



EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

Election to the Executive Committee of the European Bridge League

Opatjia – June 2014

Candidate: Panos Gerontopoulos (Greece)

General

- Born 1949 in Athens, Greece
- Single
- Lives in Athens, Greece

Education

- Elementary and High School in Athens, Greece - graduated 1967
- University of Thessaloniki, Greece - received diploma in Surveying Engineering, 1973
- University of Oxford, England - received Master of Science degree, 1974
- University of Graz, Austria - received Doctor of Technical Science degree, 1977



Profession

- Army Engineer, 1978-79
- Surveying Engineer, 1979-81
- Lecturer, National Technical University of Athens, 1981-2012
- Managing Director, General Administration Management Systems, since 2013

Bridge Activities of the candidate

Domestic career

- National Tournament Director, 1977
- Journalist, *Messimvrini* national paper, 1981-88
- Hon. Secretary, Scientists Club, 1982-85
- President, Scientists Club, 1985-91

International administration

- Member, EBL Youth Committee, 1978-85; Chairman 1985-2007
- Chairman, EBL Internet Committee since 1999-2012
- EBL News & EBL Review Editor, 1988-2000
- Elected Member EBL Executive Committee 1985; re-elected 1989, 1993, 2010
- Elected EBL Hon. Secretary 1995; re-elected 1999, 2003 & 2007
- Alternate Member WBF Executive Council 1985-91
- Member WBF Executive Council 1991-2007; WBF Vice President 1998-2007
- Member, WBF Youth Committee 1985-91; Chairman 1991-2007
- WBF & EBL Liaison with IBPA 1994-2010
- Member, IBPA since 1975; Member, IBPA Executive Council 1983-2010

Organization

- 5th European Junior Camp, Ermioni, Greece, 1983 – Chief Organizer
- International Bridge Festival, Porto Hydra, Greece, 1983-88 – Chief Organizer
- 13th European Community Championships, Athens, Greece, 1991 – Chief Organizer
- 10th World Team Olympiad, Rhodes, Greece, 1996 – WBF Liaison & Hospitality Chief
- 5th World Masters, Athens, Greece, 2000 – On-site Organizer
- and Chief Organizer of 43 other EBL and WBF official youth events over the period 1985-2008.

Achievements

- European National Juniors' Officials Congress – established 1986
- European Junior Pairs Championship – established 1991
- European Schools Team Championship – established 1994
- World Junior Pairs Championship – established 1995
- World Junior Camp – established 1995
- WBF Internet official website – launched 1996
- EBL Internet official website – launched 2001
- World Junior Individual Championship – launched 2004
- Tournament Management System – presented 2006

Distinctions

- EBL Silver medal, 1991
- IBPA Personality of the Year 1995
- WBF Committee of Honour, elected 2002
- Hellenic Bridge Federation Honorary Member, 2002

Other Interests

- Music (especially classical & opera)
- Performing Arts (theatre, cinema)
- Travelling
- Electronics (Home Cinema, Computers)
- Photography

Philosophy

I believe very strongly that bridge is not just another sport, but one that can play a vital role in a person's life – and to society as a whole.

To the young, bridge offers a creative past time and a challenging sport that complements physical sports rather than competing against them. To the adult, it provides an intellectual alternative, and to the senior an excellent means to stay alert, combat loneliness and prolong mental powers. The most important asset of bridge, however, is its strong **social character** – a feature from which the entire society can benefit.

These points have been understood by the *International Olympic Committee* (IOC) which has recognized that bridge is a sport. One step remains – until bridge is included in the Olympic Games and all our NBOs be recognized by their National Olympic Committees – and I am confident that this step will be made before too long.

The NBOs constitute the framework of our sport. The EBL has also a very important role to play. Working together with the NBOs, the EBL can deal with the thorny problem of unbalanced development across Europe, and achieve spectacular results facilitating the effective transfer and application of know-how. **Development** at bridge is a medicine for all deceases; increase of membership solves all problems, whether financial, recognition, etc. Therefore, that is where efforts must focus.

During the years that I have been lucky enough to serve on the EBL Executive Committee, I had the pleasure of working together with great administrators who during the past half century have pushed bridge from a restricted game of the aristocracy to a sport for the masses. I am glad that I was able to contribute, dealing mainly with two very important departments: the *youth* and *communication*.

The **youth** is the future of our sport – and it serves our image more than anything else. It is, however, very difficult to achieve good results because of the enormous competition it faces from other sports/hobbies/past times available to young people today. Nevertheless, in the past Junior bridge had been going from strength to strength, and I trust that this trend can be regained in the future.

Communication is also vital. This is what brings us in contact with others. It provides the channels to convince people for our cause and attract them to our world. At the same time, it serves our image to the outside world and facilitates the functioning of bridge administration whether at national or international level. 12 years of a printed medium, *EBL Review*, were followed by a professional Internet web site which reflected all activities of European bridge – future, current or past - and was much appreciated by our players.

In particular, two areas were developed on my initiative. One is tournament *registration* which allows you to enter any competition fast and accurately, while enabling the organizers to have participants information at hand as required. The other is the new *EBL Master Points* scheme prepared by the EBL Master Points Committee. We have implemented the scheme in such a way that EMP awards could be available minutes upon the completion of each tournament; and we have taken advantage of database technology to offer filters and views satisfying a demanding reader.

You are probably aware of our work in developing and combining technology in one system - the **Tournament Management System** (TMS) – which achieves full automation at our championships: as soon as a result is recorded, score calculation, results update, and results posting locally and on Internet take place instantly and automatically without human intervention! Our dream was to be able to complete the project, incorporating registration and other modules into TMS, thus making our championships work flawlessly, from A to Z, like a well-functioning company.

It is my great pleasure to be a candidate for the Executive Committee of the European Bridge League, and – as in the past - I shall use all my experience and do my very best to achieve our common goals, working with my colleagues, if the opportunity is once again presented to me.