

## International Committee

### Minutes of 23 July to 3 August Meetings at IOI 2025

#### Held in Sucre, Bolivia

##### *Present in person:*

Sun Teck Tan	President	<a href="mailto:tanst@comp.nus.edu.sg">tanst@comp.nus.edu.sg</a>	Singapore	2024-2027
Jhonatan Castro	Host 2025	<a href="mailto:jhtan@jhtan.com">jhtan@jhtan.com</a>	Bolivia	2022-2026
Azamat Seydaliev	Host 2026	<a href="mailto:a.seydaliyev@digital.uz">a.seydaliyev@digital.uz</a>	Uzbekistan	2024-2027
Wolfgang Pohl	Host 2027	<a href="mailto:pohl@bwinf.de">pohl@bwinf.de</a>	Germany	2024-2028
Eduard Kalinichenko	Elected	<a href="mailto:eduardische@gmail.com">eduardische@gmail.com</a>	Latvia	2022-2025
Fredrik Niemelä	Elected	<a href="mailto:fredrik@niemela.se">fredrik@niemela.se</a>	Sweden	2023-2026
Ágnes Erdősne Németh	Elected	<a href="mailto:erdosne@inf.elte.hu">erdosne@inf.elte.hu</a>	Hungary	2024-2027
Benjamin Burton	Elected	<a href="mailto:ab@maths.uq.edu.au">ab@maths.uq.edu.au</a>	Australia	2024-2025
Eljakim Schrijvers	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:eljakim+ioi@gmail.com">eljakim+ioi@gmail.com</a>	The Netherlands	non-voting
J.P. Pretti	Secretary	<a href="mailto:jpretti@uwaterloo.ca">jpretti@uwaterloo.ca</a>	Canada	non-voting

##### *Not present:*

Eslam Wageed	Host 2024	<a href="mailto:eslamwageed@gmail.com">eslamwageed@gmail.com</a>	Egypt	2020-2025
Sandra Schumann	Elected	<a href="mailto:sandra.schumann@ut.ee">sandra.schumann@ut.ee</a>	Estonia	2023-2026

### IC Offline Decisions Between Meetings

Moving forward, important IC decisions agreed upon by e-mail between meetings will be recorded at the start of the minutes for the following meeting. Accordingly, below are three decisions made recently.

- A membership application from The African Intelligence Club was accepted admitting Ghana as a new member of the IOI community.
- All voting members of IC unanimously deemed an immigrant studying the language of their new country (to prepare for finishing secondary school in that country) eligible for IOI 2025.
- IC considered a motion proposing that a representative of the Israeli Olympiad in Informatics be an Invited Guest at IOI 2025 and that IC co-operate with the Host Country to facilitate this. Moreover, the motion granted this person permission to attend IOI 2025 GA meetings. The motion passed with 9 votes in favour and Jhonatan abstaining.
- The Office of the IOI informed IC of its executive decision to cover IOI 2025 flight costs for the chair of HSC. When the hosts were unable to pay for this, the President, Secretary and Treasurer felt forced into this decision as the only fair and reasonable thing to do. Responses from IC agreed with the decision but emphasized it is something that the hosts should have covered.

### Welcome

Sun Teck welcomed everyone to a new IOI.

### Apologies

It was noted that Eslam and Sandra were unable to attend IOI.

## **Confirmation of Agenda**

The IC agenda was confirmed after J.P. highlighted a small number of very minor and uncontroversial recent edits.

## **Urgent Decisions Regarding IOI 2025**

### *Countries Not Attending*

J.P. and Eljakim listed several countries that were unable to attend IOI 2025 and noted that the attendance of some countries still in transit remained uncertain. IC was reminded that it decided against allowing remote participation because of the undue burden it would place on already challenged hosts. J.P. said this was explained to the non-trivial number of countries who inquired about the possibility.

### *Meal Concerns*

Eljakim reported concerns that allergens were not clearly listed at all meals and that reasonable gluten-free options were not available to contestants. Sun Teck asked if Halal options were available. Jhonatan said there were. Eljakim said this was not quite true because only salad was available. Lots of confusion ensued with J.P. suggesting that Jhonatan and another IC person investigate to ensure participants who require Halal food are accommodated.

Wolfgang observed that it can be difficult and expensive in some places to provide truly Halal options and raised the general question about what can and should be expected of hosts.

Eljakim left the room exasperated and frustrated having been the recipient of many complaints. Following this, other members of IC recognized that this was an unfair consequence of Eljakim doing so much to help the hosts and decided to assign other IC members as the point person for current concerns and new issues that arise. Ágnes was assigned as the person to work with Jhonatan on food concerns.

### *Contestant Workspaces*

One of these current concerns was the limited amount of workspace at contestants' desks. Consideration was given to ordering a clipboard for each contestant with Eljakim taking the lead on trying to procure 400 clipboards before the first contest day. Wolfgang asked Jhonatan if dividers would be used to separate contestants given how close they were sitting. Jhonatan's answer was unclear. After further back and forth and miscommunication, Eduard was assigned as the person to work with Jhonatan to resolve all concerns with contestant workspaces. Fredrik warned about the risk of making changes after the practice session and emphasized that any updates must be communicated very clearly.

