

MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN CUSTOMS SPORTS ASSOCIATION
HELD AT THE CUSTOM HOUSE, HEATHROW - LONDON, ON 4 DECEMBER 1992

1. The meeting was attended by the following:-

Delegates:

Andre Geeraerts	-	Belgium
Poul-Erik Nielson	-	Denmark
Bernhard Lapasset	-	France
Bas Van den Broek	-	Holland
Joseph Schuller	-	Luxembourg
Gearoid Murphy	-	Republic of Ireland
Malcolm Burnett	-	United Kingdom
Jack Bugge	-	Initial Chairman (UK)
Sir Brian Unwin	-	Founder (UK)

Observers:

Marc Le Reste	-	French Customs Attache
Bruno Jackson	-	Festival of Sport Organiser (UK)
J De Neuman	-	European Commission

2. The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming those attending, and offering apologies for absence from Germany, Greece and Italy. Neither Spain nor Portugal had responded to the invitation. He indicated that Sir Brian Unwin would attend later to formally declare the founding of the proposed association.

3. PROVISIONAL ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN (Agenda Item 1)

The Danish delegate proposed that, pro tem, Mr Bugge should continue in his capacity as Chairman; Mr Bugge agreed, and the proposal was carried unanimously.

The Chairman then offered the agenda for approval by the delegates. The agenda was accepted subject to the addition of 'any other business'.

4. DELEGATE INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 2)

The Danish delegate stated that his personal sporting interest was badminton; he had been an All England Champion and had represented his country at international level. Denmark embraced virtually the whole sporting spectrum (except cricket!), and the delegate assured the meeting of his country's full support.

The Irish delegate stated that he was attending the meeting as an observer, and wished to reserve judgement on his country's participation. He stated that his country had a Civil Service Sports organisation, but not a customs sports organisation per se; the Irish Revenue Commissioners were involved in a broad range of sporting activities organised by way of separate clubs that had no central support.

The Dutch delegate stated that his country did not have a customs sports club as such, but that the customs service was part of the Internal Revenue Service, which supported a wide range of sporting activities and held an annual national sports day. He indicated a wide range of sports that he'd like to see embraced by the proposed Festival of Sports, inter alia, shooting and walking. A four day marathon walk was to be held in July 1993 and six walkers from each EC country would be invited to participate.

The UK delegate stated that he had organised the UK National Sports Day, and that UK Customs regularly participated in inter-European events. The 1993 Festival of Sport would mark the 90th anniversary of the Customs & Excise Sports Club.

The French delegate stated that he was Chairman of the French Rugby Union, and that he had represented his country at international level. He stated that there was a long tradition of customs involvement in sporting activities, and that the French Customs Sports Association embraced more than 2000 members and 50 clubs. Organised sport at international level included, inter alia, rowing, rugby and football.

The Luxembourg delegate pointed out that there were only 476 serving customs officers in his country - too few for a Customs Sports Association. He played football and regularly plays tennis, whilst his countrymen are also keen on sports such as shooting and running. The Finance Ministry was organising a National sporting event (including football, table-tennis and chess) in Luxembourg on 13-17 June 1993, and an international event, open to other Member States, would take place at Vichy on 20-25 September 1993.

The Belgian delegate thanked the Chairman for his initiative in organising a Festival of Sport in 1993. He stated that the Belgian Customs had no separate Sports Association, and that sporting activities came under the umbrella of the Ministry of Finance; about 80 sports clubs had been founded and regular inter-club competitions took place, embracing athletics, basketball, bowling, cycling, football, shooting, swimming and tennis (alas, not cricket, golf, rugby or squash!). He promised his country's support - albeit sporting activities were self-financing.

Mr De Neuman explained that he was attending the meeting as a representative of both the European Commission and of the European Customs and Tax Association (ECTA); he distributed a house magazine, a copy of the association's rules, and a lapel badge to all those attending the meeting. He stated that the ECTA had been founded in 1988 and currently had some 100 members, representing various nationalities and members of the Customs service; it is a multi-lingual association drawn mainly from the Directorate General of Customs at Brussels, with its main objectives being to promote the corporate spirit and professionalism. He apologised for the absence of the Director General, and assured the meeting that the Director General appreciated the UK initiative and particularly its part in strengthening morale.

The Chairman stated that his major sporting interest was in basketball, in which he had participated at both national and international level; he was president of the Scottish Basketball Association and has been involved with the Olympic basketball squad. He recognised that the delegates represented a diverse range of sporting interests, and stated that some associations already existed - albeit, not specifically dedicated to sport. The meeting had therefore to decide whether or not they wanted a European Customs Sports Association? The delegates unanimously agreed that an association along the lines proposed was desirable.

5. THE CONSTITUTION (Agenda Item 3)

Delegates discussed the proposed constitution and agreed the following amendments:-

Heading:

That the word 'Community' should be deleted and that the amended heading should read 'Rules and constitution of the Association of European Countries Customs Sports Clubs'.

Paragraph 2 (Objects):

That sub-paragraph (a)(i) be amended to read, '(i) to encourage sport and recreation between customs personnel of European countries.'

That sub-paragraph (a)(ii) be amended to read, '(ii) to facilitate liaison between Sports Associations and sports bodies for customs, and associated personnel within European countries.'

Paragraph 3 (Affiliation):

That the paragraph be amended to read, 'All European countries customs sports associations, and any other organisation agreed to by the Council, are eligible to affiliate and each shall pay such annual subscription as the Council meeting shall from time to time decide. Subscriptions will be collected at an annual Council meeting or within two weeks thereof.'

