

It has been a fairly quiet year, concerned with details like coordinating with the g-15 group of major federations on some technical issues, such as registration, which tend to affect us disproportionately, and other matters - like attempting to move the World Junior Chess Championship away from a venue close to the war-torn Syrian border. Sadly, in a move which apparently condones cheating, FIDE upheld the score of the French team at the 2010 Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad, despite the proven computer-assistance of Sebastien Feller, which meant that England finished several places below our rightful spot.

The next year, however, promises to be full of activity, due to the FIDE Presidential Election which will take place at the Tromso Olympiad, in Norway. It is an open secret that, if no one else, then Garry Kasparov will oppose the incumbent, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, who has led FIDE for the past 18 years.

Your Delegate was re-elected last year with a powerful anti-Kirsan mandate, and therefore I have real concerns about the current ECF Presidential election and how it may potentially alter the tilt of ECF policy. I have met Andrew Paulson a number of times since over the last year or so, and find him a very energetic and engaging personality. Nevertheless, with Agon – a secretive company, founded in January 2012, in Jersey, the Channel Islands, of which Andrew Paulson is the outside face - holding the rights to all the main FIDE events for many years to come, there is a very large question mark as to his impartiality. Being an intelligent man, he makes scant effort to uphold Kirsan's record publicly: defending the indefensible is, after all, a pretty thankless task. Nevertheless, despite acknowledging Kirsan's manifest deficiencies, Andrew Paulson has stated that he does not believe a Garry Kasparov Presidency would be any improvement. I contend that his opinion is thoroughly biased, because he is very well aware that the Agon-FIDE contract will be thoroughly re-examined in the event of an electoral victory by the 13<sup>th</sup> World Champion.

As was pointed out already from the floor of the FIDE General Assembly, in Istanbul 2012, Agon has been in breach of contractual obligations to make payments to FIDE funds. The fact that the company still has a relationship with FIDE begs the question as to who are the shareholders of the offshore company and whether any members of the FIDE Presidential Board have a direct or indirect financial interest in it. Over a delightful lunch at the Garrick Club last year, Andrew described Agon's contract with FIDE as "asset-stripping". If that were found out to be anything other than just a witty turn of phrase, the repercussions will be huge...