

WFCC Changes, Projects and Contributions 2022-2026

The WFCC's work during the 2022–2026 period unfolded under the shadow of war, which directly affected at least six member countries and nearly half of our most active participants. This imposed a painful additional burden on an already limited pool of human resources and cast a pall over the atmosphere with unwelcome political tensions. In such difficult circumstances, fresh energy, new initiatives, and selfless personal contributions were essential to sustain our work and preserve enthusiasm. Looking back, the number of progressive developments that emerged is striking. I will attempt to highlight some of them:

1. New member countries

Two chess powerhouses, **India and Armenia**, joined WFCC in this period. India has been present in WFCC competitions for decades, but its official membership (since 2022) proved to be a huge gain for WFCC. With the extremely active Indian delegate **Narayan Shankar Ram** the WFCC has got energy and enthusiasm in executing most demanding WFCC duties (WCCI 2022-24 & WFCC 70 JT 2026 director, the Ethics and Disciplinary Committee spokesman), as well as in initiating and leading new projects, such as the WFCC Special Awards for the most deserving contributors to our society.

Since the 64th WCCC in Fujairah 2022 the contribution of the **United Arab Emirates** (members since 2019) has been radically increasing. The initiatives of the new Vice-President **Abdulla Ali Aal Barket** enormously improved the WFCC financial situation and relations with the FIDE, while the new WFCC Secretary **Mohammad Alhallak** lifted logistics and marketing on a new level (WFCC online sessions, WFCC social media, appearance on the Chess-Results server, etc). The Fujairah WCCC was the first one with delegates taking part via Zoom. From 2022 on the Zoom participation and WFCC online meetings became regular, thanks to the UAE technical support.

With India and the UAE on board, Asia brought new hope to Europe, and made WFCC more visible in the outside world.

2. New WFCC delegates

Suren Poghosyan (Armenia), Joachim Hambros (Austria), Marcos Roland (Brazil), Milan Petras (Czech Republic), Neal Turner (Finland), Torsten Linß (Germany), Brian Cook & Ian Watson (Great Britain), Narayan Shankar Ram (India) Marco Guida (Italy), Sergey Smotrov (Kazakhstan), Mihail Croitor (Moldova), Bilguun Sumia (Mongolia).

Among the new delegates, **Narayan Shankar Ram** and **Marco Guida** stood out in their numerous activities for the wellbeing of the WFCC. They joined their forces in organizing WCCI 2022-24, with **Marco Guida** taking the role of the spokesman of the WCCI Committee. His experience in management, finances and human relations brought the WFCC valuable energy and efficiency. **Torsten Linß** volunteered as the director of the 12th FIDE World Cup 2025, and as the organizer of the WCCC 2026, when the lack of other hosts became critical. **Brian Cook** initiated the Online Solving Challenge for Youth and kept selflessly running it, supported by **Ian Watson** and other contributors.

Some delegates shifted to more responsible duties in 2022. The Vice-President **Dinu-loan Nicula** took the lead in the project to introduce the solving events in the context of FIDE Cadet & Youth World Championships. The online participation in WFCC Meetings allowed the Honorary President of WFCC **Klaus Wenda** (1941-2026) to fully reactivate in this last period. His life-long care for PCCC/WFCC was felt up to the last days, especially in his contribution to the newly founded Ethics and Disciplinary Committee, and in initiative to organize the WFCC 70 JT 2026.

Finally, I want to stress the invisible support and proactivity of the ex-President of the WFCC **Harry Fougiaxis**. Since 2022 I've been noticing many things that he was almost invisibly doing as the WFCC President 2010-22, and that he keeps doing with the same devotion after that period.

3. New Spokesmen of the Committees

Piotr Górski (Solving), Marco Guida (WCCI), Thomas Maeder (WCCT), Narayan Shankar Ram (EDC), Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen (Studies).

Apart from already mentioned activities of WCCI and EDC, the Solving Committee has got a lot of fresh energy and caring leadership with **Piotr Górski** as the new spokesman.

