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Circular Letter No.3/22.02.2021

European Championships &

World Chess Championship Qualification stage

The 2nd ECU Board meeting in 2021 took place on Saturday 20^h of February 2021 through teleconference with main item the European Qualification system for the World Championship Cycle.

- 1. Icelandic Chess Federation confirmed that cannot organize the European Open Championship in Reykjavik till May 2021** due to travel restrictions and quarantine measures still existing in Iceland and all Europe. European Chess Union exhausted all limits to organize the event in Reykjavik within the time limits set by the regulations for the FIDE World Cup 2021. Even, as expected, the health conditions could be much better in Europe till mid of May this competition and any qualification event cannot be organized with a few weeks' notice taking in account the venue, hotels, travel and visas arrangements.
- 2. ECU and Icelandic Chess federation persist to organize (subject to better travel conditions and an official invitation by May) the European Championship 2021 in Reykjavik between August and September 2021**, being a part of the next World Championship Cycle (FIDE World Cup 2023). Exact dates will be announced by the Icelandic Chess Federation the following days.
- 3. The European Open Chess Championship 2022** will be organized in Podčetrtek, Slovenia from March 27th (arrival) to April 9th (departure) 2022 and is a part of World Championship cycle.
- 4. The Romanian Chess Federation confirmed the European Women Chess Championship 2021 in Iasi, Romania.** The event is scheduled for the first half of June but may rescheduled for later in the summer with a new announcement in March.

Concerning the qualification stage for FIDE World Cup 2021, the European Chess Union Board taking in account:

- A. The existing health conditions, and travel restrictions in Europe
- B. The re-confirmation by FIDE that World Cup 2021 will be organized in Russia starting in the first half of July <https://www.fide.com/news/879> and so the continentals qualification stages shall be completed by May 2021.
- C. The quality of the European representation
- D. The main principle that qualification to FIDE World Cup shall not be restricted by any criteria of nominations or further geographical distribution that will exclude in advance a big number of European players made the following decisions:
 - 1. Forty (40) additional spots were set for the European players for FIDE World Cup 2021. ECU Board on its meeting on January 2020 in Larnaca, Cyprus decided not to keep 50% of these additional spots for the European qualification stages but to be distributed to forty (40) European federations. This decision ensured the wide geographical\federations representation to FIDE World Cup. Additionally, one (1) spot was awarded to the 10 federations of European Small nations (Zone 10.1) that do not get any of these 40 spots. **This decision ensures the wide geographical\federations representation to FIDE World Cup.**
 - 2. Ten (10) spots will be awarded to the highest European rated players (average rating 1st July 2020-1st June 2021) after the 13 top FIDE rated players, World Champion and World Cup 2019 four (4) finalists spots will be calculated and announced by FIDE. **This decision ensures the participation to at least 20 top European rated players and the quality of European representation.**
 - 3. Thirty-six (36) spots will be awarded through a European Hybrid Qualification event that will be organized in 9 rounds from 22nd to 30th of May. **This decision ensures, under the current conditions the access to qualification to hundreds of players and many more through the national pre-qualification events.**

The exact regulations for the European Hybrid Qualification event will be finalized and announced by the mid of March but the main organizational terms are the following:

A. Participation

- European Players with 2600+ Rating (January 2021 rating list)
- 5 players per federation or
- 8 players per federation if the federation organize a national qualification event on a format selected by the federation. In this case shall be provided to ECU the standings with the players registration.

B. The venues will follow the rules of all over the board chess events, including scanning of players in entrance to the playing hall and moving in the area.

C. Federations that will take part will propose the assistant local arbiter(s) and **1 International ECU Qualified on Online events Arbiter per venue** that will be the Chief Arbiter in another county's venue taking in account the distances. Details will be announced but the rule is a foreigner Chief Arbiter on each venue.

D. ECU will appoint the central arbiters panel that will monitor and co-ordinate all event. All the decisions will be made by arbiters. The system of transmission of moves between the venues will foresee a backup solution.

E. Each federation can nominate up to two (2) venues. ECU will examine exceptional cases but, in any case, a request for a venue shall accommodate at least 5 players and the appointment and accommodation of extra arbiters. Players can play in the most convenient county/venue avoiding traveling to its own country.

F. The hybrid event will have a 30,000 euros prize fund supported by the FIDE Continental Development fund.

Sincerely,

Theodoros Tsorbatzoglou

ECU Secretary General