### *AI at IOI*

Sun Teck then noted that some AI companies were invited to compete onsite. He said this happened independent of IC after the March meetings and wondered if GA should be informed. Fredrik asked for more information and Sun Teck explained that this came up as part of sponsorship discussions including him, Eljakim and Luca Versari (ITC). Discussion followed on compensation and the need to include IC in these plans. As a cautionary tale, Ben noted the immense backlash that IMO experienced with regards to AI company participation. The main concerns centered on the lack of transparency, advance notice and a strong desire to ensure emphasis remains on kids' performances.

Sun Teck provided some more details on the specifics for IOI 2025 saying only one company was participating onsite. He said two were participating remotely one hour into the start of each contest day. In response to Fredrik, he said that no agreements had been signed, and protocols were in place only for the company participating onsite. Ben noted that all volunteers should be aware of this so that they could step aside if they had personal objections to the inclusion of AI company participation.

Ben asked that IC come to an agreement about the release of results hoping that AI does not “chew up the headlines”. Everyone agreed to try and address this by working with the companies as much as possible.

Fredrik, Wolfgang and Ben all agreed to work with Sun Teck on this and to address as many concerns about AI company participation as possible.

#### *Palestine at the GA*

J.P. said Palestine was unable to attend IOI 2025 but suggested that they should be able to engage in any GA discussions about sanctions as much as possible. He said he asked the hosts to support this when the request from Palestine came a few days before IOI. When asked for a progress update, Jhonatan said he had not initiated this yet and it could be that only one-way communication from outside to the GA would be possible, but he will inquire and report back. Fredrik was appointed as the IC person assigned to work with Jhonatan on this.

IC emphasized the importance of Palestine being able to engage in meaningful discussion by unanimously approving a motion asking the hosts to put technology in place to support this.

#### **Urgent Matter Follow-up**

At the next meeting on July 28, updates on previously discussed concerns were provided.

#### *Meal Concerns*

Ágnes said contestants reported having enough choices and that progress was being made on properly labelling meals. J.P. asked about the availability of Halal options. Ágnes said she will continue to investigate but some Muslim countries had already affirmed that available seafood and fish options would generally be alright.

#### *Contestant Workspaces*

Eduard said he and Fredrik went to the contest hall to see the current state of student workspaces themselves. They were surprised to learn that half the tables were one size and the other half another size. Out of fairness, they asked that contestants swap table types across contest days. Eduard reported that they are still working on obtaining clipboards and that dividers are supposed to arrive tonight. A little later, Sun Teck revisited this wondering why his suggestion of using the available extensions was not being implemented. Eduard and Fredrik said they investigated this and felt they were pursuing the only reasonable fair alternatives while acknowledging that the situation was just barely good enough.

#### *Palestine at the GA*

Fredrik reported that he asked the hosts about the set up to allow for Palestine’s remote participation in the GA and there are plans to test it tonight. J.P. asked to be sent details when they are known. Jhonatan said the audio-visual equipment should not be too expensive. Eljakim noted that ITC’s request for this equipment had already been approved. Fredrik wondered why the IOI was paying. Eljakim agreed this was a good question and the hosts should pay for this, but this was the only way to make it happen.

(At the next meeting Fredrik noted that the hosts did not complete the setup as planned, so no testing occurred.)

#### *AI at IOI*

Fredrik pointed to the following messaging drafted for IC to consider. It was met without concern.

*There are 2 categories of participation: Onsite and online. The onsite participation is physically at the contest site and is reasonably verified by staff (i.e. no internet access and such). Online participation is verified only by the honour system.*

- *All publication of results must be approved by the IOI before publication. The IOI should not unreasonably withhold such approval.*
- *Publication of results can only happen with a 1-week delay (from the beginning of the closing ceremony, so Aug 9, 19:30 Bolivia time). The time will be the same for all AI companies. The reason for the delay is to not distract from the contestants' achievements, and to allow exact wording to be agreed upon between AI companies and IOI.*
- *The published results should not mention any other AI companies.*
- *Onsite participants can say that their participation is verified by onsite IOI staff to be with no meaningful human interaction and followed the same time and submission limits as human participants.*
- *Online participants must say that their participation is not verified or supervised in any way with regards to human interaction but followed the same time and submission limits as human participants.*
- *For the purposes of designing future interaction protocols, we ask all participants to share all human interaction that happened. As detailed as possible.*

Eljakim noted that we need to determine who will represent IOI to address the first bullet. Fredrik agreed saying he would check if Luca Versari was okay acting as the point of contact. Luca later agreed to this provided he could expect quick responses from IC when soliciting their opinions down the road.

### **Review of Public Speeches**

J.P. explained that Denmark, Iceland and Sweden expressed concern about the President's speech during the opening ceremony. They felt it was inappropriate to air IOI's dirty laundry publicly. They were also unhappy with the remark about changing the perception of the IOI: that some delegations are here for a cheap holiday. These three countries proposed that the president's public speeches, such as at the opening and closing ceremonies, be made available to the IC before the speech is delivered with ample time for review. They emphasized that was only meant to provide IC the opportunity to give feedback. In response, Sun Teck said he would be fine with this arrangement.

### **IC Winter Meeting Minutes**

IC unanimously approved minutes from its March meeting in Sucre. Wolfgang previously noted that they were many pages long and thanked J.P. for their creation. He also suggested that tasks assigned to IC members be more explicitly recorded to ensure they are not missed.

