

## A presidents' report – IFSC Europe 2023

For me a council is a “place” where people & opinions come together. So, how did we manage to bring these together in 2023?

In 2023 we've had;  
14 board meetings,  
of which 3 in person (January Leuven Belgium, August Bern Switzerland, now Bratislava)  
and of which some were general board meetings, other were on specific topics like Sport or the MoU  
and of course we also had lots of more informal exchanges.

I really want to thank my board for the energy they bring in, even more knowing what they do next to their investment in IFSC Europe :

Heiko as VP sport who in his daytime job brought Austria to the Olympics,  
Zoe as SG did the same with the UK,  
and as board members Urs who delivered a World Championship and  
Burgi who was an essential part of the GoCo and just re-elected as VP for our biggest NF the DAV

On IFSC Europe level we've had at least 7 NF-moments of exchange. We cherish these moments deeply and I'm really happy to see how we become more & more interactive:  
most recent example is this PA where I really feel how people & opinions come together  
we've had an EO call and an online round table about competition organisation  
4 NF calls with outputs from each commission and, the important topic of safeguarding, topic we covered in a specific workshop in Manchester last year and that needs continued attention.

Talking of the commissions, they really help us, IFSC E, to put in place the good measures to make European progress inside the IFSC strategic plan. They will report later on but from my side:  
Our DevCo and SustCo are meeting monthly and making great progress on their topics, as you discovered in this mornings' workshops

The Sport Comm has such a broad amount of topics to discuss, is a great and passionate bunch of people that bring in high quality and they are treating the most important challenges for us as a sports organisation.

The Para Comm is still the most challenging but some outputs were achieved

What is certain is that we need your inputs as NF's to continue the work with the commissions and to come to the best solutions. Discussions like yesterday's definitely prove that there is a lot of ideas amongst us. We need new candidates to strengthen the work of our commissions, we want more NF's to become involved in the commissions, so really, do not hesitate to contact us if you think of new candidates.

We can always use more people and more opinions!

As a sport federation we need to focus on sport, deliver it, showcase it.

Season 2023 was yet a great one. Heiko and Alfons will give more numbers later on.

I from my side witnessed an EYCH B&S integrated in a multisport event, the Ruhr Games, which brought lots of spectators to our young athletes. Thank you, DAV for hosting.

The European Games were a unique opportunity to connect with the Olympic family, for NF's to strengthen the link with your NOC's as well as a great achievement by the Polish federation, even when challenged by thunderstorms.

Next on the calendar I could attend a first event ever in Finland, our EYCH L which some coaches called 100 times better than the WYCH. So the Finnish federation absolutely made a great start as EO.

And lastly I could taste a bit of the French Olympic atmosphere already some months before the Games. The EOQ in Laval was neatly delivered by the experienced FFME. Seeing Oriane win the Olympic ticket in front of her home crowd was simply giving me goose bumps. So congrats FFME on the organisation and also with your Olympians

In addition, congratulations to Slovenia, Italy and Poland for the tickets you obtained. 8 out of 22 Paris Olympians at this moment are Europeans and I hope that you all manage to grab a good share of the remaining tickets.

There is high pressure on event organisation so we're extremely lucky to have you, NF/EO's.

The 2024 calendar looks really promising, however there remains some gaps to fill.

For after 2024 some challenges lie ahead:

We need to find the EO's and we hope to do this more in advance so we hope more of you want to express their intentions with long term agreements or MoU's and we can have draft calendars circulating earlier.

We need to finalize a standard EO contract which the office will deliver in a draft version by the end of this month

And probably most important, we will have one and the same set of rules and format for the full next Olympiad 2025-2028. This means that our Sport Comm has, together with the IFSC commissions, some hard work to deliver over the upcoming 12 months and your inputs will be highly needed.

Another big focus for our board on delivering sport in the future were the Officials courses for which we had multiple meetings over the year and the outcomes at the moment were presented yesterday. It will be really cool to see the RS and judges courses happen in January – March!

Next on my report, we need to showcase our sport.

I hope you have all discovered and subscribed to our IFSC Europe YouTube channel. We launched it in a modest way in 2023 but we already feel the potential and will grow this more in the upcoming years.

For that and other communication, as a board we decided to search for a Social Media Officer. We've had 10+ candidates and after several rounds we have now come to one name and we hope to finalize the agreement with him in the upcoming weeks so he can start preparing the communication strategy for the next season, in close cooperation with the IFSC Communications department.

Last really important point to mention for showcasing is that we identified a clear need to work on the branding of our events, the graphical identity of what we are and what we do. We're discussing with Fabrizio how to proceed and I hope to see progress already at the first events of the 2024 season.

Other challenges for the board and for IFSC E:

Since the beginning of May we are officially without a treasurer in our board. We need new inputs, we need a time investment on the existing finances questions. There are threats for finances at national, European and World level so the treasurer position definitely was someone we missed in our board.

Not only did we lose our treasurer. In August, when the athletes elections happened during the WCH, Charlotte Durif finished her mandate as athletes representative. Even though you did not see her at our PA's, since she is living in Salt Lake City, she was of an extreme value to our board, bringing in the athletes point of view, being really active and with a broad vision on the difficulties we encounter. So thanks to her for all she has done.

It took the athletes commission quite long to define who would follow in her steps. Since the beginning of November we know Michael Piccolruaz from Italy will do so. He could not make it today due to family celebrations which were already planned. But I am sure that we are really fortunate to have again the athletes voice in our board.

Then there is the MoU with the IFSC. Right from when you elected me as your president it has been on our list of tasks and it has been a real tough mission I must say. After the GA in Salt Lake City there was some acceleration but in the end it went up and down, back and forth quite a lot. Sometimes we were discouraged, I believe I can say, but we stayed dedicated and I am proud to say that we're in the absolute final stage of a first MoU between a Continental Council and the IFSC. It will be a two year agreement and we will be able to circulate the final text in the upcoming weeks. It is a consensus, it is something that will continue to develop - compare it with the statutes - but we have a final result which will be signed soon.

With the agreement now we can focus on the operational challenges such as further integration of the staff (Alfons – Torino), Sharepoint and similar administrative tools to facilitate the work Finances cooperation, Communication & branding

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Other general challenges for the sport are definitely the danger of politicisation of sport (Ukraine, Gaza, Nagorno Karabach,...) and the sustainability topic (remember the IF Forum in Lausanne) but we will discuss these more on informal moments... and other formal moments when needed.

In any case I am convinced, and I know I can speak for the full European board, we believe, the only way is the way of interaction and cooperation within our European Council and with the other continents between you, the NF's and really congratulations for the work you have done in the statutes process;

with the athletes, we need calls with them, we need to have their voice in the boards and commissions, we need to make sure they feel part of us with the IFSC, Torino and the whole climbing family

Stronger together

Thank you