

Dear Go players in Europe!

One week ago there was an announcement by the EGF board to host the European Go Congress 2017 in Sochi, Russia. The decision for Russia was taken by the EGF board, who choose this option over a proposal from Germany to run the congress in Oberhof.

The process of taking the decision was heavily criticised by some EGF member federations as well as by many go players. Many aggressive and insulting comments were left on the web page of the European Go Federation, not just against the decision or the EGF board, but also against the volunteering organisations, mainly against the Russian Go Federation as selected host.

We, the presidents of the Russian and the German Go Federations as well as the designed Congress Directors of possible congresses in Sochi and Oberhof, condemn these accusations and insults. Both organisations value and respect each other, and both organisations treat the other proposal as a good and respectful offer for the go players to enjoy a good go congress.

The actual situation now is very bad for both sides. Russia, because the feedback from many European was very insulting, and Germany, because the Germans find it difficult to understand the decision by the EGF board. Indeed, the Russian Congress Director was close to step back from hosting the congress, likewise, the designed German Congress Director was close to refuse to step in. We consider it difficult to run a joyful event under these circumstances.

Tonight, Maxim Volkov, President of the Russian Go Federation, Michael Marz, President of the German Go Federation, Natalia Kovaleva, Congress Director of the Sochi Congress as well as Manja Marz, EGF Congress Advisor and designed Congress Director of the Oberhof Congress, met face to face with Martin Stiassny to discuss the situation.

As both sides would like to run a congress, which is well-supported by the EGF members, we agreed on the following procedure:

- 1) The decision by the EGF board shall be confirmed/overturned by the EGF member associations. As there is not enough time to run a formal online vote – according to the constitution this would require two months of announcement in advance – this will have to happen as an informal survey. The EGF President agrees to respect the outcome of this online consulting vote.
- 2) Voting will be done by email. We ask the EGF members to submit their vote in the period  
**from 10 to 19 December**  
in an email to the EGF Secretary.
- 3) Apparently, some information on both proposals was not fully available to the EGF board when taking the decision. Hence, both association will provide further information to their proposal and both are prepared to answer questions by email. (Of course we try to make the questions and answers available to public, hopefully Lorenz can help here.)
- 4) Whatever the decision will be, both associations agree to cooperate in running the congress 2017 at the location preferred by the members. Members from both associations will work in a joint organising team and we will share experience and technical equipment as much as possible. And much more.
- 5) There will be two main Congress Directors, wherever the congress shall take place, one from Russia, one from Germany.

- 6) Part of the criticism of handling the situation was that other EGF member countries were not ask to step in. If other association should volunteer to run the 2017 congress, they can still submit a proposal and take part on the vote.
- 7) The Russian Go Federation as well as the German Go Federation regret that the Congress in Ürgüp could not realise. Wherever the congress will take place instead, we intend to make Kerem Karaerkek, the Turkish Congress Director, part of the organising team to run side events, thereby adding Turkish cultural elements to the congress.

Please keep in mind: Both proposals are meant to provide good options to spend an enjoyable holiday for the European Go Players! We ask everybody to respect this and waive discussions on what is bad or what you dislike about either option. Rather comment what you like about the Sochi proposal and the Oberhof proposal and ask your association to vote for your favourite venue.



*(From right to left:)*

Maxim Volkov  
President of the Russian Go Federation

Michael Marz  
President of the German Federation

Manja Marz  
EGC Co-Congress Director 2017

Natalia Kovaleva  
EGC Co-Congress Director 2017

Martin Stiassny, EGF President