### **Scrutineers**

IC approved of the appointment of Mohammad Ali Abam, Greg Lee and Troy Vasiga as scrutineers for GA meetings during IOI 2025

### **Complaints from the GA about Accuracy**

Eduard raised complaints received about the accuracy of the President's statements during the first GA meeting ranging from incorrect to misleading. These included details about sanction decisions at EGOI 2025, the history and status of sanctions at IPhO, and claims of "similar challenges" regarding sanctions at other Olympiads. Eduard gave a word of caution saying that many complaints were received about how the IMO rushed decisions on sanctions. He said that while he and others are aware of Sun Teck's stance on sanctions, it is critical to ensure information provided is factual. Sun Teck agreed to make corrections and clarifications with Eduard agreeing to oversee creation of an overview table summarizing the status

of sanctions at other Olympiads. Ben later noted that this table needs to reflect the fact that the nature of sanctions varies across Olympiads and these distinctions need to be clear.

### **Existing and Future IOI Sanctions**

This led to a discussion about what will happen at IOI 2025 with regards to its own sanctions.

Sun Teck said he wants all current sanctions removed and a clause put in the regulations like IPhO that would prevent further sanctions. He repeated his previous arguments for going this route.

Ben said that if a proposal is being made, great care must go into the wording, and he repeated his previous cautions about the use of the word “politics”.

Eduard asked Sun Teck to draft a proposal for any regulation change he wishes to see occur. In response, Wolfgang wondered if IC should first gauge whether the GA generally wishes to go in that direction. Fredrik added that the pressing question is whether any changes would take effect for IOI 2025. He said that might be possible but would be difficult. Ben said that regulations are a means to an end and that it is more productive to talk about the existing sanctions. Eduard disagreed saying that the overall philosophy is the most important. He said he is concerned about countries with general opposition to sanctions but that would have strong feelings about which sanctions to impose if the GA did not share their general view. He also wanted to avoid a limbo situation where sanctions are allowed but none are in place. Ben countered that he prefers that these situations be considered on a case-by-case basis. In response to Eduard, he and Fredrik noted that the set of people at IOI change and we need to account for this. Sun Teck also expressed a desire to open the floor for discussion. J.P. agreed saying these discussions can be simultaneously healthy and difficult.

There was then a short discussion of personal opinions on sanctions all previously expressed at past IC meetings and recorded in the associated minutes.

J.P. suggested the idea of three separate votes on each of the existing sanctions with the observation that if they are all lifted then IC may take that as indication that GA may have an appetite for a general new regulation. Wolfgang agreed and mused about scheduling the debate during group discussions. Ben said he would agree on any other topic but feels this is different as many countries have firm and immovable positions and they were the most likely to show up for the group discussions. Wolfgang accepted this.

There was then debate about the sentiment for GA to be apolitical and the contrary opinion that it is impossible to be apolitical. After further discussion there was an agreement to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

### **Bid(s) for IOI 2028 and/or IOI 2029**

The IC heard detailed bids for future IOIs.

One bid was received from Japan to host IOI 2028 in Tokyo. IC noted it was comfortable with a shorter 7-day schedule while making it clear that this did not need to influence the length of other future IOI schedules either way. Questions were answered about accommodation proximity, budget and currency, airport transfers given the size of Tokyo, connections to IOI 2018, the ability to invite all countries and the welcoming inclusion of all groups of people. IC was satisfied with all the answers.

Another bid was received from Bulgaria to host IOI 2029 in Varna commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first IOI held in Bulgaria and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 21<sup>st</sup> IOI held in Bulgaria. Information was provided about specific locations, venues, IOI experience in Bulgaria and affiliated partners. IC was happy with answers about finalizing bookings and the invitation and inclusion of all countries and people. There was some question about the size of the selected contest venue, but this was later adequately addressed upon further investigation of the location specifications and consideration of back-up plans.

A third presentation was heard from another potential host with a preference to host IOI 2029 but the flexibility to consider hosting in 2028 and 2030 as well. The IC was very appreciative of all the effort and planning that had occurred for this bid with relatively short notice. Questions like those asked of the other bidding nations were answered well. The bidding group noted that at this point they were only looking to determine if IC liked the direction of their plans together with an indication of what year for their bid suited the IOI best.

### **Discussion of Bids**

IC then discussed financial risk, repeating countries as a host given past experience, and logistics such as distance between accommodations and venues. This was followed by a unanimous vote to recommend Japan as the IOI 2028 host and Bulgaria as the IOI 2029. IC also encouraged the third party to continue with their planning and to submit a formal bid to host IOI 2030 which they felt was best for the IOI balancing all the factors involved. Wolfgang agreed to work with Sun Teck on the announcement to the GA for its last meeting during which there will be a vote to ratify IC's future host recommendations.

Some debate without consensus followed about whether IC should choose a host five years in advance if there is a strong candidate. It was noted that this has occurred before and is permitted by the regulations, but it is not clear what the GA would prefer.

### **More Urgent Matter Follow-up**

#### *AI at IOI*

Fredrik mentioned that questions from at least one member of the GA indicates that there is still a lack of clarity about what is or is not happening. He said this was coupled with more transparency complaints. Wolfgang reiterated these concerns. Eljakim said that one group discussion could be held to discuss the AI competition idea itself and a second to discuss the relationship between the GA and IC.

In response to Eduard, Eljakim said that the GA should be informed that money is being received from AI companies for the competition but that the exact amount is part of private sponsorship agreements. Eljakim did say that the monetary amounts are substantial.

More discussion of the AI competition followed with IC members emphasizing to Sun Teck that while using AI to tackle IOI problems is inevitable post-contest, this is very different than having AI essentially compete simultaneously with contestants.

