



EUROPEAN SOFTBALL FEDERATION

PRESIDENT'S NOTICE

Dear friends,

Let me welcome all of you, my friends, to the ESF Congress in Athens, a historical city and one of the milestones of European civilization. We are mid-way through the period of the present board and a very challenging year is behind us.

I would like to thank all of you for all your efforts in promoting, developing and making Softball a top priority in your Country. Your efforts are the most important factor for all of us, for the development of softball, for the recognition of softball in every corner of Europe, and finally for myself and the ESF board. Your initiatives make us stronger, because your enthusiasm and dedication in this hard work is a confirmation that we are headed in the right direction.

One of the key tools of my Presidency is communication and information, which is very important in our current world. You have received my four reports from this past year, which presented to you information and comments of the issues at hand. Your feedback was confirmation that all this was needed and helpful. You also received a lot of information from our Communications Director, Helena Novotna. The Minutes of the Executive Board Meetings are on the website. Information and transparency is one of the main pillars of our work.

Now I would like to point out some key issues from this past year.

*Surely the most important issue is our legal status change with the establishment of **WBSC Europe** at the last Congress in Paris. For this past year we have been finalizing the Statutes and all relevant consequences. During two sessions (on May 7 and September 23) we discussed the vision of WBSC Europe including the description of the roles of the main body and both divisions - Softball Europe and Baseball Europe. I would like also to emphasize that we must have a proper and real understanding of the role of our Regional Confederation within the global picture. We all need to realize that we are a part of a larger family. In the WBSC family, everyone has their own place, Regional Federations and National Federations. We are here to spread the knowledge of our sport to every corner of our continent. That's our goal. That's why we're here. That's why WBSC Europe was established. In saying this, we have started the cooperation in common fields, such as the OTT Platform or joint event as Super 6. I am positive that the cooperation in common fields will improve as the legal points are finalized.*

Other than the common issues we also have the direct interests of Softball Europe on our Agenda. Taking into account one of our major roles of increasing the number of participants in our events, I believe we have taken the right course as we can see by the following numbers. In total 135 teams participated at ESF events, a dramatic increasing from the last two years (112 participants in 2017 and 101 in 2016). Record numbers of participating teams was broken in almost all of our competitions. The growth of softball in Europe is undeniable. I must commend and thank all of our technical members, TCs, UICs, umpires, scorers, headed by Mike Jennings for successfully running all our competitions. Of course a big thanks goes to all of the organizers for hosting our events.

Let me briefly mention other activities which occurred last year which the ESF organized or sanctioned. These activities fall into four specific areas.

The first one is the promotion of our top sport events in Europe and to present softball at world level. Other than the Super 6 tournament for the top Europeans teams we also hosted the European Pro Softball Series. USSSA Pride played exhibition games against the National Teams of 3 European power houses: Italy, Czech Republic and the Netherlands. The tour ended in France, where the USSSA Pride conducted a clinic at the Softball Academy of France in Boulouris, Côte d'Azur.

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We had an excellent opportunity to see the top men's fast pitch teams at Intercontinental Cup in Prague, which was a preparation tournament for the Men's World Championship 2019, which will be held in Europe for the first time ever.

In having the NZ Black Sox in Europe we took the opportunity to create Team Europe. Team Europe was made up of players from 12 countries and was the first time the ESF has taken on such an incredible mission. The team spent a whole day together in Prague and Havlíkův Brod before the exhibition game and the players bonded as never before. The exhibition game was a great success and Team Europe were victorious. For the players, it was a great honor, and for some of them, it was also the only chance to face the world famous Black Sox in their careers.

The second area is regional tournaments or events. Not only do our official ESF events help us reach our goals successfully but also other events under the ESF umbrella are making our sport known and accessible throughout the regions. Our Women's Euroleague project in central Europe, or the newly named Mike Stapleton Memorial for the boys, Triple Ball for Balkan countries or Baltic Open for Scandinavians. All regional events are important for our NFs. The main effort is to bring ESF sanctioned events into the regions and to enlarge our portfolio of options of events.

The third area is developing our human resources. We hosted the 2nd Blue Convention in Prague in March, where more than 70 umpires from all over Europe attended. The main topic of 2nd edition was Game Management. Other than experts from our sport like Bob Stanton, Raoul Machelet or Carolien Stadhouders, we invited an expert from another team sport, Ice Hockey Olympian referee Jan Hribik. The number of ESF licensed slowpitch umpires grew after the clinic in Riccione. In total 9 European umpires received their WBSC licence at the clinic in Forlì.

The ESCA training camp in Diessen was very successful. In total 70 participants – 43 players, 27 coaches, 15 different European countries being represented. Including instructors from the USA, Canada, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and Mexico. This second ESCA training camp was a great opportunity to develop our sport through "high level" instruction for all (coaches and players) and to promote the idea "GETTING BETTER TOGETHER". Thanks to Craig Montvidas who has lead this project.