4. New projects in cooperation with FIDE

4.1. Solving in the context of the FIDE events

Such events have been initiated and organized by **David Gurgenidze** since two decades ago, usually when the FIDE youth events were in his home country Georgia. The chance to spread solving events to other organizing countries asked for a larger team of solving directors, judges and assistants.

The organization of youth solving events in Georgia 2022-26, Brazil 2024, Italy 2024, Kazakhstan 2025, Italy 2026 and Serbia 2026 included: **David Gurgenidze, Dinu-loan Nicula, Mohammad Alhallak, Ricardo Vieira, Marcos Roland, Bruno Perez, Luc Palmans, Sergey Smotrov, Borislav Gadjanski, Ilija Serafimović, Marko Ložajić, Piotr Murdzia** and **Kevinas Kuznecovas**. The engagement of the younger generations of organizers was an important success.

This April, Vrnjačka Banja hosted the 1st FIDE Blitz Solving Championship, using the Quick Solving format. In June, Batumi engaged not less than 236 cadets from 48 countries in the World Solving Cup. The next challenge will be to organize solving events in the context of FIDE Senior & Amateur championships.

During official ECU competitions for youth, solving events were organized in Prague 2024 (by **Pavel Kamenik, Milan Petras** and helpers) and in Thessaloniki 2025 by **Nikos Sidiropoulos**, who also started writing articles on solving for ECU magazine.

The overall rise of interest for the youth solving events motivated the Youth Committee to promote a new title of the **FIDE Solving Trainer**.

As a preparation for the FIDE solving events, the young Indian problemist **Anirudh Daga**, in cooperation with WFCC President, organized five online solving sessions for 420 registered users, and sent the video materials to all of them.

4.2 Financial support to the FIDE Album Team

For the first time FIDE gave financial support to the organizing team of the FIDE Album. As the FIDE Album Committee Spokesman, **Harry Fougiaxis** took over the distribution of 6,000€ to around 60 members of the big FIDE Album Team 2022-24. From the side of the WFCC, the copies of the latest FIDE Album 2019-21 were presented to the FIDE officers in personal meetings with representatives of the Fujairah CCC.

4.3 „One Endgame Study in a Thousand“

As another joint project of FIDE & WFCC, the book „One Endgame Study in a Thousand“ was edited by **Gady Costeff** and published by **Peter Gvozdják** at the end of 2024. In only a few months, **Gady Costeff** selected and commented on 101 outstanding endgame studies, published in each year of the FIDE Centenary 1924-2024.

5. The contributions of the Fujairah CCC and the Grand Prix 2025-26

It is hard to measure precisely the overall support of the **Fujairah Chess & Culture Club** to the WFCC. The direct financial and technical yearly investments reached around 50,000€ in 2026. At the same time, the radically better financial situation made the WFCC a respectful partner with FIDE. As a symbol of the new cooperation, in October 2025 an opening ceremony was held to mark the inauguration of the **WFCC office** in the magnificent new home of FCCC. The office, located within the splendid three-storey chess palace, was officially opened by **H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Hamad Al Sharqi, Crown Prince of Fujairah**.

The direct financial investments started in 2023, with 5,000€ yearly support to special projects (YCCC vouchers, development projects in India and Romania 2026, etc). The WFCC Fujairah Solving Grand Prix 2025-26 increased this yearly sum by 22,000€ distributed to ECSC & WCSC solvers, and by 5,000€ of support to the ECSC and WCCC&WCSC organizers.

The prize fund for the **Grand Prix Final** is planned to be 30,000€, out of which 3,000€ for the composers. Other novelties introduced with the Grand Prix include the **press conferences** before each qualification competition 2025-26, and the **composing tourney** for originals used in the Grand Prix Final.

The planned dates for the Grand Prix Final are **27-30 November**, in the hall of the new Fujairah CCC building. The hostilities in the Middle East postponed the final decisions for the Magdeburg WCCC. All the details, including **Regulations, Prize List** and **Composing Tourney**, should be presented on **25th August**.