Everyone agreed that the GA should always have the ultimate say on the existence of something like an AI competition, but there was also acknowledgement that this is complicated because the GA does not exist between IOIs. A plan was put in place to include AI competitions as one of the topics for the group discussions.

#### *Contestant Workspaces*

An emergency message was received from ITC about the contest hall because neither dividers nor clipboards had arrived yet as promised. Luca Versari was calling for a back-up plan. Jhonatan guaranteed the dividers would arrive tonight but said he could not guarantee the clipboards would arrive on time. IC made it clear that the dividers are critical, but the clipboards are not. Jhonatan said the dividers were already on a plan scheduled to land in Sucre at 4pm and that he would be there to bring them to the contest hall by 6pm. After much back and forth, the situation remained unclear. It was acknowledged that all IC could do at this point was to offer to help ITC. In the end, this is what happened because the clipboards arrived, but the dividers did not. Instead, volunteers from IC and ITC designed dividers and supervised host volunteers who built the dividers the night before the first contest day.

## **GA Discussion Planning**

J.P. noted that the GA agenda included the topics of “Discussion on sanctions” and “Discussions of new initiatives”. He also said there is time on the IOI schedule for group discussions for which Fredrik confirmed his willingness to organize and run.

### *Discussion on Sanctions*

Sun Teck wondered if the current sanctions should be discussed one at a time or if a full discussion should be held. Most people felt a full discussion was inevitable and required. Sun Teck asked that people not attack each other. Ben agreed but emphasized that debate is important. Ben also reminded IC that this is an opportunity for other members of the GA, not on IC, to raise their opinions.

### *Discussion on New Initiatives*

Given time constraints, it was agreed that this time would be used for Sun Teck to provide more clarity on his proposed new initiatives to set the stage for their inclusion in the group discussions.

### *Group Discussions*

Wolfgang reminded IC that the United Kingdom had suggested the topic of “AI in national competitions” as a group discussion topic. It was later decided that this would be a topic of interest, but more pressing topics required discussion.

Jhonatan posed the group discussion topic of “definition of country” but Eduard said this will come as part of future regulation changes.

J.P. recommended that Sun Teck create slides to outline all these plans for the GA and to run them by IC beforehand.

## **President’s Report**

Sun Teck said his report to the GA covered the topics he wanted to bring to IC and much of it has already been discussed within IC. He said other remaining topics are listed separately on the agenda for discussion later.

## **Secretary’s Report**

J.P. pointed IC to his report on Google Drive for a list of his regular responsibilities. On the flip side, he reported on three complaints received since March:

- citing corruption in a country regarding team selection and eligibility criteria,
- describing concerns about oversight, ethics and misconduct within a country,
- a 216-page report listing a wide range of complaints about the IOI and national Olympiads with a focus on how its tasks and conduct poorly impact students’ mental health.

A discussion and confusion followed with disagreement on the nature of some of these complaints. J.P. said he will work to resolve any confusion so the three complaints can be discussed based on the facts at a later meeting. At that later meeting he apologized to Sun Teck who had remembered the details correctly. Upon hearing these rough details, IC was comfortable with how the complaints were handled and J.P.’s general philosophy of assessing the seriousness, validity and source of the complaint, and placing priority on resolving issues internally (nationally). It was agreed that natural justice dictates that the national organization must have a chance to respond to any complaints that IC considers serious and that whistle-blowers can sometimes be in a difficult situation.

## **More GA Meeting Planning**

IC confirmed its plan to replace the GA 5 discussion of new initiatives with Sun Teck providing summaries and discussion of each initiative during the group discussions. They agreed that the aim would be to get a sense (via straw poll) of what the GA thinks of the ideas. Then, the plan would be to create working committees for any ideas with traction. Ben volunteered to help Sun Teck craft slides for this with Fredrik still agreeing to run the discussions themselves.

Sun Teck said he would design slides for the GA 4 sanction discussion and run them by IC.

IC put a plan in place for GA 3 to apologize for the lack of transparency about the AI competition, more carefully explain what is happening in 2025 and to note that it will be one of the new initiatives discussed during group discussions. Fredrik was tasked with helping Sun Teck by reviewing his slides for this.

Wolfgang was chosen to help Sun Teck with the messaging about future hosts to be announced during GA 7.

## **Secretary Report Continued**

Continuing with the rest of his report, J.P. noted two other less regular tasks:

- He worked with the Israeli Olympiad of Informatics to facilitate their participation at IOI 2025 GA meetings and to consider ways Israeli contestants might participate in the contest.
- He worked with Eljakim so that the new IOI registration system now asks for an email address and URL to be displayed on public IOI members page, and which email address the OIOI should use to contact the national organization.

Next, J.P. reminded IC of the application from Liechtenstein. He noted that the administrative side of things would all be handled internally within Liechtenstein, but they would rely on the national Olympiad in Switzerland for team selection. IC recalled being previously comfortable with this arrangement and understood that it may be rare for Liechtenstein to send contestants but that contrary to prior belief, this does not contradict the regulations. Jhonatan was absent but all present voting members unanimously agreed to accept Liechtenstein as a new member of IOI.

J.P. noted that it is great to have more countries join the IOI, but space and cost could become an issue.

