



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

SUNDAY 2 MAY 2004

AT THE OFFICE OF THE MIDI-PYRÉNÉES COMMITTEE IN TOULOUSE

Present: Messrs. Jean-Claude BAQUE - Hans BLIJENBERG - Ian
RAWCLIFFE - Ole NIELSEN - Viorel MORARIU - Raul
MARTINS - Pierre CAMOU - José-Maria EPALZA - Jean-Louis
BARTHES -

Absent and excused: Messrs. Giancarlo DONDI - Peter BOYLE - Malcolm PHILLIPS -

**Also present
at the meeting:** Messrs. Pierre VILLEPREUX - Michel ARPAILLANGE -

Chairman Jean-Claude BAQUE opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

I. COMMUNICATION BY THE CHAIRMAN

U18 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

The Chairman noted with pleasure that, in TREVISO, the atmosphere which marked the first Junior Tournaments of the FIRA was found again – good and convivial spirit, joy to be together, youthful enthusiasm, friendships.

The competition, perfectly organized by the Italian Rugby Union, made it possible to recapture the ambience of a few years ago. Many special thanks to Tullio ROSELEN and his team for their dedication and availability.

Very good spirit on the field and at the final banquet. It should be noted that Mrs. Vernon PUGH delivered the Vernon PUGH Trophee to the winner.

The athletic organization was remarkable in all respects, due to the competence of Pierre VILLEPREUX, Michel ARPAILLANGE, Michel LAMOULIE the persons in charge of the Referees, the Sports Committee and all match Commissioners.

Twelve players were injured, but none seriously. A general observation intended for all is that one must act in conformity with the organization put in place by the local managers because they know local constraints.

For next year, there are three candidate countries: BULGARIA with Sofia, PORTUGAL with Coimbra and FRANCE with Lille. The choice will be made at the General Meeting to be held in June 2004.

Specifications are being prepared. They will be sent to all unions. The unions will have to reply before 10 June 2004 and quote three price levels.

WOMEN'S EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

The competition began yesterday. The acceptance of the teams was based on the principle of one team, one club.

- Malcolm PHILLIPS will become Chairman of the RFU in a few days; his new duties will compel him to resign the office he is exercising at the FIRA – AER.

Jean-Claude BAQUE asked to provide for his replacement at the General Meeting of June 2004. On this occasion, he will be thanked for his contribution and his engagement in the service of the FIRA –AER. This General Meeting should make it possible to speak of the future of our rugby.

II. COMPLAINTS

The Executive Committee was called upon to examine several complaints:

- PORTUGAL – RUSSIA match of 27 March 2004

The RUSSIAN team complained about the substitute referee.

The match referee, Mr. Giovanni MORANDIN (ITALY), was injured at the 14th minute. He was replaced by the No. 1 touch judge, Mr. Elio PERI (ITALY).

The coach of the Russian team blames the referee for his way of managing the game, which allegedly favored the PORTUGUESE team.

The Executive Committee, considering that the substitution was in conformity with the Rules and that, furthermore, the Committee does not have to judge the way in which the referee manages the game, dismissed the complaint.

The deposit of € 100 will be kept by the office of the treasurer of the FIRA – AER.

- LUXEMBOURG – BULGARIA match of 24 April 2004

The BULGARIAN team filed a complaint about the qualification of two LUXEMBOURG players, Jonathan FLYNN et Jonathan HARRIS.

Since the Luxembourg Rugby Union provided evidence of the qualification of the players, the Executive Committee dismissed the complaint.

However, by way of exception, the deposit of € 200 will be returned to the Bulgarian Rugby Union.

- GERMANY – SWEDEN match of 25 April 2004

The GERMAN team filed a complaint concerning the qualification of eight Swedish players.

The Executive Committee asked the General Secretary to write to the Swedish Union in order that it may submit proof that these eight players are regularly qualified for playing in the SWEDISH team.

- MALTA – SERBIA-MONTENEGRO match of 17 April 2004

The SERBIA-MONTENEGRO team filed a complaint concerning the qualification of eleven Maltese players.

The Executive Committee asked the General Secretary to write to the Maltese Union in order that it may submit proof that these eleven players are regularly qualified for playing in the MALTESE team.

III. GOVERNANCE

Pierre CAMOU attended the DUBLIN meeting on governance. He reported the following information to us:

"Convened on the initiative of the IRB in the context of the development of Governance, the regions gathered in Dublin.

The discussion chaired by Mr. Bob TURKEY showed between the lines that, behind the words, there is in reality a substantial need for money expressed by the major nations.

