



# International Rafting Federation

## Minutes of the 2017 Congress Miyoshi City, Japan October 4, 5

### 1. Opening of the Congress

The Congress was chaired and opened by Mr. Joe Willis Jones, the President. As Chair of the Congress, the President reminded the attendees of the formal process under which the Congress functioned, and that a single delegate representing each Member Nation shall be allowed to cast votes and to speak in representation of the views of their Member Nation. He informed the Congress that issues shall be voted on via a show of hands and decided by the majority.

### 2. Apologies, roll call/ establish delegates, establish quorum

**Motion I**      **A motion was made by the Chair for a roll call to ascertain each countries delegates, and to establish a quorum. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General.**

**A roll call of the Congress was made and it was determined that 28 voting delegates were present out of the 42 voting members. A quorum was therefore established, and the Congress was called to order with the full authority established under the IRF Bylaws.**

Delegates from Member Countries that answered the roll call:

Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Turkey, USA.

Proxy delegates that answered the roll call:

Colombia, Denmark, Serbia

### Board of Directors in Attendance

Mr. Joe Willis Jones – President and Chair

Mr. Peter Micheler – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Ms. Sue Liell-Cock – Secretary General

Mr. Pieter Bekkers - Head of Sport & Competition

Ms. Emilia Begunova – Co-Head Recreation and Conservation Committee

Mr. Kianoosh Mehrabi – Co-Head Recreation and Conservation Committee

Mr. Gaspar Goncz – Head of Guide Training and Education Committee

Apologies:

Mr. Rafael Gallo – Head of International Relations

Ms. Deb Cook – Head of Media & Marketing

Mr. Alex Pastir – Treasurer/Development Officer

Abstaining from Congress:

Mr. Oleg Grigoriev – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President

### 3. President's Report

The President reported on the current state of the IRF and the progress that has been made over the past two years since the last Congress was in session. He also reported on the work that he has been engaged in during that time, and informed the Congress that due to the full time work load that was necessary for the President to bring the IRF up to the standard required by a serious sports federation, that the Board of Directors had voted to offer him a salary to help compensate for the time needed as is the Secretary General compensated for her work.

A summary of the work reported by the President included the following:

- Ensuring the IRF keeps working towards ALL of its mission and goals as required in the Bylaws.
- Driving the IRF towards becoming more professional, moving rafting towards becoming an Olympic sport, and generally raising the profile of rafting around the world so that it is seen as a serious sport.
- Developing a new doping rules addendum that is in compliance with the WADA (World Anti Doping Agency) code.
- Working towards meeting the requirements for Sport Accord/GAISF membership.
- Working with Sport and Competition Committee on annual updates and proposals of the Race Rules.
- Continual updating of the many documents and procedures within the IRF that assists the IRF to manage race bids from potential host nations, and meeting with and assisting race organisers to ensure events are run per IRF requirements.
- Dealing with any doping issues that may arise, appointing doping panel members, wading through the legal requirements of WADA procedures, and advising doping panel members as to their responsibilities to the IRF.
- Overseeing WRC and pre-world events, and conducting scouting trips and evaluations of new race venues.
- Working with developing member countries such as Nepal and China to help them develop their racing programs including running judge workshops and training other race officials.
- Developing new contacts that will help grow raft racing in all countries.
- Driving the GTE scheme forward so that it is seen as the gold standard for river guiding certifications for all river guides, rafting companies and governments.
- Pushing forward with the implementation of a Recreational Operators Certificate program.
- Running GTE workshops for companies/countries that are requesting it, particularly in regions where safety standards are not high and improvements are needed.
- Establishing country/regional GTE contracts and renegotiating contracts for better terms.
- Pushing GTE in Americas where enormous untapped potential remains.
- Managing the backend of the IRF websites and forum.
- Working with IRF committees to help them be more efficient and productive
- Revising and updating IRF Bylaws so that the IRF is able to do its work better.
- Continually working with Secretary General on all aspects of the IRF daily management.
- Representing the IRF on all matters that require legal interpretation or require the writing of legal documents.