On the other hand, J.P. noted that many countries did not attend this year and provided details. Fredrik followed up to ensure that others agree that the difficulty in getting to a country should not affect IC's decision to accept a hosting bid from them. Everyone did agree but Ben added that challenges around transportation within a potential host country should be a factor under consideration. J.P. agreed and generalized some of the challenging experiences this year. He said he tries to emphasize to hosts that a key part of their communication must be to elaborate on circumstances and logistics that are unique to their location and year.

Finally, J.P. summarized all communication with other potential new members of the IOI.

## **Report on IOI 2027**

### **2027**

Wolfgang made a brief presentation on IOI 2027 focusing on updates since his previous report. This touched on the location and venue details, transportation infrastructure between Potsdam and Berlin and the Berlin airport, possible excursions, hotel options, March meeting dates (March 7 to 11, 2027), and host representation on IC, ITC and ISC.

In response to questions, Wolfgang clarified:

- The dates of September 12 to 19, 2027 are fixed and can be announced publicly.
- The planned pick-up spot is the Berlin airport.
- Potsdam is a lovely place that he would encourage anyone to visit independent of the IOI.
- Excursions have not been selected but the problem will be that there are so many to select from. They will try to balance fast-paced locations requiring travel with more relaxing options.
- Care may be needed in the selection of sponsors.
- Due to a misunderstanding, Plan A fell through for the contestant hotel so this has not been finalized yet but two quality modern hotels to be determined will be used. One challenge will be that most hotels are not equipped to efficiently and adequately serve breakfast to everyone all at once.

## **ISC and ITC Reports**

IC approved of J.P.'s suggestion that these reports be received as written reports soon after IOI.

## **Report on IOI 2026**

Azamat presented the report for IOI 2026 in Uzbekistan to be held from August 9th to 16th. He outlined the organizational framework, budget, sponsors, committees, and venues.

Eduard asked about flight connectivity, in particular discounting closely located Russia (flying through which may be difficult) to which Azamat said it was still well-connected (e.g., via Türkiye).

Fredrik noted that the capacity of the leaders' hotel was insufficient; however, the hotel is larger than the capacity stated on the slides (which was just what was reserved), and so they can go back and request a larger portion of the hotel.

Ben noted that some guests are there for translation, and the registration system captures this; therefore, it may be helpful to accommodate those guests with/near the leaders which is close to the working venues. Azamat noted that regarding locations: the city is walkable (though some distances are long).

Sun Teck asked about other personnel and committee members, and Azamat listed their names and experience. They currently have five people for each committee (HSC and HTC), but they also plan to bring in additional committee members from other countries.

There was further discussion about the GA room capacity and about Wi-Fi capacity - in particular, ensuring that Wi-Fi at the venues can cope with many simultaneous users.

Fredrik asked about sponsors and specifically whether the regular IOI sponsors would conflict with local sponsors. Azamat said there should be no problems.

Eduard noted that contestants will need a bus transfer to the contest hall and asked if this could be done in a way that allows for a reasonable amount of rest and limited waiting.

Azamat announced that the winter meeting will be from February 9th to 13th in 2026.

## **Sponsorship**

Sun Teck noted that IOI lost one sponsor last year, but that Eljakim secured two formal sponsors as replacements. Sun Teck also secured CodeMao as a third major sponsor and noted that their business is doing training for primary school through to secondary school, which is a good match for the IOI. He recommended other leaders also talk to CodeMao about possible local sponsorship.

Wolfgang asked what freedom the host has in choosing their own local sponsors. He asked for the IOI sponsor acquisition to be done more in collaboration with hosts. Fredrik noted that sponsors often have

agreements longer than the period for which we know hosts, which makes this difficult. He suggested we make it clearer to hosts what events are “owned” by the IOI and its own sponsors. Wolfgang noted that this might make it even harder to find hosts and wondered why hosts should be forced to work under IOI sponsor constraints where the amounts coming in are such a small fraction of the typical IOI budget. Sun Teck noted that for some hosts, even this small international sponsorship makes an enormous difference to a difficult budget, and so suggested working on a host-by-host basis. Fredrik noted that host-by-host arrangements are difficult to sell to global sponsors. Wolfgang highlighted the need for IC as a whole to have a clear idea of what is going on, and to be aware that a host might not be able to work with individual global sponsors in certain circumstances. Sun Teck reminded us that without global sponsors we might not have IOI 2025.

Sun Teck suggested discussing further how we do this. Wolfgang highlighted the need for transparency within IC, including full information about what contracts have been signed, what is on the table, and what the precise details are.

### **Funded projects**

Ágnes said there are two current projects:

- QuizMS is almost done; they are aiming to finish by October and will make a presentation to the GA to get more information about what they want. There is already a pilot version on the web for testing. Wolfgang highlighted the similarity between this project and Bebras. Sun Teck noted that we have already made a progressive payment to this project.
- The other project (from Luca Versari) is in progress. He also will make a presentation to the GA about it.

Fredrik asked if we are continuing the funded projects. He said he struggles to find examples of projects that we use nowadays (i.e., that address core needs for us), and he noted that the level of funding that we can provide is not enough to pay for the amount of work that would be typically required. He asked if we are getting our money’s worth, or if we are just spending money because we need to do something with it. Sun Teck noted that we get asked why we collect money, and we should do something with it. Wolfgang noted that on several occasions he has suggested lowering the registration fee at IOI, but this was never picked up by the community at large. Eduard thinks the programme is valuable and suggested that if someone has concerns with the projects then they should vote against accepting them. Ágnes agreed saying the programme signals that the IOI thinks that projects are valuable, and this may help gather further support from local communities or local sponsors.

