

OEC Meeting, 12 October 2018, in Münsingen, Switzerland

Start at: 20:05 End at: 21:45

Seminar room, 1st floor, Swiss Dog Arena

Chairman: Carmen Schmid (Germany), on behalf of Lusy Imbergerova (Italy) and Chiara Meccoli (Italy)

Counting votes: Chiara Meccoli (Italy)

Minutes: Debra Bénard (France)

Voting Participants:

Argentina

Marysol Rey

Austria

Martina Avende (leaving at 21:15)

Monika Siegl (ditto)

Belgium

Christel van Boven

Dagmar Richter

Czech Republic

Vanda Gregorova

Petra Prazakova

France

Alexandra Creusot

Sophie Perez

Germany

Carmen Schmid

Horst Gehrke

Great Britain

David Hardman

Kath Hardman

Italy

Lusy Imbergerova

Chiara Meccoli

The Netherlands

Brigitte van Gestel

Andre de Jong

Slovakia

Monika Olsovská
Sasa Vavrova

Sweden

Erika Johansson
Kerstin Eklund

Switzerland

Regula Albisser Strom
Claudia Moser

1. Welcome

Carmen Schmid welcomed participants to the OEC Meeting and requested voting representatives to sign the attendance list. After the list was returned, it was concluded that the **total number of voting participants** was **22**.

2. Candidature to organize the OEC 2021 (Carmen Schmid, Germany)

Carmen Schmid read out the following agenda item:

“Dogdance Deutschland e.V. is applying to hold the OEC 2021.
The venue would be the new Messe Stuttgart.

The OEC was already organized there in 2014.

The competition would be embedded in the largest pet fair in Germany. As in 2014, great media interest could be expected.

The framework conditions would be the same as in 2014:

- Great rest zone for all starters and their dogs.
- Airport 3 minutes away, judges and athletes could travel easily.
- On all 4 days the entrance to the fair for all starters and 1 accompanying person would be free.
- The training day on Thursday would be held with the media in mind, with TV and journalists on site.
- Opening ceremony to take place on Thursday evening.
- No access to the rest area for media and visitors.
- As before: Friday HTM, Saturday Freestyle and Sunday Final HTM and Freestyle
- The ring : 20 x 25 m, designed with a blue dog sport floor, opaque ring barrier, in addition metal grids are installed.
- Other dogs have free access to the fair and dog area.

There are a large number of hotels in the area.

Throughout the OEC, access for all teams is secured from 08:00 in the morning.

The organizing team has already organized the OEC 2014 and looks forward to a repeat.”

Results of the voting on item 2:

In favour: 22
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0

3. Candidature to organize the OEC in 2022 (Andre de Jong, Netherlands)

The following agenda item was read out by Carmen Schmid (Chairman of the Meeting):
“Propose that we (the Netherlands) would like to organise the OEC in 2022”

Results of the voting on item 3:

In favour: 22
 Against: 0
 Abstentions: 0

The Chairman announced, in addition to the decisions that had just been taken on the venue for the OEC in 2021 and 2022, that the OEC would be held in Rome, Italy, from 20 to 22 September 2019, and in Moscow, Russia, in 2020. It was possible that it might be held in Slovakia in 2023.

4. Current and next OEC Committee

The current OEC committee (period 2017/2018) consists of:

2016 - Monika Fritz
 2017 - Luc Daems
 2018 - Petra Funk until June 2018/ Brigitte Kaiser since June 2018
 2019 - Lusy Imbergerova
 2020 - Polina Ilina

The next OEC committee (period 2018/2019 after the OEC 2018 in Munsingen):

2017 - Luc Daems
 2018 - Brigitte Kaiser since June 2018
 2019 - Lusy Imbergerova
 2020 - Polina Ilina
 2021 - Carmen Schmid

5. Team of only individual dogdancers (Alexandra Creusot, Sophie Perez, France)

The agenda item, as read out by the Chairman, was: "If one country has enough competitors to make a team, but this country has only individual competitors due to the choice of its kennel club, a team be formed from those individual competitors? This situation arises every year in the case of dogdancers from France."

