November in Wroclaw the 6th edition of the Champions Cup was held and was another very successful event, thanks the Polish Bridge Union and its President Radek Kielbasinski who, as usual, offered a great support both in finance and management. In the meantime in Monaco, Pim Vaders and Jean-Charles Allavena managed the 1st European Small States Championship, introduced in our calendar after the decision taken in Rome in January at the EBL Officers Seminar. The championship was a great success with some 12 NBOs participating and opened a new very important way not only in bridge competition, but also in bridge development, because it could be a tremendous support in promoting the discipline, helping the small Federations to increase their numbers and to grow. I must*

warmly thank Jean-Charles Allavena, the father of this initiative. Let now me spend a few words on this 49th European Bridge Teams Championship. From a first analysis of the participation, with the record attendance in all three categories, it seems to be destined to be a big success and not only meet, but also to exceed our expectations. I want to particularly thank the City of Pau and its Mayor, M.me Martine Lignières-Cassou, the French Bridge Federation, led by my dear friend and colleague Yves Aubry, as well as the Organizing Committee, led by Olivier Audouard, who worked in a superb way, investing in this event big financial resources together with an enthusiasm, a professionalism and a dedication, that I seldom found in the past. They deserve, together with all their colleagues, our unconditioned applause and our gratitude. I am sure all the participants will enjoy this great event.

### Technology

Today we have a solid website where we have invested a lot of work to make it attractive and useful to the European player. I have already reported to you last year in Antalya the very impressive numbers which are growing and growing every day.

The technological advance of the League has also been sought in the integration of today's technology into one unified system: the Tournament Management System, created by Fotis Skoularikis. This provides automation to the entire championship procedure, from participants' registration to scoring and results posting both on- and off-site. This year it is possible also to line-up using your own computer from wherever you are. The advantages are obvious: speed of results, instant availability on Internet, avoidance of players' identification mistakes, master points, archiving, etc. In addition here in Pau we started with the new vu-graph system realized by Prof. Gianni Baldi and the result is here for us all to see. I believe that the show in the vu-graph theatre is superb, giving the spectators the opportunity to follow, board per board all the matches and the current ranking of all the categories. And it is not finished because, through internet, at home, everywhere in the world, it is possible to follow the show.

In a short time we will have a completely integrated system, which can carry out all the things we need to do.

### Finances

Our Treasurer will report to you about the finance, submitting to you the 2007 balance-sheet and the budget. I want only anticipate that in 2007, thanks to the excellent results of the Antalya, the positive result about Jesolo, the strict control of the expenses and an attentive distribution of the resources, we have been able to close the balance with a good profit. For this reason I must thank my colleagues, and in particular Marc de Pauw.

### WBF matters

From 29th September to 13th November with Yves Aubry, Jens Auken, Marc De Pauw and Armand Trippaers I were in Shanghai attending the World Championships, the WBF Council and various Committee Meetings. Panos Gerontopoulos and Anna Maria Torlontano, invited by José Damiani, attended the Council and some Committee Meetings. As you know, in the competitions Europe achieved some great results with the victory of Norway and the 3rd place of Netherlands in the Bermuda Bowl and the silver medal of Germany in the Venice Cup. After this event the first 6 players in the world ranking are from Europe (and, as an Italian, I am of course particularly proud because they are all from Italy), and Sabine Auken is leading the women's ranking. Many important issues

were discussed at the table of the WBF Council and many important decisions taken, as you can see in the minutes of the meetings that you have in your folder together with my report to the Council. In any case the most important decisions concerned the approval of the New Bridge Laws and the New Cycle of the WBF Championship (table in your folder). In Shanghai we had also a meeting of the Restructuring Committee to discuss and examine the changes to introduce to the WBF Constitution and By laws, following the proposal from Europe. From 10th to 16th December I was invited by José Damiani to attend the IMSA Meeting in Beijing and to visit the venue of the World Mind Sport Games. Later I will be pleased to read the report from José Damiani concerning the WBF activity.