Paragraph 4 (Executive):

That this paragraph be renumbered '5' and repositioned accordingly, and retitled, 'Executive Committee'.

That the paragraph be amended to read,

'The Executive Committee of the Association shall be, the Chairperson, the Treasurer, and two other elected members.'

Nominees must agree to stand for office.

These will normally be elected every two years from representatives of the members of the Council who are not members of the Executive Committee. The election will take place at the annual meeting of the Council.

The Chairperson will appoint a Secretary to the Association from his/her own country.

The Executive Committee will submit an annual report on the activities of the association to the Council.'

Paragraph 5 (Committee):

That this paragraph be renumbered '4' and repositioned accordingly, and retitled, 'Council'.

That the paragraph be amended to read,

'(a) The Council shall consist of one representative from each member country.

(b) The Council shall meet as frequently as necessary and not less frequently than once per calendar year.

(c) The meetings will be held in each member country in a rotation decided by the Council.

- (d) Resolutions and items for the agenda of Council meetings must be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least two months before the day fixed for the meeting. The agenda should be circulated at least 21 days before the date of the Council meeting.
- (e) Resolutions and elections to the Executive Committee will be decided by a simple majority. The Chairperson will have an ordinary vote, and in the event of a tie he/she will have a casting vote.
- (f) Observers may attend Council meetings at the discretion of the Executive Committee.'

Paragraph 6 (Finance):

That the paragraph be amended to read,

- '(a) The Funds of the Association shall be administered by the Treasurer acting under the instructions of the Council.
- (b) The accounts of the Association shall be examined and audited annually by two persons nominated at the annual Council Meeting.
- (c) Travelling/accommodation expenses to attend meetings will be the responsibility of the individual Council members or observers, as appropriate. Any other expenses incurred during the course of the meeting will be the responsibility of the host.
- (d) The Secretary's expenses are the responsibility of his/her own country.'

Paragraph 7 (Amendment of Rules):

That the paragraph be amended to read,

'These rules shall not be altered or amended except by a majority of two-thirds of the representatives present and voting at the annual Council meeting.'

Paragraph 8 (Distribution of Rules):

That the paragraph be deleted and a new paragraph substituted as follows,

'8. Association

The Association may associate with organisations having similar professional coverage and similar objects.'

6. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS (Agenda Item 4)

In continuation of Item 1 of the Agenda, the Danish delegate proposed that Mr Bugge (UK) should be formally elected as Chairman of the Association. Mr Bugge thanked the Danish delegate, but pointed out that his retirement in 1994 would prevent him from meeting the two-year requirement under rule 4 of the constitution. He also stressed that he was not the UK delegate; this role fell to Mr. Burnett. Notwithstanding these objections, the delegates felt that at the outset of the Association, the Council would be happy to elect the Chairperson for a term of one year only, and Mr Bugge was duly elected to the Chair. Mr Bugge thanked the delegates for their support.

The Chairman then requested a nomination for the office of Treasurer. The Danish delegate proposed Mr Burnett (UK); Mr Burnett accepted and was duly elected Treasurer.

The UK delegate proposed that Mr Lapasset (France) should be elected to the Executive Committee, and likewise, the Danish delegate proposed that Mr Van Den Broek (Holland) be elected to the Executive Committee. Both agreed to serve, and were duly elected.

7. SUBSCRIPTION (Agenda Item 5)

The Council agreed that the subscription unit of currency should be the ECU.

The Chairman indicated that the major expense was likely to be on administration (including publicity); he stressed that the subscription was not intended to meet travel and accommodation costs, in respect of which each country would be self-financing. He also stressed that the Association was intended to function as a facilitating, rather than an organising Body.

The Treasurer proposed an initial subscription of 50 ECUs, and the proposal was accepted by the Council.

8. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS (Agenda Item 6)

The Treasurer proposed that the Association's financial year should end on 31 July each year - to which the Council agreed.

The Treasurer proposed that two auditors be nominated in accordance with rule 6(b) of the Constitution. Mr Geeraerts and Mr Schuller were nominated and duly accepted by members of the Council.

9. ANNUAL MEETING (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman proposed that the annual meeting should take place one month either side of September, in order to provide some flexibility. However, after considerable discussion, the Council decided that an annual meeting would take place either in September or October.

The French delegate volunteered his country as the venue for the next annual Council Meeting in September 1993.

10. EXECUTIVE MEETING (Agenda Item 8)

The Council provisionally agreed that the first Executive Committee meeting would be held on Tuesday, 26 January 1993.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda addition)

The Council discussed the sports to be represented at the UK Festival of Sport which will be held at Aldershot on 4 June 1993, the intention being that each Community country team will represent a specific sport in an international contest between other Community countries and the UK.

It had been agreed that Community countries would represent specific sports as follows:-

Belgium - lawn tennis
Denmark - badminton
France - basketball
Luxembourg - football

Ireland said that they might be interested in golf.
Holland and the Commission both indicated a desire to participate.

Other sports/countries to be determined.

12. Sir Brian Unwin, Chairman of the Board of H M Customs and Excise, addressed the delegates and formally declared the foundation of the European Customs Sports Association. Each delegate was presented with an engraved pewter tankard to formally commemorate the founding of the European Customs Sports Association.
13. The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking all those present for attending, and especially Sir Brian Unwin for agreeing to inaugurate the Association.