#### 4. Reports on membership applications, resignations or expulsions

The Chair recognized Ms. Sue Liell-Cock, the Secretary General, who then reported on the following membership issues:

##### **a) Recommendations for Expulsion of IRF Members:**

- i. “Asociación de Descenso de Ríos” as the IRF member representing the nation of Mexico. This organisation no longer exists.
- ii. Korean Rafting Association (KRA) as the IRF member representing the nation of South Korea. This organisation has been unresponsive to any official communications from the IRF for more than 2 years.
- iii. Spanish Canoe Federation as the IRF member representing the nation of Spain. This organisation has been unresponsive to any official communications from the IRF for more than two years, and has not fulfilled the membership requirements that are detailed in the IRF Bylaws.

##### **Motion II**

**A motion was made by the Chair requesting that the Congress vote to expel the above three organisations as members of the IRF. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General.**

**A vote was taken by the Congress using a show of hands. The vote was recorded with the motion being approved unanimously.**

**It was so resolved by the Congress to expel these organisations as IRF Members.**

##### **b) Advisements of new IRF Provisional Members:**

- i. United Arab Emirates Rafting Federation to represent the nation of UAE as an IRF Provisional Member under advice and approval of the BOD.
- ii. Armenian National Federation of Rafting to represent the nation of Armenia as an IRF Provisional Member under advice and approval of the BOD.
- iii. Mexican Association of River Guides, A C., (AMEGRAC) to represent the nation of Mexico as the new IRF Provisional Member under advice and approval of the BOD.

##### **Motion III**

**A motion was made by the Chair requesting that the Congress vote to accept UAE Rafting Federation as the UAE Provisional Member, and the Armenian National Federation of Rafting as the Armenian Provisional Member, Mexican Association of River Guides, A C., (AMEGRAC) as the Mexican Provisional Member. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General.**

**A vote was taken by the Congress using a show of hands. The vote was recorded with the motion being approved unanimously.**

**It was so resolved by the Congress to accept the above mentioned organisations to represent the nations of UAE, Armenia and Mexico as IRF Provisional Members.**

### **c) Resignations of Full Members:**

The Brazil Canoe Federation (CBCa) which represents the nation of Brazil, has submitted a request to resign their membership from the IRF.

**Motion IV**     **A motion was made by the Chair requesting that the Congress vote to accept CBCa's resignation from IRF membership. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General.**

**A vote was taken by the Congress using a show of hands. The vote was recorded with the motion being approved unanimously.**

**It was so resolved by the Congress to accept the resignation of CBCa as a member of the IRF.**

## **5. Management Report by the Secretary General**

The Chair recognised the Secretary General to summarise her management report. The Secretary General then gave a brief summary of the written report that she had distributed to IRF member nations prior to the Congress. She mentioned the importance that members should take the time to read and study the reports sent out.

Ms. Liell-Cock reiterated the fact that the IRF is growing exponentially at the moment sighting the fact that right now she and others were working on this WRC (2017) while also preparing for WRC events in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, and ERC events in 2018 and 2019. She then reminded the Congress that this was only one aspect of the work load that she handles.

Ms. Liell-Cock then requested once again that all IRF members must be willing to volunteer and take on small projects for the IRF – reiterating that all small projects add to the success of the IRF and the growth of rafting. She then offered a special thanks to Mr. Sean Clarke from Great Britain who has recently stepped up to manage the IRF's Instagram and Twitter social media accounts, and to assist with providing content for the IRF's website and Facebook account.

## **6. 2017 Interim Financial Report by the Secretary General**

The Chair asked the delegates if there were any questions or concerns about the 2017 interim financial report that was sent to member nations prior to the Congress. No questions or concerns were voiced.

