

Statement of the European Chess Union

30 January 2023

The European Chess Union (ECU) hereby expresses its position on the possible transfer of the Russian Chess Federation (RCF) to the Asian Chess Federation (ACF).

The ECU notes the following articles in the press and statements by officials of the Russian Chess Federation regarding the intended withdrawal of the Russian Chess Federation (RCF) from the European Chess Union (ECU) and move to the Asian Chess Federation (ACF):

Declarations by Russian Chess Federation President Mr. Andrey Filatov:

<https://newsunrolled.com/sports/144533.html>

Declarations of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Russian Chess Federation Mr. Dimitry Peskov: <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1121915/rcf-votes-join-asian-chess-federation>

The ECU would like to clarify its position on the following:

Any European Chess Federation that is a member of ECU may be dissolved, ask for withdrawal of its membership, or be expelled by the ECU General Assembly. The FIDE Continents and Zones are defined by the FIDE statutes and regulations. Under those statutes and regulations FIDE Zones 1.1 to 1.10 are part of the European Continent. These Zones can only be amended by International Chess Federation (FIDE) and only FIDE can decide matters concerning its own regulations.

On 30 April 2022 the ECU received a letter from the RCF advising that they had applied for membership of the ACF and that they intend to withdraw from the European Chess Union as soon as they have been admitted. As of the date of this release, the RCF has not officially withdrawn from the ECU.

The European Chess Union has written to both FIDE and the FIDE Constitutional Commission. The first letter in April 2022 was sent to FIDE and the second letter dated 01 December 2022, was also addressed to the Asian Chess Federation. In these letters ECU addressed all the constitutional, procedural, and ethical matters concerning the proposed transfer of the RCF to the ACF. To date (30 January 2023) the ECU has not received an answer to either communication.

ECU members were informed about this issue at the ECU Annual General Assembly on July 23rd, 2022 at Thessaloniki. All the related discussions at the ECU General Assembly are here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phOp49xQ0bM&t=7102s> (after 3 hour and 2 minutes on the video). The prior discussion and voting in the GA also concerned sanctions imposed on Belarus and the Russian Chess Federation by the European Chess Union in March 2022.

<https://www.europchess.org/ecu-suspends-the-russian-and-belarusian-chess-federations/>

The decisions of the ECU General Assembly on July 23rd can be found here:

<https://www.europchess.org/communique-of-the-ecu-general-assembly-and-elections-2022/>

The ECU has taken a clear position, expressing its concern about the high ranked Russia Security Council officials who are part of the RCF's constitutional structure (Board of Trustees), including the Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu and the Press Secretary of the Russian President Dmitry Peskov (See <https://ruchess.ru/federation/board/>). This makes the RCF, a sports entity, not only politically exposed, but also exposed to the consequences of the war. We firmly believe that in such crucial moments for peace and safety in Europe, each federation should protect its independence as a sporting body.

Moreover, the ECU notes that the RCF has already annexed into its official structure the territory of Crimea. https://ruchess.ru/federation/regional_federations/yuzhnyy_federalnyy_okrug/ This action is contrary to FIDE statutes and contravenes the unanimous decision/resolution of the ECU General Assembly 2014 taken after a letter from the Ukrainian Chess Federation to the ECU, dated 5 May 2014:

“The ECU General Assembly reaffirms:

- 1) ECU is following and respecting its Statutes*
- 2) In this case and all similar cases, the ECU is acting according to UN maps and UN resolutions*
- 3) The ECU is following the International Olympic Committee's decisions for sports jurisdiction*
- 4) ECU is a sports organisation and promotes friendship and peace to all nations”*

The two matters above have already been brought to the attention of the FIDE Constitutional Commission, and we address them again through this statement.

According to recent and repeated public declarations by the President of the Russian Chess Federation Mr. Andrey Filatov, the move to the Asian Chess federation is only a technical matter, nobody objects in Asia, and this will be confirmed by the Asian Chess Federation General Assembly scheduled to run in parallel to the Asian Summit between 26th of February and 3rd of March. Unless the ECU receives a clear statement from FIDE opposing the move, we will assume that the Russian Chess federation also has the green light from FIDE. The Russian Chess Federation has indicated that they are in touch with FIDE, but to date, the ECU has not received any official information of this.

https://ruchess.ru/en/news/all/happy_new_year_s_greetings_from_cfr_president_andrey_filatov_22/

Considering the date of the Asian General Assembly and the obvious fact that a federation cannot be simultaneously member of two continents, the ECU expects the Russian Chess Federation to withdraw its membership of the ECU by Friday 24th February 2023.

While the ECU acknowledges the great Russian chess history and contribution, the invasion and war in Ukraine, has obliged the IOC and international sports federations to take difficult decisions and firm positions. The IOC have repeatedly stated that the intention of sanctions is not to punish individual athletes. Accordingly, the European Chess Union was among the federations that have allowed from March 2022 the participation of individual athletes under the status and clear terms of neutrality that have been set by the ECU Board and approved by the General Assembly. Especially those players who have not acted against the peace mission of sports.

Several players belonging before to the Russian Chess Federation have been transferred, at their request, to the FIDE flag under the FIDE special status arrangement and they have permanent residence in Europe. The planned move of the Russian Chess Federation to Asia could result in many difficulties for these players. To support them, the ECU would accept any of these players who wish to remain members of the European chess family as participants in the forthcoming European Championships under a special status to be agreed with FIDE.