<https://grandprix.wfcc.ch>

6. WFCC social media and other marketing projects

In December 2022, WFCC Social Media was launched (YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram), and the number of followers has been growing to over 2000 in August 2026. All the technical work has been done by **WFCC Secretary**, and the list of contributors, apart from WFCC

President, included Indian problemists **Anirudh Daga** (Learner's Corner Video Series) and **Satanick Mukhuty** (Problem of the Day).

During 2023 the **FIDE website** published more than ten extensive articles by the WFCC President (Solvers Rating Lists, World Solving Cup events, 19th ISC, 16th ECSC, 11th FIDE World Composing Cup, 7th Youth Chess Composing Challenge, FIDE support to veterans, etc). To keep using this chance for promotion WFCC would need more contributors and a department devoted to marketing and advertisement.

In 2024 **Fujairah Club** launched a video promoting FIDE solving events. The video was sent to all national chess federations, and posted in FIDE social media where it reached over 10K views. The same year WFCC purchased a permanent account on the **Chess-Results** Server, and became visible on the most popular platform for following chess results. Once again, the whole process was executed by the **WFCC Secretary**.

7. "My First Endgame Study"

While the book „One Endgame Study in a Thousand“ was still in print, **Gady Costeff** initiated a composing tourney with this book included into a rich set of prizes. The tourney for new composers "My First Endgame Study" was organized by WFCC and ChessBase India, with **Gady Costeff** as the judge and **Satanick Mukhuty** as the director. It attracted 35 composers with 60 entries.

8. WFCC Composing Calendar

Since the end of 2023 **Kenneth Solja** has been volunteering as the coordinator of the WFCC Composing Calendar. Regular contributions from organizers of composing tourneys are needed to rich the full potentials of this new project.

9. "Chess Composers Club"

As seen from the report 7.7, the new member of the Youth Committee **Nikola Petković** has invested his time and endless enthusiasm to create the new platform for all composers, protected from the spamming we face in most of the current blogs . The educational and social importance of the "Chess Composers Club" will largely depend on involvement of all experienced composers. First of all the CCC needs more activity of potential mentors in some of the genres.

10. "Solve a Study" platform

The latest contribution to the open resources offered to the CCC users is another complex project by **Gady Costeff**. The platform with the modest name "Solve a Study" contains more than a thousand selected and commented endgames to be solved move by move. At the end, the solver is rewarded by the number of points, analyses and comments.

11. The progress of the Youth Chess Composing Challenge

Since 2024, the five most successful U23 YCCC composers from five different countries have been offered vouchers of **500€** for taking part in the WFCC Congress or ECSC next year. The same year, the rise of the quality of YCCC was noted. With **Kjell Widlert** as the new judge in Section C, and **Hans**

Gruber as the Assistant Director, the awards became richer and better organized, while preserving the same friendly and constructive atmosphere that makes YCCC so exceptional.

Twelve U23 composers took part in WCCI 2022-24, eight in the WFCC 70 JT 2026, and five of them already have compositions elected for the FIDE Album. The most important breakthrough 2022-26 has been made in Asian countries. This fact was highlighted by the discovery of a group of talented juniors from **China**, who joined the **12th WCCT** as a team, right after the first successes in YCCC.

During the Alba Iulia WCCC 2025 the first **Youth Evening** was organized to introduce nine talented composers aged from 11 to 22.

12. Other personal contributions

Last but not least, the WFCC Current List of FIDE Album Points has been significantly enriched thanks to the dedicated work of **Bjørn Enemark** and **Harry Fougiaxis**, while **Roland Ott** has continued his meticulous efforts in locating and organizing files within the WFCC Archive. Notably, he completed all the WCCT reports. I extend my sincere gratitude to all the contributors mentioned here and apologize to anyone I may have inadvertently overlooked.

Marjan Kovačević

WFCC President