**Motion V**     **A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to accept and approve the 2017 Interim Financial Report. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General.**

**A vote was taken by the Congress using a show of hands and recorded with 27 delegates in favour and 1 delegate against (Serbia).**

**It was so resolved by the Congress to accept and approve the 2017 Interim Financial Report.**

## 7. Proposed 2018 Budget by the Secretary General

The Chair asked the delegates if there were any questions or concerns about the proposed 2018 budget. No questions or concerns were voiced.

**Motion VI A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to accept and approve the proposed Budget for 2018. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General.**

**A vote was taken by the Congress using a show of hands and recorded with 27 delegates in favour and 1 delegate against (Serbia).**

**It was so resolved by the Congress to accept and approve the 2017 Interim Financial Report and the proposed 2018 Budget.**

## 8. Reports from Heads of Committees

It was stated by the Chair that each member nation had been sent Committee reports prior to the Congress and that delegates had hopefully taken time to read them. The Congress, Agenda and Reports were also announced on the IRF website for easy access to all and so, in the interest of saving time, it was not necessary for the Congress to read each report from the Committee Heads.

Mr. Kianoosh Mehrabi, co-Chair of the Recreational and Conservation Committee gave a brief summary of some of the aims of the committee whose desire is to expand the influence of the IRF beyond racing and into the recreational sector. He informed the Congress that his committee has been looking into special needs rafters as well as looking into how to assist less developed countries with such things as training, providing rafts and rafting equipment, and experienced assistance so as to get recreational rafting started and growing in those regions.

Mr. Gaspar Goncz, Chair of the Guide Training and Education Committee, explained how the GTE system was growing very rapidly and that the recent changes have raised the standard of the system to a much higher level. The integrity of the system is also much higher now as well, and it brings in a solid amount of funding which is essential for the general running of the IRF. Volunteer based work slows down the dynamic development and spreading of the Guide Certification Program and the ROC, therefore as a part of being a more professional organization, payed positions need to be created and contributions to the GTE program need to be compensated.

Mr. Peter Micheler stated that he agreed with Mr. Goncz's assertions re the GTE system being the biggest and best in the world and that it must keep growing.

The Chair agreed that recent changes and advancements in the GTE system has made it the Gold standard of the rafting industry, which in turn was making it more and more transferable.

## 9. Discussions and Resolutions on Proposals

Prior to the Congress, the IRF Administration received a total of four (4) formal proposals which were submitted in timeous fashion by IRF Member Nations and the BOD. As per IRF Bylaws, these proposals required that the Board of Directors review each proposal and to take a position on the proposal before Congress. The Congress is then required to vote on the proposals presented. The Chair presented each of these proposals to the Congress and recognized the delegates who represented the nations who had submitted these proposals.

**PROPOSAL 1**    **A Proposal to Accept Various IRF Bylaw Updates and Changes**  
*proposed by the IRF President and the BOD*

1. The Chair impressed upon the Congress the importance of updating the IRF Bylaws to meet current conditions in the IRF and to match them to standard international sport federation practises. Delegates were reminded that a copy of the proposed updates had been sent to each of the IRF Member Nations prior to the Congress so that they could be examined in accordance with the timeline prescribed in the IRF Bylaws. The Chair then asked that the Congress, in the interest of saving time, to vote to accept or reject all of the changes proposed in the Bylaws.
2. Mr. Goran Loric, delegate from BiH (Bosnia and Herzegovina) stated that Bylaw proposals should be dealt with more like the system in place for race rule revisions. Mr. Loric suggested that proposals to changes to the Bylaws needed to be sent out to IRF members longer than one (1) month prior to Congress so that members can assess them with more time, and that it would also be preferable if the proposed changes could be discussed among members and possible revisions suggested before the final proposal is put before Congress.
3. The Chair explained that the timeline used for sumitting Bylaw changes is prescribed in the Bylaws, was approved by a previous Congress, and has been in effect almost since the IRF was created. He suggested that if BiH is unhappy with the current system, that it should propose a change in the Bylaws that revises the system. Mr. Jones also reminded the Congress, that if it did not vote to accept the changes as a whole, then each section which was contentious could be voted on individually.

