

**Report at the Meeting
of Ministers of Sports and Presidents of NOC
of the European Community
Brdo, Slovenia, 17.03.2008**

Ladies and Gentleman!

It is a pleasure for me to speak in front of such a distinguished audience and knowing your very busy schedules, let me express my sincere gratitude for giving us an opportunity to meet with all of you. I would like to present to you the following information:

- The World Chess Federation (Federation Internationale des Echecs or FIDE for short) was formed during the Paris Olympic Games in 1924. The fifteen original members have now expanded to 163, with representatives from all continents. This makes FIDE one of the largest sports' federations in the world.
- In June 1999, FIDE was recognised by the International Olympic Committee as an International Sports Federation. Today, chess is an affiliate or fully recognised member of 103 National Olympic Committees, including 14 in the European Union. Chess is recognised as a sport in 105 countries, including 22 in the European Union. These numbers are constantly increasing as recognition is received from more countries and National Olympic Committees.
- We are aiming at the active introduction of chess into the school curriculum in various countries as an element, which diminishes drugs use among the younger generation. This programme has great social importance for all society. Chess is probably the only sport that really prevents drugs dissemination. We have created a commercial structure, established a flexible calendar of events, regularised qualification norms for trainers and arbiters and established FIDE Academies all over the world. Through the higher utilisation of regional academies, FIDE is promoting the training and the education of trainers, educators, arbiters and organisers. The participants at the academies return to their own federations to pass on their knowledge and expertise.
- There are over one million registered members in our member federations, although the number of chess players in the world is up to half a billion. Many people play socially without ever becoming members of clubs or federations. Research shows that over one third of our federation members are under 20 years of age and only 10% are above 50 years old.
- To perform at the highest levels, chess players need to be physically fit. Chess players have to watch their diet and physical condition because of the strenuous tournament schedule and nervous energy expended. FIDE subscribes to the World Anti-Doping Code and carries out regular tests.
- Following the IOC recommendations, we have undertaken a large number of steps so that chess be included into the programmes of continental and regional Games. Chess was included into the programme of the Asian Games in Qatar (December 2006), All Africa Games in Nigeria (July 2002) and Algeria (July 2007), Arab Games (November 2007), ASEAN Games in the Philippines (2005),

Caribbean Games in 2003, and at the World Students Championships. In Qatar, guests of honour Messrs. Gilbert Felli and Heine Verbruggen attended the chess tournament of the Asian Games. None of the other Mind sports has such achievements. However, we consider our sport as a normal sport rather than a mind sport.

We are confident in our future because:

- FIDE is the only sports Federation which organizes National, Continental and World Championship for Youth and Juniors in age categories of 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20 years.
- Chess allows people with physical disabilities to compete on level terms with other players.
- There is no gender problem in chess. Boys and girls, men and women can, and do, compete against each other in the same event.
- After 13 years of disputes, the chess world has been unified and we have our chess king Grandmaster Vishy Anand of India.
- Our next World Championship match will be organized this October in Bonn and Chess Olympiad in Dresden, both Germany. We will be honoured to have you as our guests at these events.

Chess has been recognised by the IOC as a sport. The IOC President, Jacques Rogge, has encouraged FIDE to actively work with National Olympic Committees. He offered his support and encouragement to all the chess federations which wish to join the National Olympic Committees in their own countries. It is our wish to ensure that all countries follow the lead of the IOC and accept chess as a sport.

Thank you for your kind attention.

And now I'd like to give a floor to one of the greatest champion in the history of Sport Grandmaster Anatoly Karpov who will share with you his own sport experience.

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