

Like in the last years most of the time I invested for international events / contacts.

With the big financial support of Pandanet Inc. we could start in September 2011 the second season of the Pandanet Go European Team Championship, with 31 country-teams (30 teams in the first season). We "lost" two countries (Luxembourg, Croatia), but won 3 new ones (Norway, Belarus, Kazakhstan). Only Azerbaijan, Armenia, Latvia and Lithuania are till now not active in the PGETC.

The championship ended with the finals in Bonn (July 2012) where Russia defended their title of the first season, followed by Czechia, Ukraine and France. Allover the PGETC is a successful event, and the third season will start in September 2012.

Another highlight in the European Go-scene, Pair-Go, is linked very close with Japan. Again a team of European pairs participated at the 21st World Amateur Pair Go Championship in Tokyo. But the final result in the field of 32 pairs (no European pair under the top 8) was a bit disappointing for Europe. Therefore I proposed to the japanese organizers that from 2012 on not only pairs from countries in Europe can participate but also the best placed amateur-pair of the European Pair Go Championship. This proposal was accepted, parallel raising the importance of our European Pair Go Championship. Jan Hora and Klara Zaloudkova from Czechia won this place at the EPGC 2012 in Lyon and will play in November 2012 in Tokyo.

This year's World Amateur Go Championship (WAGC) happened in May 2012 in Guangzhou (China), with good results for Europeans. Sorry to say that some European countries (Poland, Ukraine, Armenia,...) were absent.

The contacts to China started very promising at the EGC2011 in Bordeaux where two teams of the Chinese City League (8 Professionals) played their match as a big show-event for Europe. Additional we got an invitation for the "unannounced" women's world championship in Chna, where Natalia Kovaleva from Russia represented Europe.

The highlight of this year's contacts with China were the (new) 1st Sport Accord World Mind Games in Beijing, held in December, where for the first time a team started with the flag of the European Union. This generated a lot of difficulties for the EGF because we prepared a qualification not limited on players from EU-countries. Happy to say that this problem has been solved for the 2nd SAWMG by skipping the team-event ! Further on EGF got an invitation for the first Bailing-Cup in Beijing. We were able to nominate one player (Charlie Akerblom, 5d, from Sweden) although this invitation was only for participating, without any financial support for travelling and accomodation. Also the Bailing-Cup will be played every year from now on.

Besides these positive points we are sorry to say that the plan of sending European youngsters to China in the summer-holidays, as discussed in Tampere 2010 and updated in December 2011 in Beijing with China Qi-Yuan, could not be fixed for the summer 2012, but might happen next year. . More painful that is was not possible to extend the sponsoring of the EGC by Zhuyeqing Tea Company for the 2012 congress in Bonn.

Looking on the contacts with Korea we see improvements year over year. Not only that again the Korean Prime Minister's Cup happened with more than 30 players from Europe (and full financial support for travelling), KABA invited "unlimited" strong amateur-players from Europe to play in the BC Card Cup. We got more invitations than we found players. Finally 6 Europeans played in this tournament, 3 travelled from Europe and three already staying in Korea could participate as well.

Also KBA (the organisation for the Korean Professionals) helped Europe. Fredrik Blomback, 6d, from Sweden and Dusan Mitic, 6d, from Serbia could stay for more than 6 months in Korea improving their Go like Insei's while KBA covered a lot of their costs.

Another project, just running, started in 2012 – Korean Professionals touring through Europe in the summer. The idea behind it: Instead of positioning strong Korean Amateurs/Professionals over one year (or longer) at a fixed city in Europe let two or more Korean teachers visit European summer Go camps, main tournaments and the EGC. Then they have much more time (and fun) by teaching daily and enjoying the European Go-scene as well. So for the first time this summer 2 groups come to Europe, each for about 6 weeks, all over 4 Professionals (2 male / 2 female). It's very likely that we find such an agreement also for the summer 2013.

Last not least, the EGF has very good contacts to Taiwan as well, mainly to the Ing Foundation and its tournaments (Ing-Cup, World Amateur Go Youth Championship). Jana Hricova, in charge for Go-activities of our youngsters, works on this field.

Talking about possibilities for young players in far-east: The EGF gets more and more invitations for participating in summer-tournaments and/or teaching possibilities in Japan, Korea and China. But in most cases these invitations arrive very late and without a financial support for the flight-tickets. Therefore it is very difficult for Jana to find young players spending part of their school holidays in far east...

Looking to the west, again under the lead of Jana Hricova and Ales Cieply the fourth Transatlantic Youth Match (Europe vs. USA/Canada, under 18) was played in June 2012. After winning last year this year Europe lost 2:8.

Besides the other European Championships (women, youth, students, pair) where the EGF helped with some money as much as possible, also supporting European teachers in these events, the EGF organized a special qualification tournament in Prague for nominating players to participate in the 1st SportAccord Mind Games in Beijing. Finally 22 players participated, all got financial support for travelling and accommodation with the consequence that the final 5 European participants (Catalin Taranu, Christian Pop, Cornel Burzo, Jan Simara and Vanessa Wong) won less money in Beijing. EGF took part of the money (guaranteed prize-money from SportAccord) for the tournament in Prague. This year we will have a similar tournament in Lille, only for male players, with less financial support (because of reduced prize-money for the 2nd SAWMG). Best case would be to take existing tournaments for qualifying for SAWMG, we hope to find a solution for 2013.

Since March 2012 I am deeply involved in preparing the 2. World Mind Sports Games in Lille, where the EGF will be the organizer on behalf of the IGF (www.wmsg2012.org).

Martin Stiassny, July 2012