Mr. Jones then reminded the Congress that changes to the Bylaws needed 2/3 of the votes cast to be passed. Therefore the changes needed to receive 18 votes in favour if all 27 delegates present at the Congress voted.

4. The delegate from the Czech Republic, Mr. Stanislav Hajeks stated that the Czech federation did not want to accept the change of the BOD standing for 4 years instead of 2 years as it is now.
5. The Chair then asked the Congress if anyone wished to vote against accepting all of the Bylaw changes, and there was one (1) delegate who opposed. It was then accepted that the other delegates were all in favour.  
*Note: The Chair later decided to nullify this decision, as the voting process did not properly take into account the possibility of abstentions. The vote was then recounted so that abstentions could be recorded.*
6. The Chair recognised the delegate from BiH who requested a clarification as to whether abstained votes were counted as a vote or not. It was explained by the Chair that to “abstain from voting” very clearly means that a delegate is choosing not to vote. Therefore, countries who chose not to vote will not be recorded as part of the vote total.

**Motion VII**    **A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to accept and approve all of the proposed updates and changes to the IRF Bylaws as presented. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General. A vote was taken by the Congress using a show of hand.**

**The vote was recorded with the proposal being approved with 23 votes in favour and 4 votes against (Czech, Slovenia, BiH and Serbia).**

**It was so resolved by the Congress to accept and include all of the proposed changes and updates to the IRF Bylaws.**

The First Session of the 2017 IRF Congress was adjourned by the Chair with pending business to be carried forward to the Second Session.

## SECOND SESSION – 5 Oct

The Second Session of the 2017 Congress was called to order by the Chair, Mr. Joe Willis Jones. The Chair then informed the Congress that the quorum established during the First Session was still in effect and that the Congress would proceed under the full authority given to it under the IRF Bylaws.

The Chair made a clarification that was brought up by a few delegates after the close of the First Session of the Congress that concerned the new IRF emblem. The Congress was informed that the changes in the Bylaws included acceptance of the new IRF emblem, but that the old emblem can still be used, but will be slowly phased out over time.

**PROPOSAL 2**    **To create an independent Ethics Committee which will be guided by comprehensive ethics policies**  
*proposed by the IRF President*

**Motion VIII**        **A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to vote whether to accept or decline the proposal to create an Ethics Committee and to accept or decline its proposed governing policies. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General.**

**A vote was taken by the Congress using a show of hands. The vote was recorded with proposal being approved unanimously.**

**It was so resolved by the Congress to accept the proposal to create an Ethics Committee and to accept the proposed governing policies.**

The Chair informed the Congress that the Serbian Rafting Federation had sent in five (5) proposals, however only two (2) were deemed to be acceptable as proposals that were suitable for consideration by the Congress. The Chair then reminded the proxy delegate from Serbia, (and the Congress) that proposals suitable to put before the Congress must concern issues that require a vote or discussion by the Congress, and they need to be clear and detailed so that member federations can debate the issue at their national meetings and so instruct their delegates as to how to vote and discuss at the Congress itself. He further reminded the Serbian proxy delegate that proposals which were redundant or are issues that fall under the jurisdiction of a Committee that was created by the Congress, must be directed to the proper Committee or IRF official instead of the Congress. The Chair then proceeded to read to the Congress the three (3) proposals that were rejected.

1. A proposal asking that Mr. Jones to resign as President but not detailing reasons. The Chair explained that this proposal was redundant, as all BOD members resign at the end of Congress anyway, and that all proposals should include relevant details.
2. A proposal asking that the financial documents of the IRF be readily available and transparent to all members. The Chair explained that this proposal was redundant, as all financial document were already readily available and transparent to any member federations who requested them. He also mentioned that the Serbian Rafting Federation has never requested the IRF financial records, or they would have known this.
3. A proposal requesting the categorization of IRF Judges for A and B level competition. The Chair explained that this proposal is not a Congress issue, but is under the jurisdiction of the Judges Committee which was created by Congress for deciding such issues.