The last area that I would like to point out is promotion and special projects. I am not able to number all the projects realized mainly by Helena Novotna, and the team of people around her but most of these projects you may have noticed such as the live streaming. I would like to broaden your horizon and remind you the special project by Rom Marinus, which introduced all European countries via interview with local players.

The WBSC Europe Congress in Athens is just around the corner. Let me invite you to join us and share with us ideas and be part of the creation of our future. I am really looking forward to it with pride and strength. I feel we are on the right path, in the right direction. I know some countries, mainly single federations, are worried about the identity of our sport, of softball. I fully understand this concern. However, being together will make us stronger and we can achieve our goals better and move forward quicker. But we have to be strong enough and it depends on all of us. We are all Softball Europe and we have to know that every moment of our life. We are coming to this union, a marriage if you like, as a self-confident partner with pride in our sport. We have to do the best for our sport without any personal ambitions. This will be our strength.

My last words to you here are to believe me when I say, I was, I am and I will always be behind you on this journey.

Best regards



*Gabriel Waage
ESF President*

TC Report; Director, Competitions & Technical, 2018

Competitions in 2018:

Competition	Location	# Teams	# Games	# Umps	Spectators	Viewers**
			Plan / Actual			
MSPECh	Chocen, CZE	7	34 / 34	7	2 525	
MECh	Havlickuv Brod, CZE	12	54 / 53	12	6 343	16 645
U19WECh	Staranzano, ITA	17	74 / 74	17	8 332	24 829
U22WECh	Trnava, SVK	17	74 / 69	17	5 110	17 941
CSPEsc	Riccione, ITA	16	90 / 90	14	4 335	
EMRYT	Collecchio, ITA	18	59 / 59	12	3 938	
WEPC	Forli, ITA	9	40 / 40	11	4 254	
WEC	La Loggia, ITA	9	35 / 35	11	2 715	
WECWC	Capelle, NED	12	63 / 61	14	4 396	
MESC	Prague, CZE	18	77 / 77	19	4 903	9 702
10 events	ESF TOTALS	135	600 / 593	134	46 851	69 117
10 events	2017 Comparisons	112	472 / 472	108	48,663*	
ICC	Prague, CZE	7	20 / 17	8	3 367	
Super Six	Hoofddorp	6	18 / 17	6	1 930	
2018	GRAND TOTALS 2018	148	638 / 626	148	52 148	

*The apparent reduction in comparative attendances since 2017 reflects that year's WECh, which alone attracted more than 17,000 spectators.

**Viewer numbers are total combined live views from streaming on baseballsoftball.tv and by Playo.tv. Men's FP Championship and ICC were also covered by CZE TV.

Softball Europe Season:

The 2018 season was a challenge for all involved, featuring more events, teams and games than ever before. There were 10 purely Softball Europe events, as 2017, but now including the new MSPECh, with 592 games compared to 472, 135 teams competing against 112, and an increase in the number of umpires assigned, from 108 to 139.

Our year started with some surprises, which provided significant challenges to hosts and officials. From a host's perspective, their bid will have been presented for consideration late in 2017, based on an anticipated number of teams entering. When actual entries exceeded all expectation, the demand for additional games translated into the need for more fields and larger umpire crews.

Competition Hosts:

Whilst we thank all organisers for their enthusiasm in bidding to host our events, special mention must go to Slovakia, who responded to the unexpected challenge of accommodating 17 U22WECh teams despite this being their first ESF competition as organisers. They found the extra facilities and volunteers required to deliver one of the best-run tournaments we have seen.

We will have to anticipate similar demands in future and request intending organisers to have pre-planned access to additional facilities if needed.

Unhappily, we also encountered organisers who were either not sufficiently aware of their obligations under our regulations, under-estimated the effort required or demonstrated little commitment to the event, only providing bare fields facilities without the full infrastructure of volunteers and services our teams expect. We experienced particular difficulties before and during the CSPESC in Riccione.

Future inspections will more specifically identify exactly who will take ownership of the event, from full involvement at the TC meeting to the Closing Ceremony, ensuring that both the host Club and Federation are committed to its success.

Competition administration:

Weather took its toll as always, but the disruptions caused were minimised by TCs managing fields and games in collaboration with organisers: ground-crews invariably demonstrated great dedication and expertise in bringing flooded fields back into use with minimum delay.

As at the end of every season we will now recommend any changes that may be required to the EC on issues such as deadlines for submitting entries, allocation of teams to pools, time-slots allocated to games, the use of the coin-flip procedure and the structure of finals.

The closing sequence of those competitions which act as qualifiers for WBSC World events will all adopt their process; we will determine how all other finals are concluded and in particular will consider whether the double-elimination system, where now used, should be continued.

Umpire issues:

As well as the extra demand placed on the Softball Europe umpire group as described above, they were faced with several unfortunate examples of illness immediately prior to event, and injuries incurred while on the field. All such incidents deplete the competition crew and put further strains on those remaining, and on their UiCs.

