



RENEW ECU

One move. Real Change.

RENEW ECU OFFICIAL PROGRAM One Move. Real Change

European chess deserves more. More opportunities for federations, stronger events, better support for players and organizers, and a modern, transparent European Chess Union that delivers real value to its members.

This program is our commitment to making that happen. It is built on practical solutions, clear priorities, and the belief that together we can unlock the full potential of European chess. We invite every federation to join us in this effort and help shape a stronger future for the ECU.
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Renew ECU One Move – Real Change



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1. Democratic Renewal and Good Governance

The ECU belongs to its member federations. Every federation deserves a real voice in decisions, open competition when events are awarded, and full visibility of how its organisation is run. Federations should never learn of decisions after they have been taken, see events awarded without a competitive bidding process, or search the ECU website in vain for audited accounts. Too often, they do.

After twelve years under the same leadership, decision-making has become concentrated in too few hands. However capable those hands may be, no organisation should depend so heavily on so few people. Renewal is how fresh ideas and new leaders emerge.

We will:

- ✓ Introduce a maximum of two terms for the ECU President, so that leadership changes at least every eight years and new ideas keep coming through.
- ✓ Publish independently audited accounts and an annual report on the ECU website every year, so every federation can see how the organisation is run and how its money is spent.
- ✓ Appoint experts to key positions to put an end to nepotism and sinecures.
- ✓ Award every major ECU event through an open, competitive bidding process with published criteria, giving all federations a fair chance to host.
- ✓ Distribute real responsibility across a professional Board with defined portfolios, ending the ECU's dependence on any single office-holder.
- ✓ Consult member federations before major decisions are taken, through structured consultation and a dedicated point of contact for every federation.



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2. Improve the Quality and Conditions of ECU Events

European Championships should represent the very best of European chess. Every player deserves excellent playing conditions, professional organisation, and an experience worthy of competing for a European title. Players should never arrive at events to find substandard accommodation, poor catering, and disorganisation. Too often, they do.

We will:

- ✓ Introduce High-Quality Standards for all European Championships to ensure every event meets the same high standards of organisation, playing conditions and player experience.
- ✓ Appoint a professional Technical Delegate for every major championship to support organisers, ensure ECU standards are met before and during the event, and write a final evaluation after the competition.
- ✓ Improve playing conditions, increase prize funds and coordinate the European calendar with major international events to attract Europe's strongest players.
- ✓ Ensure every championship delivers the highest standards of organisation, accessibility, security, hospitality and live broadcasting.



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3. Sponsorship, Finances, and Prize Funds

European chess has the potential to achieve far more, but ambition needs resources. Players competing for a European title deserve prize funds that reflect the prestige of the event. Yet prize funds have barely moved in over a decade, while the cost of competing and organising has risen year after year. Our players and organisers deserve better.

We will:

- ✓ Establish an ECU Partnerships and Sponsorship Department with a clear target: to double the ECU's annual budget to at least €1.2 million through long-term partnerships with businesses, governments and organisations that recognise the value of chess.
- ✓ Identify and build the marketing value of ECU and package it properly for key partners from different sectors. We will stop awarding the title of General Sponsor of ECU to companies that bring 0€ to the ECU.
- ✓ Invest in development programmes that support players, member federations and the long-term growth of European chess.
- ✓ Reduce the ECU's reliance on membership fees and organiser contributions, so that growing the game does not mean growing the burden on federations.
- ✓ Introduce a transparent Micro-Grants Programme to support grassroots projects, youth initiatives, and local chess development.
- ✓ Increase prize funds across all European Championships
 - European Blitz&Rapid - with prize pool of 120,000€ starting in 2027
 - European Individual Championship - with a prize pool of 150,000€ from 2028
 - European Women's Championship - special free of charge invitations to top players and talented youth



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4. Make European Chess Visible: Modernising the ECU's Digital Strategy

European chess must be seen. With 54 member federations, world champions and millions of fans, the ECU should be one of the leading digital voices in world chess. Yet today, every European Championship builds its own website, which lives for a year and then disappears. Games, results and standings survive only on third-party platforms, scattered across the internet, while the ECU keeps no permanent record for its own history. There is no single place where organisers bid for events, federations vote on those bids, players enter, and fans follow.

We will:

- ✓ Build a professional ECU marketing strategy and involve experts.
- ✓ Restart the ECU Media and Marketing Commission, which has been inactive since 2024.
- ✓ Transform the ECU website into a modern digital platform with integrated services for players, organisers, federations, and fans, including tournament entries, organiser applications, live coverage, and federation resources.
- ✓ Invest in professional photography, digital content, and broadcasting to showcase European championships at the highest level.
- ✓ Create a Federation Space where every member federation can promote its events, achievements, and development projects.
- ✓ Tell the stories of Europe's players, organisers, and federations through engaging content, interviews, behind-the-scenes coverage, and social media.
- ✓ Develop a comprehensive digital marketing strategy to increase the visibility of European chess, strengthen the ECU brand, and create greater value for sponsors and partners.
- ✓ Provide federations seeking TV exposure with examples from countries where it was successful.



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5. Business Partnerships and Corporate Chess

Thousands of companies across Europe already play chess, in office leagues, national corporate championships and team events. These companies are natural partners for our game, yet the ECU offers them almost nothing: no pathway from national leagues to a European stage, and a Corporate Championship that few have heard of. The business community is ready to play. We should invite them properly.