Justification (as explained during the meeting):

The French Kennel Club prefers to align itself with FCI rules, especially about pedigreed dogs, rather than with OEC rules. Therefore it does not permit a team from France to be formed for the OEC. However, teams are given priority in registration for the OEC, and only afterwards are individuals allowed to register. This means that French dogdancers are often deprived of the opportunity to compete.

Solutions proposed during the discussion:

Setting up a national organization, independent of the French Kennel Club, for promoting the sport and organizing competitions; holding a qualifying event, or making an existing one like the Grand Prix de France become one; continuing to register as individuals (even though that is difficult), and then designating them as a team.

6. Music (Helle Larssen, Denmark)

The agenda item, as read out by the Chairman, was: "The rules refer to all music as 'CDs'. Most countries use USB sticks for music these days, so maybe the wording in the rules should be changed, so it is possible to bring back-up music on a USB stick rather than a CD. In a few years, it will be difficult to find a PC, which can even deal with CDs."

Following a short discussion, the following changes to the OEC competition rules were put to the vote: In the section entitled "Music" replace the term "CD" with "CD or other portable media".

Results of the voting on item 6:

In favour: 22
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0

These changes have been incorporated in OEC rules

7. Judges (Sasa Vavrova, Slovakia)

The agenda item, as read out by the Chairman, was:

"A. Judges at Open European Championships must have abroad experience in judging at least for 5 years, or competing in highest classes (in rules of concrete country) at least 5 years (it means starting at least 5 years ago).

B.1 Judges are not permitted to judge family members as handlers, or dogs owned by themselves, family members or relatives such as children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters or in-laws. Neither are they allowed to judge household members or residents of their household.

B.2 If a judge has bred a dog or had a dog for training, or if a dog has been living in the judge's household within one year of the competition he or she can not act as judge in this competition. It is recommended that the competitor has the priority and another judge should be invited if ineligibility to judge has arisen.

C. Judges of Open European Championships cannot compete at the same championships what they are judging."

The proposer of the item, Sasa Vavrova, explained that the overall objective was to open up discussion on how to make OEC judging more serious.

Discussion on item 7.A: five years' judging experience abroad

Carmen Schmid asked what was the definition of "abroad", or "international", judging experience.

Sonja Scheurer and Claudia Moser suggested that the criterion should be judging, not for "at least 5 years", but at a certain number of competitions.

Erika Johansson said that for Sweden, a country "at the edge of the world", to require judging of a minimum number of international competitions would be unfair, so it would be better to say that some but not all judging must be at international competitions.

Regarding the requirement of "competing in the highest classes", Christel van Boven said that if judges don't do the sport at that level, they can't evaluate competitors.

Sonja Scheurer replied that competing in "the highest classes" was not by any means a prerequisite for judging expertise: depending on the breed of dog one worked, getting to the highest class was difficult if not impossible.

Kath Hardman queried the need for the proposal: had a problem actually arisen in the past with the judging of OEC competitions?

Claudia Moser proposed the following amendment under item 7.A. After the first line of the section of the current rules on “Judging”, which now read “Each round in the Open European Championship will be judged by three or five judges”, the rules would state: “*to be chosen by organisers from among judges having several years of judging experience, including, preferably, at the international level.*”

Voting on amendment to proposal under item 7.A

In favour: 22
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0

This amendment has been incorporated in OEC rules.

Discussion on item 7.B.1: not judging family or household members

A question was raised as to whether the problem had actually occurred, and Sasa Vavrova said it had.

Martina Avende contested the idea that OEC judges could not be trusted to be objective in such situations. A similar prohibition had been unsuccessfully instituted for agility in Austria.

Sasa Vavrova said that judging agility was less subjective than dogdance judging.

Claudia Moser said that it was hard to be objective if you knew the dog or the person, but it was even worse if you trained with the person. Judges were by definition expected to be objective, however.

It was pointed out that the judges were known long before the participants were. Therefore, it would be unfair to make organisers change judges because of entries in the OEC. Also, there were three or even five judges, so a single judge’s marks would be corrected by the overall average of the judges’ marks.

Kirsten Eklund and Wanda Gregorova said that in Sweden and the Czech Republic, it was prohibited to judge family members.