#### Future events

The 2008 EBL Competition programme will be completed with the Youth Pairs Championship and the Champions Cup. The Youth Pairs Championship will be held at Gem Sport Centre in Wroclaw from 15th to 18th July and I want to express my gratitude to Radek Kielbasinski personally and to the Polish Bridge Union for taking on the responsibility of organising the event in a very short time, after that we heard that it was impossible to organize it in Frankfurt, as planned. The Champions Cup will be held at the White House in Amsterdam from 6th to 9th November with the cooperation of the Dutch Bridge Federation and with its President, my dear friend and colleague Armand Trippaers personally involved in the organisation. As you know the competition is reserved to the National Teams Champions of the first 10 ranked Countries of the Pau Championship, plus the defending Champions and the host team. So we have to wait the end of these championships to know the teams entitled to be invited. In the past month we worked very hard to programme and plan the EBL events for the future years, in order to have the situation completely under control and to avoid mistakes, misunderstandings or last minute surprises. For 2009 we plan to have the 4th European Open Championship in Sanremo, Italy, from 12th to 27th June. Sanremo, the town of flowers, is a very well-known Italian town (not only for the classic Milano-Sanremo bicycle race, the Cars International Rally or the Song International Festival) on the Ligurian Sea, close to the border with France and we hope to be able to achieve a great success. We received very good support from the local Authorities and we have started the organisation. You can find in your folder the first useful information. After Sanremo in the middle of July we will have the Youth Teams Championship in Brasov, Romania and we are at the moment discussing all the organisational details with Marius Georgescu, President of the Romanian Bridge Federation. We hope to forward all the details and useful information immediately after the summer holidays. In October the Champions Cup will be held in Paris and we are defining all the details with the French Federation. In 2010 the European Teams Championship will be held in Ostend, Belgium where we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary. With Marc De Pauw and Bart Magerman we have already met the Deputy Mayor and the Director of the Tourism Office of Ostend to discuss the organisation and a representative of Ostend will give an official presentation at the Executive Committee next week. We have some proposals for the Champions Cup and we are examining them. If there is any NBO interested in the organisation of the Youth Pairs Championship, please do not hesitate to contact me. We are examining proposals we have received for the 2011 Open Championship and with Jens Auken and Marc De Pauw we are discussing with the Danish Bridge Federation the organisation of the 2012 Teams Championship in Aarhus, where we have already gone to speak with the local Authorities and to visit the venue.

### Conclusion

*My dear friends, this is the synopsis of what we have done in the last year, during which time, of course, the ordinary work done in the offices in Milan, Athens and Brussels has continued. I would like to note that in the Milan office, Marina had to work very hard in this period to follow the organisation of the TDs Seminar, all the problems concerning Pau, Wroclaw and Sanremo, the preparation of the General Assembly, the usual office job and in addition support me in all my activity and movements and I would like to thank her very warmly. I also want to thank all my colleagues and everyone who has worked with the EBL. I am very proud to say that we are a great team and if we continue along our current path I am sure we will achieve all the objectives we laid out in Antalya at the beginning of the legislature. Of course we cannot forget that we are living, everywhere in Europe, with very few exceptions, in a period of recession and difficulties which involve social and economical change and it means that we have to increase even more our dedication, passion and enthusiasm. As I said at the Opening Ceremony, this year, the Olympic Year, Sport will celebrate its higher moment and in October in Beijing, Bridge together with the other Mind Sports will be part of this celebration, underlining that it is possible to play together, to compete together, to interact with each other, rejecting any discrimination, in peace, friendship and harmony. This is our message and this message starts from here, from Pau, where, once again, I am sure that we will be proud to show the real and true values of our discipline. Once again this event will reflect our way of being and thinking. Once again we will reinforce the message of our motto "Bridge for Peace" I am at the end dear Friends and I want to thank you for what you, all of you, have done and are doing for bridge in managing, organizing and developing our marvelous discipline. Remember that you are the EBL and we are proud to be working with you: without you, your support, your friendship, your solidarity we could not achieve any result, we could not do anything.*

*Thank you for the attention and un abbraccio to you all.*

### **5.Approval of the President's Report**

The President opened the floor to discussion about his report but no-one asked leave to speak.