**PROPOSAL 3      Add to IRF Bylaws that one individual can only carry one function as a IRF representative (one person one function or official)**

*proposed by the Serbia Rafting Federation (SRF)*

The Chair explained to the Congress that this proposal was accepted as being a Congress issue because it was a request for changing the IRF Bylaws, however the wording was unclear. The Chair then invited the proxy delegate for Serbia, Mr. Goran Lolic, to clarify the proposal. Mr. Lolic stated that he had not been appraised of the details of the proposal by the Serbian Federation, and so could not clarify it further.

**Motion IX A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to vote to accept or decline the SRF proposal as per above. The motion was seconded by the proxy delegate from Serbia.**

**A vote was taken by the Congress using a show of hands and recorded with 1 delegate in favour (Serbia) and the remaining majority against.**

**It was so resolved by the Congress to decline the proposal made by the Serbian Rafting Federation.**

**PROPOSAL 4      Request that IRF Ordinary Congress is held once a year.**  
*proposed by the Serbia Rafting Federation (SRF)*

The Secretary General pointed out that Congresses were very time consuming to prepare for as there are many reports and other details that need to be actioned as per Bylaws. She said that the time would be better spent having other more constructive meetings that would be more beneficial to the IRF. And if there was a need for Congress to decide something an Extraordinary Congress could be called as was done in Brazil in 2014.

Mr. Stan Hajeks, delegate for the Czech Republic, stated that it was too costly for their delegates to attend a Congress every year.

**Motion X A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to vote to accept or decline the SRF proposal as per above. The motion was seconded by Serbia's proxy delegate.**



**A vote was taken by the Congress using a show of hands and recorded with 1 delegate in favour (Serbia) and the remaining majority against.**

**It was so resolved by the Congress to decline the proposal made by the Serbian Rafting Federation.**

## **Discussion topics before the Congress**

### **SportAccord/GAISF application update and steps forward** *proposed by the Secretary General*

The Chair explained what the SportAccord is - now renamed back to its original name of GAISF (Global Association of International Sports Federations) - and why it is important that the IRF continue to pursue its goal of becoming a GAISF member, including the fact that GAISF recognition gives the IRF more credibility in the eyes of the sporting and sponsorship world. He then explained to the Congress that GAISF recognition of the IRF requires that the IRF either pursue GAISF membership directly, or that the IRF would need to fall under the umbrella of an international sports federation that already has GAISF membership, such as the ICF (International Canoe Federation).

Mr. Jones then explained that the GAISF membership process has been a moving target for the IRF as it has changed over the past few years and become more difficult, and that many current GAISF members enjoyed a much easier pathway to membership. He informed the Congress that the most challenging change was that GAISF now required that an international federation have a minimum of 40 members (up from 30) who are recognised by their NOC (National Olympic Committee) or NSA (National Sports Authority).

Mr. Jones then informed the Congress that GAISF had recently created a new membership pathway which they call "Observer" status. He further informed the Congress that this opportunity was very encouraging as it would allow the IRF recognition by GAISF without meeting all membership requirements, and that federations with Observer status are assisted by GAISF in obtaining the remaining requirements for full membership.

The Chair then recognized the Secretary General, who further informed the Congress which GAISF membership requirements the IRF has met, and which requirements are still needed.

The Chair then invited delegates to participate in an open discussion on the issue of GAISF membership. Various delegates asked questions about the need for GAISF recognition, and some offered up their federation's stories. Slovakia, Czech Republic and Slovenia delegates all mentioned that their country's NSA are requiring that the IRF be recognised by GAISF, and that they have lost, or will lose major proportions of their funding without this recognition.