Following the various statements made by each of the Regions, the FIRA refused to take part in the vote, as none of the proposals suited it.

The FIRA believes that, at present, the composition of the Council answers the questions raised by certain people. It suffices to make small adjustments in its composition and in the votes of certain parties.

This position seemed to be acceptable to the CEOs.

The status quo must be maintained between today and November. In November, however, one will have to be attentive, in particular, to the financial aspects of competitions and "Grants."

José-Maria EPALZA stated that many countries are in great financial difficulties. Certain countries ask why the money is not given to the major nations rather than being distributed to all to no avail.

Other countries are asking that the Council be reduced to the eight founding unions.

However, the trend is to broaden the Council by including the regions in it, to provide for an executive committee of five people and for the General Meeting as well. This will be discussed in future.

José-Maria EPALZA communicated the following figures concerning the functioning of the IRB:

	2002	2003
Revenues	20,943	72,168
Expenses	14,767	29,956
Reserves	40,349	77,360

These figures are in thousands of pounds.

IV. 2007 COMPETITION

The qualification formula for the 2007 World Cup will be the same as that used for 2003.

Georgia would like to have one more qualifying country from Europe. This will not be possible as the 2007 formula will be the same as in 2003.

The current structure of the European Championship will be maintained.

All countries of the FIRA – AER will take part in the qualifying rounds. The first matches will be played in September and in October 2004.

The countries that must travel will receive from the IRB 85% of the amount of their expenses and perhaps 100%.

At the end of this season, the countries will be ranked 1st to 32nd:

After a long discussion during which each member gave his point of view, an agreement regarding the formula will be presented at the General Assembly in June 2004.

This entire qualifying phase represents 88 matches that have to be organized.

Ties will be broken according to the formula used for the 2007 World Cup.

V. WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

The next Women's Rugby World Cup will be organized in 2006. The number of teams will be cut from 16 to 12.

For the FIRA – AER zone, five or six teams will be qualified.

VI. GENERAL BUSINESS

- BYLAWS AND RULES

The Bylaws and Rules of the FIRA – AER were updated by the Administrative and Legal Committee. A Special General Meeting will be convened in June, at the same time as the Regular General Meeting. During this SGM, the members of the FIRA – AER will be asked to approve the new Bylaws and the new Internal Rules.

- U18

The success and atmosphere of the U18 European Championship in TREVISO impels us to continue with this competition.

Therefore, we must:

- Put in place special specifications for U18 players;
 - Put in place an upgrading and downgrading system between the three groups;
 - Provide for specific training, as there is a difference in play between groups A, B and C.
 - A Level 3 training session will be organized between 20 and 24 October for the coaches of next year's U18 teams.
- SERBIA-MONTENEGRO, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA and AUSTRIA plus MOLDAVIA will take part in a Tournament in June 2004.

- RUSSIA – CZECH REPUBLIC match

The match was not played because of snow. Since the result does not change the rankings, the match is officially cancelled.

- RUSSIA – ROMANIA match

The Romanians reportedly absorbed sleep-inducing products. These products are not on the official list of prohibited substances. Since the Medical Committee declared itself incompetent, the Legal Committee will ask ROMANIA to file a complaint, because this case depends of the legal and not of the sport matter.

- TRAINING SESSIONS FOR GENERAL SECRETARIES

A training session will be held between 10 and 12 November 2004 in Heidelberg (GERMANY).

- EUROPEAN CUP OF THE REGIONS

The Black Sea Cup. It will pit ROMANIA, UKRAINE, RUSSIA AND GEORGIA. The team ranked first will enter the quarter-finals directly.

- SEVEN-A-SIDE RUGBY

The new round will begin in POLAND on 8 and 9 may 2004. A few problems remain. We will have to talk about them again.

- SLOVAKIA will submit its application in June with a view to becoming a member of the FIRA –AER.
- 2005 GENERAL MEETING

Two candidacies have been received at the office of the FIRA – AER: PORTUGAL and BELGIUM. A letter requesting candidacies will be sent to all unions.

- FINANCES

This year, the FIRA – AER posted a positive result of € 50,000.

The Treasurer pointed out that salaries and travel expenses are up.

- GENERAL MEETING IN PALMA DE MAJORCA

The meetings will be held as follows:

- Afternoon of Thursday 17:
Meeting of the Executive Committee in the presence of the RDMs.
- Morning of Friday 18:
Meeting of the different sectors
- Afternoon of Friday 18:
Meeting of the Board of Managers
- Morning of Saturday 19:
Regular and Special General Meeting

There being no other item on the agenda, Chairman Jean-Claude BAQUE adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

