

Foundation of ECU – European Chess Union

After the Second World War chess also played a specific role in the conflict between East and West, especially with the legendary Bobby Fischer as new world champion in 1972.

At that time FIDE is an organization where the continents had no statutory influence and any continental championships.

In the 3rd world more and more chess federations were established and Florencio Campomanes, with their support and the goodwill of Soviet Union in 1982 was elected as new president of FIDE. Europe, especially Western Europe felt not well represented there.

Three years later the time is ripe and Rolf Littorin from Sweden requires at the FIDE-congress in Graz statutory power for Europe. But Campomanes was not enthusiastic about this request and not willing to share the power.

As result of long and extensive discussions finally ECU was founded in Graz on August 30th, 1985 with Rolf Littorin as first ECU-president.

The understanding of ECU is to be the continental chess association for whole Europa without membership fee and to cooperate with FIDE like UEFA does in football with UEFA.

In the first stage ECU comprises 19 members: e.g. chess-giants like England, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain and the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Eastern countries of Europe take a wait-and-see approach, influenced by Soviet Union which is pro-ECU but also pro-Campomanes.

One year later, at the FIDE-congress 1986 in Dubai, Rolf Littorin retired and I was elected unanimously as ECU-president and held this position until 1998.

My time was marked by the introduction of new European championships and the recruiting new members for ECU. The breakthrough to a strong continental chess union was achieved after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia when many new member states joined us.

Relations with FIDE improved over the years and it was Boris Kutin, my successor and ECU-president for three terms , who successfully managed to achieve in 2000 our full administrative and financial autonomy by agreement with FIDE.

Today, ECU covers almost all of Europe and actually ECU-president Zurab Azmaiparashvili and his team are facing new challenges.

I would like to thank to all of those who have collaborated on the successful development of ECU or will do it in the future.

Kurt Jungwirth