There was some disagreement in the room as to whether the projects would have happened anyway without IOI funding. Eduard noted that the very small funding that he gets for IOI statistics does help encourage him to do it well.

Fredrik highlighted that we should also pay for the IOI registration system.

Wolfgang also noted the danger of a project being built and then everyone forgetting about it - in particular, we do not hear much nowadays about projects from previous years. Fredrik noted that we do not require a 100% success rate but is not sure that this is the best use of our money. Eduard suggested that instead of removing funded projects, we tighten the criteria and require both a presentation and vote from the GA. Fredrik liked this idea for two reasons: it gives more validation as to why we spend the funding but also it makes the projects much more visible among the international community.

Wolfgang made the concrete suggestion that, in the future, projects are sent to IC whereupon we arrange space to present them to the GA for the GA’s approval. It was generally agreed within IC that this is a good idea, and we will try it for a year or two. An additional suggestion was that, if you get funded during IOI’n, it is strongly recommended that you report back to the GA on your project during IOI’(n+1).

Sun Teck picked up on the comment that we should pay for the registration system and asked if we should do this. He noted that Kim would never ask for it. Fredrik suggested between 1000 and 1500 EUR each year, which is nothing for what we are getting, but which does send a message as to how much IOI values this work. This was agreed within IC with no objections. (Note: Kim was not present in the room during this discussion.)

## **Regulation changes**

Eduard spoke to this. There are no regulation changes this year, but he is working on converting regulations to LaTeX on GitHub and will present to the GA later this week. He said we will also use GitHub issues to track suggestions and changes that need to be made. The plan is to use a private fork for work-in-progress which can then be pushed when it is ready. This will all pass to Fredrik once Eduard falls off the committee at the end of IOI 2025.

## **Sanctions**

Sun Teck presented his draft slides for the GA sanction discussion and gathered feedback from IC.

## **Budget**

Eljakim said that most financial issues were discussed during the March meeting, and the key topic now was to discuss and approve the budget for 2026.

Eljakim said the starting budget is identical to the previous year. The high-level summary includes a total income of 27.500 Euros and total expenses of 31.500 Euros which correspond to 2024 final figures of 27.027 Euros and 10.317 Euros respectively. Almost 23.000 of the projected expenses are for development (e.g. IOI projects, IOI journal, ITC lab, ISC fund and IOI allies) with the other four categories of expenses (Office of the IOI, financing expenses, communication and miscellaneous) each accounting for under 5.000 Euros.

A change suggested by others in IC was to add a 1500 Euro payment for the registration system. All present voting members (Jhonatan and Azamat were absent) agreed to propose this to the GA.

Eljakim noted that two countries have yet to pay the registration fee this year, but they have promised to do so very soon.

Eljakim also said the IOI will have some leftover money from sponsorship after IOI.

Wolfgang emphasized that future hosts need to know all the details about sponsors.

Ben said we received a good number of volunteers to become new allies. That said, he added that there is a chance goodwill will dry up and we may have to pay for more training. Fredrik questioned if this should be a line item in the budget if we are unsure if the amount will be spent. After a bit of debate, for transparency, IC agreed to put in 1500 EUR as a very rough estimate of what might need to be spent on this training.

## **Vote on Sanctions**

IC discussed two options: (1) using the Schulze method to rank all combinations of options, and (2) voting on the current sanctions individually.

Fredrik said he thinks both are fine, but he prefers Option (1).

Wolfgang preferred Option (2) because it more closely matches specific requests that IC received by email and it also “keeps us on track” closer to what IC initially considered.

Ben said that on reflection, he quite likes Option (1) because he doesn't think the individual votes are independent and Option (1) allows this to be expressed. For example, last year, the top two options were to sanction all three countries (Russia, Belarus and Israel) or to sanction none of them. He reminded everyone that these two options were quite close, and both received far more votes than the other options.

J.P. said he also prefers Option (1) and does not feel it is too distinct from the original plan.

Eduard didn't feel strongly but thought he had been convinced to use the Schulze method especially if the countries that proposed individual votes are okay with it.

Sun Teck said GA members he spoke to also prefer to use the Schulze method.

In response to Eduard, Ben said that his request to ITC was to allow ties in Schulze rankings but that all options had to be ranked.

Wolfgang emphasized that we should mention the specific input and suggestions received by IC. Ben said these suggestions must be incorporated but when IC receives contradictory proposals it must find a way to conduct the ensuing discussions and votes.

A vote was taken with Eduard, Ben, Ágnes, Fredrik and Sun Teck choosing Option (1) and Wolfgang selecting Option (2). Jhonatan and Azamat were absent for the vote.

This winning option was eventually formalized as follows:

The first vote is a 9-way Schulze:

- A) Keep all current sanctions in place (Belarus, Israel, Russia).
- B) Lift sanctions for Belarus, keep sanctions for Israel and Russia.
- C) Lift sanctions for Israel, keep sanctions for Belarus and Russia.
- D) Lift sanctions for Russia, keep sanctions for Belarus and Israel.
- E) Lift sanctions for Belarus and Israel, keep sanctions for Russia.
- F) Lift sanctions for Belarus and Russia, keep sanctions for Israel.
- G) Lift sanctions for Israel and Russia, keep sanctions for Belarus.
- H) Lift all current sanctions (Belarus, Israel, Russia).
- I) Lift all current sanctions, and task IC to draft regulations that clarifies that IOI must not sanction any members.

