



*A letter written by **Tamas Gyarfas**, President of the Hungarian Swimming Association, concerning the behind-the-scenes debates inside FINA and LEN. This was sent to all LEN Member Federations as well as to swim and sports media through the Europe.*

Dear President,

I am writing this letter now, although I never imagined such an absurd situation would occur in which I must respectfully ask the LEN member Federation representatives once again, to support "with their votes "my candidature for the position of FINA Bureau membership, at the upcoming FINA Congress. The reason why I decided to do so is, that according to the latest news, the voting process already held in Zurich, is going to be repeated at the FINA Congress on 24 July in Rome.

You have already backed me once on 28 September 2008 in Zurich, Switzerland. As you certainly recall at the LEN Congress, in the presence of FINA President Mustapha Larfaoui, FINA Honorary Secretary Bartolo Consolo, and FINA Honorary Treasurer Dr Julio Maglione, the delegates unanimously decided to elect - by secret ballot in that particular place and time "the four persons to automatically represent Europe in the FINA Bureau between 2009 and 2013, and the official nominees eligible according to the World at large procedure in Rome.

The result of the vote is well known and minuted: Nory Kruchten 73, Paolo Barelli 61, Tamas Gyarfas (undersigned) 60, Dimitris Diathesopoulos 59. (Sven Folvik ranked 5th and Christa Thiel 6th).

Roughly six months later, in March 2009, during the FINA Bureau meeting in Dubai the FINA President suddenly suggested to amend the regulations in order to allow all six (6) European representatives (and not only the first four) to be automatically eligible for FINA Bureau membership. The proposal was rejected by the FINA Bureau.

Now, in July 2009, another twist and switch!!! As we have noticed, the final result in Zurich was not to everyone's taste. All signs indicate that "as there are still more than six European candidates for the FINA Bureau membership "the voting and decision in Zurich seems to be actually considered as if it never happened at all. It means that the first four ranked by a democratic voting procedure in Zurich have to compete in an election again. Compare this to the previous consideration of the regulations whereas only those placed behind them (5th and 6th) were to enter the World at large election procedure.

One may legitimately wonder why wasn't such a standpoint been clearly expressed on 28 September 2008 in Zurich? Wouldn't it have been fair and much clearer to immediately announce: "Ladies and gentlemen (as there was a lady too among the candidates), the present procedure was only a rehearsal, now that we had some fun let us prepare for the real competition to be held next year in Rome, on 24 July."

In Zurich, the FINA executive leadership extended their congratulations for the legitimate result. According to the latest rumours, they now ignore the decision of the LEN Congress. As if nothing happened in Zurich, a new vote will be carried out in Rome to establish all six FINA Bureau spots reserved for the European Continent.

This shows in fact how much FINA values the decision of the LEN Congress.

The funny thing is that "with the exception of the LEN President "several LEN leaders are among those in favour of a new voting. Consequently, taking advantage of the opportunity that has come up, even some of the current leading figures of LEN are ready to doubt the democratic decision of the highest LEN forum, the LEN Congress. They are the same who will be entitled to decide upon cases of protest, and could accuse athletes of an unfair behaviour (in case they might not accept a defeat in a way worthy of a sportsman).

If this attitude proves to be valid, it would be worthwhile to introduce it for the swimming competitions as well. Let's suppose Magnini defeats Bernard in the 100m freestyle in Rome. No problem at all. Bring a good lawyer in, and this could be enough for a re-swim.

In the same manner, even the venue of the European Swimming Championships to be held next year in Budapest could also be contested and doubted, specially because that decision was also made in Zurich ! It may easily happen that next year in July that decision will be changed as well, since the event will only start on 4 August, therefore enough time still.

A few days ago, in his circular letter sent to the LEN Member Federations, Dimitris Diathesopoulos LEN Vice President stated:

"From my experience being an attorney at Law for 32 years, in order to change or otherwise alter such decision, there are two ways, either the LEN Congress to make a different decision or such decision to be appealed to the proper court by anyone that has the legal right, which latter has not happened, so the decision is LEGAL, IN GOOD STANDING and APPLICABLE."

I share the same opinion. However, may I modestly add that I am only a sports leader for about 32 years.

Although it looks like there is still much left for me to learn.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tamas Gyarfás'.

Tamas Gyarfás

President of the Hungarian Swimming Association