The report was subject to a vote and the General Assembly approved it by acclamation. The President thanked the Delegates.

### **6.Treasurer's Report - Balance Sheet and Accounts 2007 and Auditor's Reports.**

The President called upon the EBL Treasurer, Mr. Marc De Pauw, to address the General Assembly and the Treasurer reported as per following:

*Dear Delegates,*

*Only one year ago, in Antalya, the General Assembly was presented and approved the following financial reports: the accounts for the years 2003 to 2006 and the budgets for 2007 and 2008. On today's agenda, I will be presenting the accounts 2007 and the*

*budgets for the years 2009 and 2010. To make the joint between these years, and to be able to give you a full overview of EBL's financial situation, I will also give you an update on the budget 2008. Before discussing the figures, I would like to remind the policy framework – for the financial management of the League - which was put in place by the Executive Committee in 2003 and as it has been updated by the new Executive Committee, after the 2007 elections:*

*FIXED income & expenses: The overall goal for the fixed side of the budget, containing the yearly recurrent income and expenses which are related to the operational functioning of the League, is to break even. To the extent structural sponsorships can be established, at least part of these additional resources should be used to lower the financial contributions by the NBO's.*

*VARIABLE income & expenses: For the second part of the budget – containing the income & expenses linked to: a) the organisation of Championships; b) special bridge competitions (e.g. the Internet Simultaneous Pairs); c) the organisation of TD courses, NBO Seminars, Teaching Weeks, etc ... - the goal is: In the even years, to break even on the Championship's financial results, investing in other activities (TD courses, NBO Seminars, ...). In the odd years, mainly thanks to the positive results of the Open Championships, to contribute to the building up of the financial reserves of EBL.*

*Regarding the OVERALL RESULT, our goal is to rebuild a strategic financial reserve for the League: by the end of 2010, the target is to reach an amount of 500.000 €; on a longer term, the minimum reserves of the League should be put at the level of 750.000 €.*

## **YEAR 2007 ACCOUNTS**

*The figures concerning the Profit & Losses account 2007 are shown in Attachment A. For reasons of comparison, on the same table, also the budgets 2008 to 2010 are shown. On these budget figures I will comment later. The full report on the year 2007 accounts, including the Auditor's opinion, has already been sent to the NBO. Some copies are available at this Meeting.*

### **PROFIT & LOSSES ACCOUNT (P&L)**

#### **P&L – FIXED SIDE**

*As was the case in the previous years, the dominant source of income for the League, on the fixed side of its' P&L, are the membership dues. Membership figures 2006, the basis for the calculation of the 2007 dues, increased by 1073, in comparison with the previous year. In 2006, EBL counted 381.734 regular members and 11.950 members under the age of 20. At the year end, besides the 2 suspended countries (Armenia and Ukraine), no one of the 48 NBO's failed to fulfil the financial commitments to the League. Including the financial income, on EBL's assets, total fixed income, in 2007, has reached the amount of 238,4 k€. During the year 2007, given the policy objective to break even on the fixed side of the budget, continuous efforts to limit the fixed expenses to the strict necessary, have been undertaken. In comparison with the initial budget, due to some marginal adjustments concerning the expenses of the League's bodies and because of some new initiatives (e.g. the Masterpoint programme, the small NBO's committee and the new*

insurance policy covering the directors' responsibilities ), real expenses (252 k€) exceeded the initial budget by some 24 k€. In my view however, all of the expenses made were justifiable and necessary with regard to the League's missions. In total, the fixed side of the Profit & Loss account 2007 shows a deficit of 13,2 k€. For a number of years now, it has been established that, with the present financial means of the League and being unable to find a structural sponsor to cover our fixed expenses, the break even goal on this side of the P&L cannot be attained. For this reason, the Executive Committee has decided to submit a proposal to the General Assembly to index the dues to the League.