Some delegates mentioned that they had achieved NOC or NSA recognition by falling under their national canoe federation's umbrella, but that such a pathway was far from ideal. It was mentioned that Brazil Rafting has been given virtually no financial support while under their

national canoe federation, despite the fact that it has produced the most successful rafting team in the history of the sport (Brazil's Open Men's team is 7 time World Champions). It was further mentioned that rafting has recently been eliminated from Brazil's canoe federation program and that the canoe federation has resigned its membership from the IRF.

It was mentioned by the Secretary General that several years ago the Spanish Canoe Federation took over a growing rafting association in Spain who had IRF membership, and then did absolutely nothing for it - basically killing the sport in Spain – and has refused to answer inquiries from the IRF.

The delegate from BiH informed the Congress that they have recently separated from their national canoe federation because of a lack of support or interest in rafting.

The delegate from Bulgaria informed the Congress how their rafting federation had to fight with their national canoe federation who attempted to claim rafting as their sport. The case eventually went to court and the rafting federation won the fight.

The delegate from Germany, Mr. Pieter Micheler informed the Congress how no funding or support is given to rafting in Germany by their national canoe federation, even though rafting is under their umbrella.

The delegate from Great Britain informed the Congress that British Rafting has had very little support under their national canoe federation up until now, but felt that this may be changing with new leadership.

The Chair then recognised Mr. Peter Micheler and asked him to relay his experiences while working within the ICF and to offer his opinion as to whether the IRF should seriously consider placing itself under the jurisdiction of the ICF. Mr. Micheler spoke at length about 1) the pros and cons of the IRF moving under the ICF umbrella making special note that the IRF interest should be purely for taking the R4 to the Olympics, and not include the R6, GTE program, or other IRF interests - of which the conclusion was that the cons far outweighed the pros, 2) of the very negative experiences by the majority of national rafting organisations which chose to go under the umbrella of a national canoe federation, and 3) the reality of rafting reaching the Olympics via the ICF, which he considered to be a very far and distant possibility given the ICF's other priorities and the lack of additional Olympic slots currently available to the ICF.

*(Mr. Micheler's notes on the above issues are included at the end of these minutes)*

Mr. Micheler also informed the Congress that Mr. Danilo Barmaz, the president of the Italian Rafting Federation (an IRF member), had been in contact with him and informed him that he had recently had a meeting before the ICF's board of directors and proposed that they should create a new rafting discipline program. The written proposal presented by Mr. Barmaz was in essence, a copy of the IRF's entire program, and his proposal suggested that the IRF was an ineffectual and badly managed organisation, and that he (Mr. Barmaz) could do a much better job managing rafting sport using a management team from Italy that was led by himself, and working under the ICF umbrella.

The Chair then informed the Congress that he had been approached by Mr. Barmaz in late 2016 about placing the IRF under the umbrella of the ICF so that rafting would have a faster track towards becoming an Olympic sport, and that he had several meetings with Mr. Barmaz on this subject. However, it soon became apparent that Mr. Barmaz was attempting to recruit him to help create a new rafting organisation in opposition to the IRF. Mr. Jones explained that he had rejected this idea, as he considered it to be a breach of ethics, and that he could only be involved in such an effort if he resigned from the IRF.

Mr. Jones stated that he had then attempted to contact the ICF leadership to discuss the idea of the two federations working together to take rafting to the Olympics (as Mr. Barmaz had indicated through his sources that the ICF was willing to consider) but that the ICF had not replied or even acknowledged receipt of his inquiries. Shortly after this attempt at contact, Mr. Barmaz had become very angry and subsequently severed all conversations and sharing of information. Mr. Jones further mentioned that he was aware of continued efforts by Mr. Barmaz to recruit leaders of IRF member federations and IRF officers to abandon the IRF to join his cause.