We will:

- ✓ Establish a Partnership and Sponsorship Commission of ECU.
- ✓ Identify and build key marketing values of ECU and its events.
- ✓ Grow the European Corporate Chess Championship into one of the ECU's premier events, with a prestigious European Final, professional broadcasting and media promotion.
- ✓ Connect national corporate leagues into a European pathway, so that a company team anywhere in Europe can compete for a European title.
- ✓ Create a clear route for companies to move from playing chess to partnering with chess, working with the Partnerships Commission to turn participants into sponsors.
- ✓ Ensure that revenue from corporate partnerships flows into prize funds, development programmes and support for member federations.
- ✓ Send a representative to major European conferences on sports, technology and business. The networking opportunities created through this engagement will open new possibilities for partnerships, innovation, sponsorship, and the further promotion of chess.



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6. Empowering Member Federations

The ECU exists to serve its member federations. Yet for many federations, especially smaller ones, the ECU is little more than an invoice and an invitation: membership fees go out, and no support comes back. Every federation, whatever its size, should be able to call on the ECU for practical help with funding, organisation and growth. Today, almost none can.

We will:

- ✓ Help federations secure sponsorship and access European and international funding programmes, with the ECU's Partnerships Department acting as a resource for every member federation, not only for the ECU itself.
- ✓ Launch a Federation Development Programme offering practical, hands-on help with governance, event organisation and strategic planning, delivered through training seminars.
- ✓ Assign a dedicated ECU board member to every member federation to provide regular support and maintain direct communication throughout the year.
- ✓ Direct ECU development funding where it achieves the most benefit, with dedicated support for Small Nations set out in Point 8.
- ✓ Create a yearly ECU Conference, a platform to improve, share and learn.
- ✓ Establish special training programs for national teams.
- ✓ Assist federations in seeking greater recognition from their National Olympic Committee or sports ministry.



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7. Strengthen Women's Chess

Talented female players are leaving competitive chess. Prize funds in women's events have not kept pace with the growth of the game, making it increasingly difficult to sustain a career at the highest level. This is a loss for every one of our 54 member federations.

Supporting women in chess is not charity. It is essential to the future of our game.

We will:

- ✓ Create more competitive opportunities for women, including greater access to open competitions.
- ✓ Introduce clear Safe Play guidelines and reporting procedures for every ECU event, ensuring a safe, professional, and welcoming environment for all participants.
- ✓ Increase the number of female officials by supporting their recruitment, education and development.
- ✓ Raise the visibility of women's chess through professional media coverage, promotion, and stronger recognition of female role models.
- ✓ Rebuild a strong Women's Commission to advise the ECU Board on the development of women's chess across Europe.



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8. Support for Small Nations

Small Nations are an essential part of the European chess family. A federation of a hundred players faces the same costs of travel, training and organisation as a federation of a hundred thousand, with none of the resources. Without targeted support, the gap only widens.

We will:

- ✓ Guarantee the current financial support for ESNA, and increase it up to 50% during the 4-year term.
- ✓ Help organisers to attract commercial partnerships and improve the long-term sustainability of the ESNA events.
- ✓ Run dedicated online training programmes for Small Nations, pooling players, coaches and arbiters across federations so that no federation is too small to develop its people.
- ✓ Strengthen the participation of Small Nations in ECU championships and development programmes.
- ✓ Introduce a transparent Micro-Grants Programme from 2028 to support grassroots projects, youth initiatives, and local chess development.



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9. Arbiters and Fair Play

Arbiters and Fair Play experts are essential to the success and integrity of every ECU event. Their expertise ensures that competitions are fair, professional and trusted by players.

The current daily rate of 60.00€ is outdated and fails to recognise the expertise, responsibility, and dedication required of modern arbiters. An organisation that depends on professionals should pay them like professionals.

We will:

- ✓ Increase the daily remuneration for ECU arbiters from 60.00€ to 100€ per day.
- ✓ Build a transparent system for appointing officials to events.
- ✓ Establish regular consultation with the ECU Arbiters' Council to ensure their experience helps shape future regulations and event standards.
- ✓ Strengthen Fair Play standards and support the experts who safeguard the integrity of our competitions.
- ✓ Invest in the education and professional development of arbiters and Fair Play experts.
- ✓ Create an arbiter's corner on the ECU YouTube channel, describing instructive situations by experienced ECU arbiters and Fair Play experts.



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10. Chess in Education

Chess is one of the most powerful educational tools we have, teaching young people concentration, creativity and problem-solving. Across Europe, federations have built outstanding chess-in-education programmes, reaching hundreds of thousands of children. They have done it largely alone. The ECU, which should be Europe's platform for sharing this work and funding its growth, has stood on the sidelines.

We will:

- ✓ Partner with a platform which will provide classes and accounts, for free, to children, chosen by their federation.
- ✓ Create a conference to share educational materials, research, and best practices.
- ✓ Actively pursue Erasmus+ and other European funding opportunities to expand chess in schools.
- ✓ Promote successful educational initiatives and help federations implement proven chess-in-education programmes.

See you in Bucharest at the ECU General Assembly.

Together, let's renew the European Chess Union.

Vote for Renew ECU. One Move. Real Change.