Two umpire training events were held. The first was a clinic run by Bob Stanton (WBSC) and Carolien Stadhouders (Softball Europe DoU) to qualify more European umpires to WBSC level. This was hosted by the WEPC hosts, Forli, immediately preceding that event. The second was a Slowpitch European qualifying course in Riccione, twinned with



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the CSPESC, where all the qualifying umpires then called. Tutors Chris Moon and Hans Daanen delivered a welcome increase in the number of SP umpires, all needed to service the growing interest in this discipline.

Our thanks to both organisers for the extra efforts required by these training sessions.

Scoring:

The scorer group initiated a new pre-game report based on the teams' line-ups to brief media representatives and PlayO TV commentators on players' performance data, updated by each game's play-by-play statistics.

WBSC at European and Global level:

The ESF season was augmented by two unique 'showcase' competitions, the Super6 combining the top European Softball and Baseball teams in a joint WBSC-endorsed competition to demonstrate the common strengths of the disciplines in anticipation of even closer European integration, and the Intercontinental Cup, a global celebration of the Men's game in preparation for Czechia to host the WBSC World Cup (Championship) in 2019.

Both events helped to broaden the horizons of our TC group, as we administered the Super6 in close cooperation with our Baseball colleagues, with opportunities to explore common ground between us, and the ICC as a genuinely global competition with all WBSC-qualified officials and the teams ranked 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th and 11th in the world.

Softball Europe teams entered 2018 WBSC Women's and Junior Men's competitions. Italy, Netherlands and Great Britain achieved 7th, 8th and 11th respectively in the Women's; Czechia and Denmark 7th and 13th in the Men's. As well as a number of European umpires, Carolien Stadhouders, Conny Chwojka, Anna Battagelli and Gabi Hardinger all served on the WBSC staff at these events.

Going forward:

2019 is unlikely to generate the level of competition activity that 2018 presented, but will be used to prepare for the future. We will redefine the role and number of the TC members needed at our events; integrate our technical procedures, scoring systems, training and documentation with our Baseball Europe colleagues wherever practical; and align our European competition age groups and schedule with the WBSC's world programmes to ensure a seamless transition of European teams towards the highest competitive levels.



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APPOINTMENT of ORGANIZERS of COMPETITIONS

(Approved by ESF Congress February 10, 2018, updated May 2, September 27, November 10, November 25)

CALENDAR 2019

June 30 – July 6	XXI. Women's European Championship	Ostrava (CZE)
July 29 – August 3	X. U-16 Women's European Championship	Zagreb (CRO)
TBA	U-18 Women's European Qualifier	<i>Nomination open</i>
July 15 - 20	XII. Coed Slowpitch European Championship	Budapest (HUN)
August 14 – 17	VIII. European M. Romeo Youth Trophy	Collecchio (ITA)
August 19 – 24	XLII. Women's European Premiere Cup	Bollate (ITA)
August 19 – 24	XXVI. Women's European Cup	Dupnitsa (BUL)
August 19 – 24	XXVIII. Women's European Cup Winners Cup	Eagles Praha (CZE) Moergestel (NED)
August 26 – 31	VIII. Men's European Super Cup	Nettuno Rome (ITA)

CALENDAR 2020

TBA	XXII. Women's European Championship	<i>Nomination open</i>
July	XI. U-15 Women's European Championship	Enschede (NED)
July	XV. Men's European Championship	Ledenice (CZE)
July	XI. U-18 Men's European Championship II. U-15 Men's European Championship	Sezimovo Usti (CZE)
TBA	II. Men Slowpitch European Championship	<i>Nomination open</i>

CALENDAR 2021

TBA	XVI. U-18 Women's European Championship	<i>Nomination open</i>
TBA	VII. U-22 Women's European Championship	Kunovice (CZE)
TBA	XIII. Coed Slowpitch European Championship	<i>Nomination open</i>



To all ESF and CEB National Federations Presidents

December 15th, 2018

Mr, Mrs Presidents,

Dear Friends,

Less than a year ago, National Federations of European Baseball and Softball gathered in Val d'Europe, France for the inaugural Congress of **WBSC Europe**. It was a historical moment which brought Baseball and Softball together and the start of greater cooperation between our sports in Europe.

Following the discussions the joint CEB-ESF Commission had with WBSC on the Statutes, we are pleased to announce that the proposed Statutes of the continental federation will be submitted for your approval during the 2019 Congress to be held on February 2nd in Athens, Greece. We will hold a WBSC Europe session after the regular ESC and CEB Congresses.

The interim Executive Board of WBSC Europe to be instated during the Congress will continue to work on the merge of CEB and ESF and submit the final Statutes and all relevant documents for your approval in 2020. By 2021, WBSC Europe will be fully operative, CEB and ESF becoming Divisions within WBSC Europe and all procedures shall be in place to create the new WBSC Executive Board.

We count on your support to show that the European Baseball and Softball community is unified and walks in the footsteps of the WBSC.

We would like to take the opportunity of this letter to wish you a happy holiday season and are looking forward to meeting you all during the CEB-ESF/WBSC Europe Congress next year in Athens, Greece.

Gabriel Waage

ESF President
WBSC Europe Co-President

Didier Seminet

CEB President
WBSC Europe Co-President