And then the second vote is to confirm the winning option (requiring a simple majority).

## **Complaints**

Sun Teck said that two formal complaints had been received. One was about his speech during the opening ceremony and the second about his comments regarding LGBTQ people during the GA.

As background and an explanation Sun Teck stated that he is worried about finding hosts, has received complaints from Muslim countries and was told by one country that they would not be able to host IOI if some previous opening ceremony content was repeated in their country. Sun Teck said the second complaint followed a heated 20-to-30-minute talk after the previous GA meeting where lots was said and then taken out of context in the follow-up formal complaint.

Fredrik asked what that context was. Sun Teck answered that it was discussion about the ability of countries to host IOI.

On the accusation of mentioning delegations attending IOI for a cheap holiday, Sun Teck said this came from a comment he heard from another potential host.

Eljakim pointed out that the concerns about Sun Teck's opening ceremony speech were less about his right to have opinions and more about the appropriateness of choosing the opening ceremony as the place

to say them. Fredrik agreed noting that people perceived it as a comment about contestants even if it was not intended that way. Wolfgang also agreed adding that he personally would not put opinion into an opening ceremony speech or more generally that it would be best to avoid statements there that divide the community.

Ben said every president can and should have their own speech. He said one thing he aimed for when president was to focus his opening ceremony remarks on the contestants.

Eljakim stated that the opening ceremonies should be upbeat and positive.

Hearing all this, J.P. said that wearing his secretary hat, he felt the opening speech concerns had been heard and addressed. He acknowledged that Sun Teck offered to share his future speeches with IC in advance. J.P. said he would let the complainants know all of this.

Moving to the other complaint about Sun Teck's comments on LGBTQ people, J.P. acknowledged that this would be a hard but important discussion. He said that Sun Teck has been made aware that the complaint will be followed by a motion asking that he be removed as President. Knowing this, J.P. observed that IC needs to be prepared to handle this motion appropriately.

J.P. continued to say that now speaking personally, he had a hard time imagining a context in which Sun Teck's comments were okay.

Fredrik said the same thing.

Sun Teck responded by saying there are people that think this way. He referenced the scenario of a parent expressing concern about their child being around and influenced by gay people.

Eljakim followed to say that the President was framing things as if he was protecting the IOI, but he wanted to know, if Sun Teck was willing to answer, how he personally felt outside of this context. He specifically asked if Sun Teck believes homosexuality is contagious, dangerous, criminal and/or not normal?

Sun Teck replied that he is not against any of these things.

Eljakim said he read the complaint and that as an IOI Ally he has heard a similar complaint. He said LGBTQ people feel unsafe because they feel the President thinks being gay is not okay. He said that even now, he is uncertain about how Sun Teck feels himself. Eljakim said that the key is to express without any doubt that being gay is not contagious or dangerous or abnormal.

Sun Teck said there is more context. He said he is not against LGBTQ people. He said he is Roman Catholic and follows his faith's teachings.

Eduard said that IOI as an organization has some values and even though there is pressure to find hosts, we should not bend to every potential host desire. He said that earlier this week, the suggestion was made that the vote to approve a future host is a mere formality, but he strongly disagrees with this. He said he would fully accept the GA not ratifying a potential host if they contradicted the IOI's values. Eduard said the first job of the President of IOI upon hearing a concern about cheap vacationers should not be to try and assume there is an issue to be fixed; it should be to defend the IOI and give an explanation.

Speaking on the second complaint, Eduard said he sees similarities. He said optics matter, and this is not a matter of being caught off guard because he has heard this from Sun Teck before. Eduard said these statements are not acceptable under any circumstances. He said he hears Sun Teck's claims of acceptance and hears him say he is trying to defend the IOI. However, Eduard said that if a parent expressed concern to Sun Teck about their child "catching gayness" at IOI, he wondered why Sun Teck's first reaction was to cater to this parent.

Sun Teck asked that we recall an IC a while ago where Ben tried to add a regulation to ensure the safety of LGBTQ people. He said this regulation was not accepted by IC. J.P. noted that Sun Teck was not

correctly characterizing the regulation proposed by Ben and this had been pointed out multiple times in the past when raised by Sun Teck.

Fredrik said he doesn't understand how this is related. He said being with gay people does not turn people gay and it is as simple as that. J.P. then repeated and emphasized this.

Ben spoke and first acknowledged that this must be very difficult for Sun Teck. He then said that while Egypt is a country with laws against homosexuality, the organizers worked with the venues and IOI to try and make everyone feel comfortable. Ben said that Sun Teck claims LGBTQ rights should not be followed to the extent that they violate the rights of others. He asked what rights those are, claiming this gets to the core of things.

Sun Teck asked Ben if he agreed that potential hosts had these concern. Ben said he only heard it from Sun Teck.

Wolfgang said that if a potential host will not welcome gay people, then they violate the Code of Conduct.

Eljakim said that Sun Teck is saying what he wants to protect one country, but all participants need protecting as well. He asked if Sun Teck is asking potential hosts if they will welcome all members of the IOI community.

Sun Teck asked if Eljakim believes that some parents worry about their child being around gay people.

Eljakim said that he understands that there are people who believe this just as there are people who don't believe humans have ever been to the moon.

Sun Teck countered with a question: "Do we not need to take care of these parents' concerns?"

Everyone else in the room shook their head "no".

Sun Teck continued: "Don't we need to respect their views?"