### **P&L – VARIABLE SIDE**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the European Open Championships, organized during the second half of June in Antalya, Turkey have fulfilled our expectations. With 214 teams and 675 pairs in competition, the numbers exceeded the Tenerife '05 championships (196 teams & 589 pairs), without equaling however the Menton '03 participation (307 teams & 928 pairs). It has to be noted that the Turkish Bridge Federation, besides offering the League vast logistic and financial support, has motivated an important number of Turkish players to participate in this event. On the financial side, this event has produced a bonus of near to 216 k€. This financial result proving the fact that the organisation of the Open Championship can and must substantially contribute to the League's financial position, the EBL Executive Committee has decided not to discontinue this format of international bridge competition. 22 Junior, 16 Schools and 12 Girls Teams competed in the 21<sup>st</sup> European Youth Team Championships, organized in Jesolo, Italy (July 11-21). This very nice and much appreciated event has received the full support of the FIGB, the Italian Bridge Federation. Thanks to these circumstances, the net cost for the League was limited to some 19 k€, which is substantially lower than in previous editions. From 4-9 August, in Bruges Belgium, the European Universities Bridge Cup 2007 was organized. Following the line of these bi-annual Championships, which have been organized since 1994, now EUSA (the European branch of FISU) has accepted the patronage of the event. In Bruges, 32 teams have competed. As in the previous years, EBL's contribution to these Championships was limited to 10 k€. The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the European Champions Cup, took place in Wroclaw, Poland, from November 8 – 11. Thanks again to the Polish Bridge Union, who has supported this event by providing substantial logistic and financial support, this prestigious Championship took place under the best of conditions whilst limiting the cost for the League to a very reasonable 10 k€. For some years now, Anna Gudge and her team have been organizing a yearly Simultaneous Internet Pairs Competition. Each year aiming at a wider spread participation, objective which still remains to be achieved, this competition produces a small (7 k€) but much appreciated contribution to the League's financial results. Finally, in the beginning of the year, an NBO Seminar was organized in the premises of the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) in the outskirts of Roma. During these meetings, many interesting presentations were produced and there was extensive opportunity to exchange ideas and organize bilateral meetings with the NBO Delegates. On the financial level, this Seminar had a cost – or would the word investment be a better chosen one ? – of some 30 k€. Overall, the variable side of the Profit & Loss Statement for the year shows a bonus of 155 k€

## **GLOBAL FINANCIAL RESULT FOR THE YEAR 2007**

*Adding up the figures for both the fixed and the variable side of the Profit & Loss Statement 2007, we arrive at a bonus of 141,2 k€. The financial outcome of 2007 constitutes a new step toward to rebuilding of the financial reserves of the League. At the end of the year, the equity position of the League reached the amount of 401,98 k€, as is shown on the balance sheet.*

### **BALANCE SHEET 2007**

*In Attachment B, the balance sheet at the end of 2007 is shown. For reasons of comparison, the 2006 year end figures have been added. It remains the policy goal of the present EBL Executive Committee to arrive, as soon as possible, to a level of equity which offers a better guarantee for the future activities.*

### **AUDITOR'S REPORTS**

*EBL's accounts are examined and verified by Ernst & Young. The full report which has been produced for the year 2007 is at the disposal of the Delegates. In Attachment C, a copy of the auditor's opinion for the year 2007 is given.*

### **CONCLUSION**

*After a satisfactory year 2006, the financial result for the year 2007 is totally in line with the aims set forward. By accepting the proposed indexation of the NBO dues to the League, our Members will further support their League to fulfil its statutory mission.*

## **7. Approval of the Balance Sheet and Accounts 2007**

The President thanked Mr. De Pauw and opened the floor to discussion about the treasurer's report: Mr. Patrick Jourdain, Wales and Mr. Jan Kamras, Sweden asked leave to speak.

