

Since 2006, when the Belgian businessman Bessel Kok ran for the FIDE Presidency, the ECF, in common with the majority of Europe and North America, has been opposed to the continued reign of Kirsan Ilyumzhinov. The Russian's constant hobnobbing with dictators, bizarre claims of space-travel and constant promises of fantastical projects are an embarrassment to the chess world. Unsurprisingly, in this unappealing environment, corporate sponsors have been highly reluctant to associate themselves with our noble game.

It is against this background that I was elected ECF Delegate to FIDE, in 2009, in part, I believe, because ECF members expected a more robust and less equivocal stance than that of my predecessor and because they also understood the advantages of being represented by someone who is recognized and respected throughout the chess world. I have visited one hundred countries and I personally know the majority of FIDE Delegates.

I was deeply involved in supporting the Anatoly Karpov 2010 campaign, devoting several months of my time, for no pay, to canvassing for votes in places as far afield as Central America and Africa. For all his flaws, I believed that the Former World Champion presented a far more credible image for chess than the incumbent. Karpov lost, but a momentum has been built up by his campaign organiser, Garry Kasparov, whom I fully expect to run for FIDE President in 2014. Garry has been working tirelessly behind the scenes in preparation for this during these last two years. I have also been quietly working, in places such as Pakistan and Peru, and the fact that the FIDE President has quickly followed me to these countries just months afterwards perhaps gives an indication of the regard in which I am held as a campaigner.

The sharp criticism which FIDE received during the Vice-Presidential court case in Lausanne, Switzerland (see the Delegate's report), has obliged FIDE to become more accountable. This has directly led, this September, to the biggest redrafting of FIDE statutes in a generation. Much of the work was done by Ms. Ank Santens, the lawyer who represented the ECF in Lausanne. With better statutes and fairer electoral rules now in place, the neutral venue of Tromsø, Norway, 2014, will present the best opportunity yet of ousting the disastrous Kirsan Ilyumzhinov from office. If re-elected, I intend to support Garry Kasparov, whose high international profile and business acumen will help transform the sponsorship landscape dramatically for the better. I would therefore kindly ask Council to support me until 2014. I have no intention whatsoever of continuing as Delegate beyond that date, unless, of course, there is a change of regime.

Which brings me on to Rupert Jones... In countries with less lax regulations than ours, the fact that he is registered for and represents another country would automatically disqualify him from seeking office. It is ironic that he was playing for Papua New Guinea in the Olympiad at the time of the announcement of his official nomination for the post of English Chess Federation Delegate to FIDE. Rupert's support for Kirsan Ilyumzhinov in the 2010 Presidential Election, against the recommendation of the Papua New Guinea General Secretary, was amply sufficient for PNG to abstain. Be under no illusion -Rupert's election would be met by jubilation in FIDE headquarters.

If he were elected, he would at least bring experience to the post, as he has acted as the Botswanan Delegate to FIDE in the past. He is also currently Secretary of the Development Commission, which doles out money to small federations. Such things, however, do not necessarily square with the aims of the ECF. The election is essentially a choice between an Englishman who has represented his country for his entire career, or an opportunist who will wear whichever flag suits him. Notwithstanding the fact he was nominated from within the UK, he has tacit support from without. In short, you can either vote for the English representative in FIDE or the FIDE representative in the ECF.

Regrettably I will not be able to attend the Council meeting on October 13th. I have a prior commitment with an ECF team of juniors in Potsdam that weekend. I have therefore asked David Anderton to be my proxy. Best wishes!

Nigel Short.