

Mr President, Distinguished Officers of FIDE, Members of National Federations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

ICCF – the International Correspondence Chess Federation – which I represent is not only the largest CC organization worldwide with 65 affiliated member countries and more than 60.000 chess players, but the oldest one (founded in 1951) and the only one recognized by FIDE, since formation..

Therefore we see ourselves working in close harmony with FIDE, in the ongoing development of our great game, fulfilling our responsibilities for correspondence chess, in all its modern forms ie by post, Email and Webserver transmission of moves.

Some over the board chess players have a poor perception of CC, particularly since computer chess playing software has become more advanced. However, it is still a strongly held view of most strong CC players that computer programmes will never kill CC, and it would be always ethical for players to use modern tools (just as they can move the chess pieces) in analysis for their running games. A good example of the ability of the strength of correspondence chess was the win of a CC GM over the strong Hydra machine. Computers often do not clearly indicate the strongest move in many positions, but a strong CC player is always looking for the very best move available.

Of course it would be too long to debate about this aspect, but one thing is sure: the fact that OTB and CC have the same essence and are regarded as a mixture of art, science and sport. Enhancement of international friendship is very important to us.

Not all chess lovers can play over the board or are able to attend tournaments or chess opens lasting 10 or more days, we cater for people who have a high function in their country, those who cannot travel abroad, to disabled people, and even to prisoners!

ICCF offers to all categories of players the possibility to practise their wonderful hobby, with a large spectrum of events from the lowest level through to the World Championship, as well as the opportunity to achieve ICCF titles and international CC ratings, without moving out of their homes!

In fact in ICCF we have thousands of OTB players including FIDE GMs and IMs some of them are even representing their countries in this FIDE Olympiad in Turin. OTB and CC should never be in conflict, they are complementary to each other and several OTB champions like Alexander Alekhine, Paul Keres, Mikhail Tchigorin, Ulf Andersson, Peter Leko and many others have tried CC successfully and enjoyed playing CC .

Nowadays CC is not only played by post with long duration and onerous costs, but also CC players have the possibility to play by Email or on the new ICCF Webserver, which reduces significantly the two handicaps I just described as it is possible now to finish the games in few days or weeks instead of months and years.

In this optic our aim will be to remain the same and is: the promotion of chess in general and CC in particular.

ICCF expressed a wish to participate in the FIDE Olympiad in Turin, first because we consider our organization as part of the FIDE family, second to demonstrate the skill of CC players in this important event and third to exploit this unique occasion to contact OTB Federations and persuade them to support our action by creating CC sections.

Unfortunately our wishes were not fulfilled, ICCF was not admitted and despite our disappointment we respect the decision taken by the FIDE authorities.. However, in another sense, it confirmed that FIDE recognised its special relationship with ICCF as the international organisation with responsibility for our special way of playing chess.

Perhaps in the past there was not very effective communication between FIDE and ICCF, but I can give you the assurance that our goal is to build bridges between our two organizations and to strengthen our relationships in the future.

I take this occasion to invite officially a FIDE Representative to our ICCF Congress which will be held in Dresden (Germany) from 14.10 2006 to 20.10.2006. I would also like to inform you today that I have asked the ICCF Honorary President, Alan Borwell, who was ICCF President from 1996 until 2003, to be our Liaison Officer to FIDE and I hope that FIDE officers will work with Alan to promote greater mutual co-operation.

To demonstrate our commitment, we are ready to host some FIDE competitions on the ICCF webserver like ie a school championships or any event related to chess development, just as we did years go with the Telechess Olympiads.

We worked together when our respective logos were evolved we decided on Amici Sumus, "we are friends" and we are also planning to have our own Anthem.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

AMICI SUMUS.

Med Samraoui
ICCF President