Mr. Patrick Jourdain (Wales) asked which was the foreseen profit for Sanremo and Mr. De Pauw answered that the foreseen profit was lower than the one had in Antalya and that no decision had still been taken on what incentives give to the players. Mr. Jan Kamras (Sweden) asked which was the point of having a reserve of € 750.000,00. Mr. De Pauw answered that EBL has to have a reserve to face any unsuccessful event and, taking into consideration the annual budget, EBL needs to have a minimum reserve of € 750.000,00 to feel save.

Not having other questions from the assembly, the President invited approval of the Balance Sheet and Accounts 2007 and they were approved without any exception.

## **8. Indexation of the membership-dues - Examination of the Budget 2008/2009/2010**

Mr. Marc De Pauw explained the proposal to index-link the yearly dues to EBL and the Budget 2009 and 2010 as per following:

## Proposal to index-link yearly dues to EBL

### 1. Antecedents

The principle of 1 Chf/member, as the basis for the yearly dues to the European Bridge League, was adopted by the Malta June '99 Congress.

In Maastricht August 2000, in discussing with the NBO Delegates, the Executive Committee proposed to apply this principle in the following way:

- a) spread the increase in dues over a 3-year period ('00-'02);
- b) apply a decreasing scale, in relation with the membership numbers.

This proposal and the dues schedule, was formally approved by the Congress in it's June '01 Meeting in Tenerife.

Since then, the following scale has been applied for the calculation of the yearly dues to EBL, the Chf being converted into the € at the rate of 1 Chf = 0,68 €, from the year 2004 onwards:

The minimum yearly contribution to the League amounts to 680 €. Up to 30000 members, the NBO pay the full 0,68 €/member. Above this n° of members, a decreasing scale is applied.

Number of members	Minimum €	€/member (in addition to minimum)	Additional dues (at max memb. within category)	Total dues (at max memb. of category)
0 - 500	680	0,00	0	680
501 - 30000	680	0,68	20060	20740
30001 - 60000	20740	0,34	10200	30940
60001 - 90000	30940	0,17	5100	36040
90000+	36040	0,10	(no maximum)	(no maximum)

The minimum yearly contribution to the League amounts to 680 €. Up to 30000 members, the NBO pays the full 0,68 €/member. Above this n° of members, a decrease scale is applied.

### 2. Inflation Figures

Since **1999**, the cost of living and also the costs of running the League have increased substantially. According to the OECD statistics for Europe, by the end of 2007 and based upon an index year 2000=100, the price indicator will have reached the index 125. This means that, over a 7-year period, prices have risen by some 25 %.

For EBL, lodging it's expenses mainly in Europe, this means a loss of purchasing power of the same order.

### 3. Proposal

The EBL Executive Committee proposes to the General Assembly to accept, in its Pau June '08 Meeting, the principle of a yearly indexation of the dues to the League. The rate of indexation would be decided upon by the Executive Committee, and would be in

relation with the inflation figures as measured by OECD. For the year 2008 the schedule of dues would be fixed as follows:

Number of members	Minimum €	€/member (in addition to minimum)	Additional dues (at max memb. within category)	Total dues (at max memb. of category)
0 - 500	750	0,00	0	750
501 – 30000	750	0,75	22125	22875
30001 – 60000	22875	0,38	11400	34275
60001 - 90000	34275	0,20	6000	40275
90000+	40275	0,11	(no maximum)	(no maximum)

Because this scale can only be applied after having received the approval by the General Assembly, the initial contributions to EBL (to be invoiced at the beginning of 2008) have been based upon the old schedule of dues. If approved, the increase for 2008 would be collected together with the dues for the year 2009.

### **Budgets 2008 – 2009 - 2010**

The budget figures for the years 2008 to 2010 are shown in Attachment A. The year 2008 figures concern a “present view” on this years’ possible results. The other figures have not yet been proposed, and accepted, by the EBL Executive Committee. This discussion is scheduled for the Pau Meetings.