Mr. Jones further offered his opinion to the Congress that he believes the IRF is the best international sports organisation to lead rafting forward, has earned this position through over 20 years of dedication, hard work and steady progress, and that the ICF has done nothing for rafting and shown virtually no interest in the sport and there is no indication that this will change. He further stated that he believes that the idea of splitting rafting into two competing international organisations as proposed by Mr. Barmaz would cause fractures in our sport and hinder its growth rather than help it.

The delegate from New Zealand asked the Congress if the Olympics should be a primary goal for the IRF to focus on, as so many artificial courses were becoming obsolete and bankrupt. This opened a topic of discussion about the Olympics during which some members voiced concern that if the IRF were to concentrate its energy on pursuing the Olympics, that it would change our sport into something very different than what we now enjoy, and that the comradery and friendship between international competitors which currently makes rafting competitions so enjoyable would suffer under the pressure to win Olympic medals and recognition.

The Olympic topic was concluded with a general agreement that although the Olympics may be a very distant possibility, membership in GAISF is an obtainable goal, an essential requirement for many IRF members, and important to the growth of rafting sport. It was further agreed by the Congress that the IRF must pursue GAISF Observer status and that we must continue to pursue our goal to become a GAISF Full Member as speedily as possible.

The Chair then voiced the fact that the ICF leadership has publicly stated, and that it is mentioned in the ICF statutes, that the ICF considers itself to be the sole international organisation for controlling all paddle sports. The Chair suggested that there is good chance that the ICF will try block IRF membership into GAISF and to be prepared for such a challenge from them. The Chair then reminded the Congress that the

ICF attempted to (unsuccessfully) block the IDBF (International Dragon Boat Federation) from GAISF membership, and they are currently engaged in a legal battle with the ISA (International Surfing Association) over SUP – even though the ISA has fostered this paddle sport into international recognition. The Chair then stated that the IRF's 20 year history as the sole international body overseeing rafting, raft guide training and international raft competition events is proof enough that our federation is on firm ground for defending our right to continue as the international body that oversees rafting.

The Secretary General then explained that the GAISF application requires a large amount of paperwork and documentation to be presented and some of that documentation must come from our national federation members. She further explained the need for each of our members to pursue NOC or NSA recognition. She further informed the Congress that the IRF is very close to having 40 members with NOC or NSA recognition as required by GAISF – much closer than an early survey indicated, or what some members were saying. There were some questions from some delegates about how best to pursue these goals. The Secretary General then asked that our members please respond as quickly as possible when the IRF requests paperwork and documentation necessary for the GAISF application.

With no further points for discussion or delegate questions about GAISF membership, the Chair closed the discussion.

## 8. Election of IRF Officers and Committee Heads

The Chair opened the process for the election of the new Board of Directors. The Chair recognised the Secretary General and asked that she read list of candidates that were nominated. The Secretary General read the list of candidates, their positions nominated for and who nominated them (as per list sent out with the Congress Agenda) as the Officers and Chair positions which form the IRF Board of Directors. Eight candidates for the Board were unopposed.

**Motion XIII** A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to vote for each position from the list of candidates, and was seconded by the Secretary General.

**Candidate for President**  
**Mr. Joe Willis Jones - Chile**  
**Result:**  
**26 Yes votes**  
**1 No vote**  
**Mr. Jones is elected.**

**Candidate for Secretary General**  
**Ms. Sue Liell-Cock - South Africa**  
**Result:**  
**26 Yes votes**  
**1 No vote**  
**Ms. Liell-Cock is elected.**

