

Fake News Mr. Treasurer?

by Bachar Kouatly

On July 24 FIDE posted two letters on fide.com. The headline was: "FIDE requests Mr. Dvorkovich to stop spreading fake news". When such headlines start to appear, we are brutally reminded that the FIDE election is coming up quite soon. The headline in question also triggers curiosity about of what is behind this and what is going on.

The factual background

Based on this we must look a little closer behind the scenes to find out what triggered this statement of spreading fake news. FIDE is referring to an exchange of letters regarding arrears and fulfillment of financial obligations by member federations. It all started with a letter from VP Filatov (The Russian Chess Federation) and a reply from The FIDE Treasurer Dr. Siegel on behalf of FIDE. (Both letters are published on fide.com.)

Based on the received information, VP Filatov raises the issue of arrears, deadline for payment and possible consequences for participation in the Batumi Olympiad and the FIDE elections if the arrears are not paid in time. He then asks for the following very important and relevant information: "Please update the debt list on FIDE website and clarify when the final list of delegates will be published"

In his answer Dr Siegel informs that all federations in mid-July have received the regular invoice for the first 6 months of 2018 and that there is no mention of a 23 July deadline for payment in the letters. Then the FIDE Treasurer also states without any reservations that federations cannot be excluded from elections due to debts.

The follow up by Candidate Dvorkovich

To maintain full transparency and accurate information, Candidate Dvorkovich then raised the same issues in an email to federations. This clearly provoked FIDE and led to following headline in Dr. Siegel (FIDE) letter July 20: "Mr. Dvorkovich produces fake news to terrify national federations."

The same letter ends with "In my personal view this is disgraceful election-driven action. Moreover, the pathetic attempt to discredit FIDE's administration is obvious and of lowest level. For the future I hope that Mr. Dvorkovich will bring some fairness in his electoral campaign."

We find it hard to believe that the FIDE Treasurer is unaware of the FIDE Statutes

and Financial Regulations regarding arrears. After all he is a well-educated man and these regulations in many ways defines the main objectives and premises of the Treasurers work. Still it seems necessary to enlighten him with the following:

The FIDE Statutes

The FIDE Statutes **Chapter 02 – Membership** states that the members "...are also obliged to pay the membership fees and the other FIDE contributions fixed by the General Assembly (GA) at the designated time"

(2.4) The non-fulfillment of these obligations may result in a temporary exclusion and then later a permanent exclusion

(2.5) Once a federation is temporary excluded, it will not be permitted to participate in any FIDE event or meeting during this period (2.5).

(2.5) Payments made 60 days before the GA will solve this, but payments made after the 60 days but before the GA will still not allow participation unless there is a majority approval of the GA (2.5).

The Financial Regulations

These regulations deal further with this in its point **6. Arrears**.

(6.1) States categorically that a federation with 6 months arrears shall not receive services and cannot bid for any FIDE event (6.1)

(6.2) In the next point it states that a federation with two years of arrears "shall be temporarily excluded".

(6.3) To secure transparency around arrears and such possible measures, the Treasurer shall list all federations with more than 6 months of arrears on the FIDE site.

Some questions to the FIDE Treasurer

Based on the above, the following important questions should immediately be answered by the Treasurer:

- 1) Did FIDE publish an updated arrears list 1 July as required by the Financial Regulations?
- 2) Which federations (if any) on this list are in two years of arrears?

3) Does the Treasurer acknowledge that the 60 days deadline is before 3 August?

4) Which federations (if any) are temporarily excluded 60 days before the GA in Batumi?

Election year, arrears and fake news

The Treasurers reaction to the mail by Candidate Dvorkovich is totally out of proportions. Instead of just giving the asked information, he turns political. This is probably based on the old saying that to attack is the best defense. Let's however set aside the total lack of politeness and decency in his letter, and instead give the unexperienced Treasurer a much-needed update regarding arrears in election years.

There is always a "list" of federations who technically should have been temporarily excluded. If this happens, these federations are in principal not entitled to vote. However, when the deadline for payments comes, the federations have suddenly almost always managed to pay their dues. Whether this is an act of Santa Clause or a result of intervention from competing candidates and supporters, or hard work by the feds themselves, we really can't say. The very reason why we need transparency on this issue, is to avoid that the current FIDE leadership controls information and makes it unavailable for scrutiny.

In his letter the treasurer makes the mistake of not separating between the FIDE Statutes and regulations on one hand, and what can be described as "common practice" on the other hand. He should carefully execute his duties according to Statutes and Regulations and leave it to the relevant FIDE organ to vote and decide. In the ongoing competition regarding production of fake news, the Treasurer is now in a clear lead.