Some comments:

#### **1. BUDGET 2008**

Supposing the approval of the dues indexation (starting in 2008), whilst maintaining the fixed expenses at their present level, the outcome of the fixed side of the P&L would be a small bonus. Achieving this result would mean that, for the first time in many years, the break even goal for this side of our accounts would be achieved. The Championships and activities programme, as reflected on the variable side of the 2008 budget, allows for the following events: By the time this document will be submitted to the General Assembly, the 49<sup>th</sup> European Teams Championships will be well underway. High participation figures and a well organised event by the French Bridge Federation, will normally produce a good financial result for EBL. Our budget is made on a 93k€ bonus, quite similar to the Warsaw '06 figure. We remain in Poland for the 9<sup>th</sup> European Youth Pairs Championships, where the city of Wroclav and the PBU will be again hosting this event. Though this Championship is meant to break even, we budget a small loss of 10k€. Early November, we will be going to the nice city of Amsterdam, where the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the European Champions Cup will take place. A budget allowance of 7,5k € is foreseen. Again counting upon Anna Gudge, we have assumed an income of some 7 k€ out of the Simultaneous Pairs Competition. Last May, in Telecitta – Italy, a TD course has been organised, to

explain the new Competition rules the WBF has put in place. The cost of this organisation is estimated at 15k€. In total, adding up the figures of the fixed and the variable side of the budget, at the end of the year we would arrive at a bonus of some 72k €, bringing EBL's reserves near to the 474 k€ border line.

## 2. BUDGET 2009

Awaiting possible new initiatives to be decided by the EBL Executive Committee, the P&L estimate for the year 2009 shows, on its' fixed side, a bonus of some 16k€. This again, would be in line with our policy objectives. On the variable side of the P&L, the following initiatives have been budgeted: After the successful organisation in Antalya, Turkey, now Italy (most probably the city of San Remo) will be organising for the first time the 4<sup>th</sup> European Open Bridge Championships. Though we hope for a record attendance, beating the Menton figures, we have cautiously estimated the profit of this event at the level of 150 k€. No venue has yet been identified for the 22<sup>nd</sup> European Youth Teams Championships. As for the past edition, we aim at a deficit not exceeding 10 k€. For the 8<sup>th</sup> European Champions Cup, we will be going to the city of Paris, France. Here, again, the aim is not to spend more than the 10 k€, we have seen in the last couple of editions. Finally, we hope to register a bonus coming out of the yearly Simultaneous Pairs Competition. It has however been established that a wider spread participation, in the geographical sense of the word, could produce much higher figures. In a venue yet to be found, the idea is to organise a new NBO Seminar. Traditionally, the investment made in this well attended and always highly appreciated organisation is some 25 k€. Because, if reality follows the budgeted figures, in the course of the year 2009, we would achieve the short term goal of bringing EBL's financial reserves over the 500 k€ borderline, the Executive Committee has decided to launch a new initiative. Responding to the needs signalled by several NBO's , starting in 2009, a Youth bridge Promotion Fund would be set up. In the current budget, and depending on the realisation of the financial objectives as set out for this year, a first contribution of 50 k€ is foreseen. The precise uses for these funds, the aims and objectives for this Fund, will be decided upon on proposal of the EBL Youth Committee. Putting together the results of both sides of our P&L, the financial outcome of the year 2009 would be a bonus of some 67,8 k€. As shown in Attachment A, if realised, this would bring the EBL equity near to 550 k€. So doing, another strategic goal would be attained.