**Candidate for Chair of Sport & Competition**

**Mr. Eric Boudreau - Canada**

**Result:**

**26 Yes votes**

**1 abstain**

**Mr. Boudreau is elected.**

**Candidate for Chair of Guide Training & Education Committee**

**Mr. Gaspar Goncz**

**Result**

**26 Yes votes**

**1 abstain**

**Mr. Goncz is elected.**

**Candidates for Treasurer**

**Mr. Pieter Bekkers - Netherlands**

**Mr. Alex Pastir - Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Result:**

**Mr. Bekkers - 20 Yes votes**

**Mr. Pastir - 6 Yes votes**

**1 abstain**

**Mr. Bekkers is elected.**

**Candidates for Chair of International Relations Committee**

**Mr. Rafael Gallo - Costa Rica**

**Mr. Peter Micheler - Germany**

**Result:**

**Mr. Micheler - 23 Yes votes**

**Mr. Gallo - 3 Yes votes**

**1 abstain**

**Mr. Micheler is elected.**

**Candidate for Chair of Media & Marketing Committee**

**Ms. Nada Matic - Serbia**

**Result: 25 Yes votes**

**2 No votes**

**Ms. Matic is elected.**

**Candidate for Chair of Judges Committee**

**Mr. Jozef Kytka - Slovakia**

**Result: 26 Yes votes**

**1 abstain**

**Mr. Kytka is elected.**

**Candidate for Chair of Recreational Rafting Committee**

**Ms. Emilia Begunova - Bulgaria**

**Result:**

**26 Yes votes**

**1 abstain**

**Ms. Begunova is elected.**

**Candidate for Chair of Conservation Committee**

**Mr. Kianoosh Mehrabi - Iran**

**Result:**

**26 Yes votes**

**1 abstain**

**Mr. Mehrabi is elected**

**It was so resolved by the Congress that the positions to the Board of Directors are hereby elected as per above.**

**The newly created Athlete's Committee shall also elect from within its members a Chair who shall serve as a member of the IRF Board of Directors as per the IRF Bylaws. This election shall take place after the Congress when the Athlete's Committee has been formed and conducted its first meeting.**

## 9. Adjournment of the Congress

The Chair thanked all delegates and BOD members in attendance for their interest and participation, and adjourned the Second Session and closed the 2017 IRF Congress.

***Notes from Vice President, Mr. Peter Micheler's opinions of the pro's and con's of the IRF being under the umbrella of the ICF.***

Mr. Micheler first made special note that the IRF should only consider going under the ICF to help take the IRF R4 competition to the Olympics, and that we should not put R6, the GTE program, or other programs of the IRF into the hands of the ICF. He also emphasized that the collaboration between ICF/IRF would be a hard negotiation, but for the sake of the sport we should always be willing to look seriously into handing the R4 it into their dubiously trustful hands if there is a chance they can put rafting into the Olympics in the near future (by 2024).

**Pros.**

- The sport of rafting would be inside the IOC immediately and therefore also GAISF.
- Rafting could be promoted at the next Olympic Games as fun tours for the IOC members and families. 1-2 hours a day only.
- We could do a small unofficial demo event (H2H) at the Olympics when IOC members are attending.
- Much better for lobbying for the sport.
- Use of the ICF structure for the sport of rafting in media and backup on the canoe slalom judges which are already there.

**Cons.**

- The ICF does not have the number of athletes at Olympic Games to implement rafting, 500-600 are needed. In this contingent we should have 128 athletes for 2 x 64 men & women, selected through continental selections. With cross over of ICF and IRF athletes maybe less than 80 required.

- Rafting athletes will very likely be selected from ICF slalom and sprint athletes rather than from our IRF rafting athletes.
- The Next 3 Olympic Games (Tokyo 2020, Paris 2024, Los Angeles 2028) do not have rafting in their program. If the ICF can't make it happen until 2028 there is no need to go with them. Rafting in Paris 2024 is not realistic at this point, but a slight chance. Time limit for 2028 ends 2023 the latest as by then the program for LA will be fixed.
- Therefore, if rafting becomes an ICF discipline in the next years, it will just be another of their non-Olympic disciplines which receive little or no funding from the ICF. If there is no funding from the ICF, there will be no money from ICF's national canoe federations to support rafting. This is national policy almost all over the planet. This will mean funding for rafting from national canoe federations will remain the same as we have now – non-existent.
- The ICF will give priority for Boater Cross and Downriver Sprint ahead of Rafting being implemented into the Olympic Games. They are first on the list.