Kath Hardman pointed out that the OEC took place only once a year, and with an international group of participants and competitors, so the problem was not comparable to what happened in national competitions.

Claudia Moser said that if a judge gave especially higher or even lower points to a family member or someone closely associated with him/her, he/she was unlikely to be re-invited to judge at an OEC competition.

Voting on proposal under item 7.B.1

In favour: 9
Against: 11
Abstentions: 2

Discussion on item 7.B.2: judging dogs bred or brought up in a judge’s household

Kath Hardman said that policing such a connection would be difficult and ultimately futile.

Claudia Moser added that policing was difficult and the sport had not yet shown the need for it.

Sasa Vavrova said the judge could be disqualified after the fact.

It was pointed out, for the second time during the meeting, that the three- or five-judge system provided security against excessively high or low marking of a given team by a single judge.

Voting on proposal under item 7.B.2:

In favour: 0
Against: 14
Abstentions: 8

Discussion on item 7.C: Judges not competing when judging

Voting on proposal under item 7.C:

In favour: 10
Against: 8
Abstentions: 4

8. Rename the OEC (Claudia Moser, Monika Olsovska, Melanie Felix, Katrin Stiller)

The agenda item, as read out by the Chairman, was “The OEC has become a very well known and respected competition, that has participants from many different nations, even those that are not strictly in Europe (such as Russia, Japan, etc.). Also it is the only competition that is completely barrier free and allows all teams and all dogs (no matter if or which pedigree they have) to compete against each other.

This in our opinion reflects the spirit and goals of Dogdance / Freestyle / HTM, where everyone is welcome to participate and leaves the sport open to all handlers, nationalities, breeds and dogs with or without pedigrees. Also, so far the biggest number of different countries competing has always been at the OEC.

The title World Champion seems to be more valuable than a title such as European Champion to many people. So to reflect, that the winner of the OEC has actually has competed against all dogs and not just a selection of them as at a FCI-Championship, a change of name might help to keep the OEC „THE“ event of the Freestyle and HTM-year.

Therefore, I propose to rename the OEC and call it in the future Open World Championship and the winner could therefore call himself HTM or Freestyle World Champion.”

Christel van Boven pointed out that there was already a World Championship – what was the point of having a second one?

Alexandra Creusot said that French competitors would not be able to participate in a “second” or “Open” World Championship whose name conflicted with that of the FCI World Championship.

Lusy Imbergerova pointed out that in agility and disc dog, there were actually a number of World Championships.

Horst Gehrke pointed out that name recognition equalled content. The danger was that there would be "world championships" in Japan and other countries all over the world.

Erica Johansson said that if the name of the OEC was changed to "Open" World Championship, there would certainly be problems with the FCI. It would be better to clearly separate the OEC from FCI competitions by emphasizing that any dog, pure-bred or not, could come and compete.

Claudia Moser expressed the fear that Kennel Clubs would give preference to FCI World Championship, and that the OEC would die without Kennel Club support.

David Hardman suggested, based on the British experience, that if that appeared to be happening, a body independent from the Kennel Club should be set up.

Christel van Boven said that in Belgium, such a move had resulted in the independent body being banned from FCI competitions.

Kersten Eklund said that at all costs, the OEC must be protected from coming under FCI domination. The objective was the opposite: to make the FCI gradually accept the policy of the OEC, namely that all dogs, with or without pedigree, should and could compete.

Carmen Schmid (Chairman) said that the OEC was such a great event, it would be a shame to give it another name, even if that might make it more prestigious and help to gain sponsors.

Erika Johansson said the dream was to open up the FCI World Championship and at the same time make the OEC more attractive to more countries.

It was pointed out that there was a working group within the FCI that might be able to move in that direction.

Voting on proposal under item 8 (Rename the OEC):

In favour: 6

Against: 15

Abstentions: 1

9. Change the OEC rules (Kerstin Eklund, Sweden)

Agenda item withdrawn.

10. Who will organise the next OEC meeting from Russia?

Agenda item withdrawn, on the understanding that Lusy Imbergerova would find out from Polina Il'ina who should be the contact person for OEC Moscow 2019.

11. Country representative declared before the meeting

Same as above.