## 3. BUDGET 2010

It is off course early days to foresee the results of the year 2010, last working year of the present Executive Committee. Without having been discussed, at this day, by the Executive Committee, the presented budget reflects the working of the League "as is" and does not include any new initiatives. The fixed side of the P&L includes all the usual elements, closing with a bonus of some 23 k€. On the variable side, the following organisations and championships have been programmed: Contacts in order to find a suitable venue for the organisation of the 50<sup>th</sup> European Teams Championships are currently underway. This special edition will be the occasion to commemorate the history of this prestigious event. Besides this, are also programmed: the 10<sup>th</sup> Youth Pairs Championships, the 9<sup>th</sup> European Champions Cup and the Simultaneous Pairs Competition. Depending on the results for all of these planned activities, a second contribution of 25 k€ to the Youth bridge Promotion Fund has been foreseen. Finally, we foresee the organisation of a Tournament Directors & Teachers course. Adding the

*financial result of both sides of the P&L, we would arrive at a small bonus of some 5 k€, putting the EBL at the level of some 655 k€.*

## **9. Approval of the index-link of the membership-dues**

The President thanked Mr. De Pauw and opened the floor to discussion: Mr. Liggat, Scotland, Mr. Kamras, Sweden, Mr. Stocken, England, Mr. Audouard, France, Mr. Henningsen, Finland, Mr. Trippaers, Netherlands and Mr. Dix, Malta asked leave to speak.

Mr. David Liggat noted that the pound area had a strong devaluation towards the euro and Mr. De Pauw answered that it depends on the different currencies. Mr. Kamras asked if the increase will start from 2008 and will be billed in 2009 and Mr. De Pauw answered that it is so. Mr. Peter Stocken asked if every year from now on there will be an indexation and Mr. De Pauw answered that for the moment EBL is trying to recover the 10% increase of the last period, but the idea was to keep it, otherwise in a few years there will be again the same situation. Mr. Audouard asked if the Assembly had to vote for the proposal altogether or for each point separately and in addition if in the years to come the amount of the indexation will also be approved by the Assembly; Mr. De Pauw answered that the proposal should be voted altogether and that the approval by the Assembly for the years to come was not in the proposal, but it was possible to consider it. Mr. Henningsen asked if it was necessary to introduce the indexation this year, considering that next year the NBOs will have to pay for two indexations, so having a great increase to pay for; Mr. De Pauw answered that he could understand it but looking at the EBL figures there is still a loss to cover. Mr. Stocken said that they were not able to discuss the proposal with their members; Mr. De Pauw noted that the Agenda had been sent 60 days ago and Mr. Stocken said he did not receive any papers and it was very difficult for him to know how he should react without consulting his board. Mr. Kamras and Mr. Henningsen proposed to postpone the indexation to next year. Mr. Trippaers said that he did not understand this discussion because all the NBOs received this letter and his board thoroughly discussed the possibilities, so he proposed to vote for this proposal, yes or not. Mr. Dix and Mr. Kamras said that the Assembly should vote, and if the proposal got the majority it was done.

The proposal was subject to a vote with the following result:

Yes 66

No 13

Abst. 9

The proposal has been approved.

## **10. World Mind Sport Game, Beijing October 2010**

The President read to the Assembly the following letter from the WBF President José Damiani:

*Dear President, Dear Friends, I am terribly sorry not to be able to be with you today for this General Assembly. As President Emeritus of the European Bridge League, my heart*

*is always very close to you. I am glad to see that these Championships broke all the records of participation. At the same time, I really hope that this will not prevent some of you from coming to Beijing to enjoy the first World Bridge Games as part of the first World Mind Sports Games. I can confirm today with great pleasure that, thanks to our collaboration with the Chinese Authorities and the local organizing committee as well as the cooperation of my personal friend and colleague Valery Zakoptieov, President of the Russian Bridge Federation and Vice President of the IMSA, we have achieved our goal. He showed his ability in organizing the first IMSA Cup in Perm, Russia his native city which was a great success and on which he may present a video. We will be able to offer, through Air China, the plane tickets to all our Juniors as well as full board and accommodation in the media village, which is equivalent to a three star hotel. We are very proud to have registered about 90 different countries with more than 100 Youth Teams (close to 110), 72 Open Teams, about 60 women's Teams some of them also being accommodated free of charge as we know that, unfortunately, most of the time the national federations are not able to afford their expenses. Certainly, thanks to this help, this will result in a tremendous record. The Seniors are a little bit disappointing even though we also progress here with a little less than 40 teams. I sincerely hope that a lot of players will join us later on for the World Transnational Mixed Teams which will be a very attractive competition. The Open, Women's, Seniors and Transnational Mixed will be played in the new National Convention Centre in the Olympic Complex with one 4-star hotel and one 5-star hotel, which are both very nice and next door at a very reasonable rate of about €100 for the 4-star and about €140 for the 5-star, breakfast, service and taxes included, single or double occupancy (€10 for a second breakfast). I do encourage all of you to try to get in touch with your colleagues in Chess, Draughts, Go and Chinese Chess so that national delegations have the same uniforms for the official opening and closing ceremonies and some form of dress code for playing. You will also be asked to bring some water from your country in a special, representative national container or bottle (in place of the Olympic torch). Mixing this water will be the symbol of "Wisdom and Harmony" which will be our motto during these World Mind Sports Games, which will gather about 4,000 players from our different sports and certainly around 120 different countries. Please be very careful to fulfill the application forms that you can download from the IMSA website [www.2008wmsg.org](http://www.2008wmsg.org) which are absolutely essential to get visas (do this as soon as possible), badges with photos (to be accommodated free or not) and air-tickets. Then send a copy to us. You must all come on this occasion to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the World Bridge Federation and participate actively in the Congress where we intend to propose some changes in our Constitution to come into force for 2010, hopefully in St. Petersburg for the World Bridge Series during the second half of September. Here again I want to thank Valery Zakoptelov for having managed to get a nice place and ensure a sponsorship grant. In the meantime, we have signed the contract for Sao Paolo where we will hold the World Bridge Teams Championships in 2009 at the end of August/first half of September and which will include the Bermuda bowl, the Venice Cup, the Senior Bowl and the World Transnational Open Teams. Finally, I would like to remind you about the next World University Championships that Geert Magermann is going to organize with the FISU and the Polish Federation in Lods next September. I consider this event very important for the promotion of our sport. Please do your best to send at least one team. We are trying to get more and more young bridge players, including through the Internet where we organize special tournaments for them. This is the case also for the women thanks to the initiative taken by Anna Maria Torlontano, and the*

*Women's Committee, who I thank and compliment for their first success and for the developments they are suggesting. My friends, I am really counting on your cooperation as the European Bridge League and its national bridge organizations must clearly continue to be the most dynamic zone and members in the world. We all have to do our best for the good and the future of bridge. See you all in Beijing, which must really mark a new start for our sport. Thank you all. Signed: José Damiani.*

## **11. Various**

The President informed that the President of the Israel Federation requested to address the Assembly about the problem connected with the Lebanon Bridge Federation and invited Mr. Ben Tovim to the podium.

Mr. Ben Tovim reported to the Assembly that some decision have to be taken to define the position of the Lebanon Teams which refuse to play against the Israel Teams in the official events. Also here in Pau the Women Lebanon Team refused to play against Israel in the first match of the championship. It is impossible to continue to accept this situation also because there is no reason why Lebanon continues to be part of the EBL, having to be part of Asia as in all the other sports organisations. A part the unfair situation completely against the Rules & Regulation, there is also a great damage for Israel which can obtain only an artificial result based on its average and cannot achieve the best result possible.

The President replied that is not a case of official refusal to play. So the Championship Committee has to apply the rule concerning the late arrival at the table which says that after a certain time the team loses the match.

The situation is delicate because the Lebanese Federation was one of the founders of the European Bridge League, that's why they want to continue to be part of it. In any case the matter will be discussed at the next meeting of the WBF Council.

The Assembly agreed.

There being no further business, the President thanked all the Delegates for their attendance and contribution, and at 13.45 hrs. declared closed the General Assembly.

Signed: Gianarrigo Rona – EBL President