Fredrik said there was zero controversy when the Code of Conduct was adopted. He said it does not require much, only some basic humanity. He said we want to be inclusive which means that we all need to be able to be ourselves. He said this must be allowed. Fredrik said he cannot accept the premise that coming together from different cultures can cause us to become gay, change religion etc.

Ben spoke to address his IOI 2024 remarks during the closing ceremony. He said he was not pushing politics or advocating but rather just visibly being who he is. He said that if that is a political act then it is what it is. Ben said that whether people like/believe it or not, there are many LGBTQ leaders and contestants in the IOI community. He said that in a sense, from a contestant's point of view, if you see someone from a different group and are not one of these people, then you just see someone different and you move on without controversy. He said on the other hand if you are from this group and you see someone from the top of the hierarchy in the same group, and you don't statistically see this often, then this really matters. He said LGBTQ people don't have lots of role models. He said he still gets people coming up to him two or three years later at IOI and even outside IOI saying they have a queer student or themselves are queer and they want to thank Ben for helping them feel seen. Ben said if you are not from this demographic then it should be nothing; not politics; nothing more.

## **Equity Diversity and Inclusion**

J.P. said there was not much to report on equity, diversity and inclusion this year but observed that one woman is dropping off IC and only men ran for the open positions. Ben later emphasized that this matters because IC has had to deal with issues around women (e.g. harassment) so it is a real problem, and our reaction should not be to simply shrug and move on.

J.P. also expressed some concern about the proportion of IC members from Europe saying more geographic diversity is strongly desirable. Everyone agreed.

Eduard wondered if some reframing at election time might help and hoped that people would run for IC not only because they were unhappy about something but perhaps, they could be motivated to fill a diversity gap. Ben said the regulations support being explicit about this when making the call for nominations.

Ben said he will share past diversity data with J.P. so that it can continue to be updated.

Eduard noted that a conscious decision was made by him not to collect or publish gender data on IOI Statistics for privacy reasons, but IC can decide otherwise because the IOI Registration system does ask for gender data every year. Everyone agreed we should only publish aggregate gender data.

Ben said he is looking for someone to take over the IOI Ally programme because he may not be at any future IOIs.

Ben said it remains the case that we get questions every year about whether different host countries will be welcoming to new students. He said we have done a good job recently during the host bidding process asking about this, and he hopes we can continue this practice even if it can sometimes be embarrassing to pose the questions.

## **Other Business**

### *GA 7*

IC agreed to rename the agenda item “Call for projects” just “IOI Projects” in the future.

After a quick discussion, IC agreed that it supports the proposal received from Italy subject to Sun Teck’s own desire to remain on IC:

*In case the removal of the president is approved by the GA, a further vote is taken to decide whether to keep him as a regular member of the IC instead (rather than removing him completely). The main rationale behind, for me, is to help the transition and improve continuity.*

### *Group Discussions Post-Mortem*

IC lamented the fact that it was incredibly hard to hear during the group discussions because of the lack of a microphone and the ever-presence of marching bands.

Fredrik gave a summary:

- Side Mirror Contest: There were many comments about the diminishing value of this idea. In the straw poll, 15 were against the idea and 7 supported it.
- IOI Kids: In the straw poll, 20 people were against the idea and 2 supported it. The main complaint was that others are already doing this and slapping IOI’s name on it feels like a cash grab.
- AI Competition: Following a long and productive discussion, 32 voted for the idea and 1 against in a straw poll, but with a very strong push for this to be onsite only. There was further discussion of ethical guidelines, requirements, publishing rules, and the need for the IOI to control the public messaging. Fredrik said a working committee is in the process of being established to explore this idea further.
- Coach Training. This also received strong support with 37 votes for it and 2 against in a straw poll. There were a range of detailed comments on the specifics with some people requesting that it be opened to countries that have earned a gold medal but not for some time. Sun Teck said he also plans to set up a working committee for this initiative.
- IOI Alumni Portal: The conversation felt largely negative but the straw poll to assess

people's appetite for the idea was split evenly 12 to 12.

#### *Gender Talk*

Ágnes reported that about 60 or 70 attended this with about half coming from the IOI and half locals.

#### *Role of Guests*

Ben observed that we really have two kinds of non-tourist guests: ones present for the welfare of contestants and another for translation. A key distinguishing feature is that the first group must not be at translation sessions, and the other must be present for translation sessions. He recommended revisions be considered to the regulations to address this. Fredrik offered to take this on working with Eljakim to ensure everything is properly synchronized with the registration system.

#### *GA Chair*

J.P. said this position has not always worked out well. Difficulties often arise when the host views the Chair of GA as a ceremonial position and/or when someone very unfamiliar with the IOI is handed this role.

Ben said that one good requirement might be that the person has been to GA meetings at some past IOI.

In response to J.P., Azamat said a chair has not yet been selected for IOI 2026 GA meetings.

Wolfgang wondered if the only change that is needed is IC taking a more active role in this process. Ben questioned if we should go a little further and explicitly say that the GA Chair is chosen by IC in collaboration with the host. Eduard said IC has been trying to encourage hosts in this way for a while, but it is not working. Fredrik concurred and said he almost prefers to remove this responsibility from the host entirely. Ben stated a preference for collaboration wanting to avoid insulting hosts. Wolfgang agreed because the host may indeed have ideal candidates.

When J.P. threw out the idea of defining this to be someone who knows the regulations and almost like a non-voting member of IC, Ben cautioned that the GA Chair should not be from IC itself because IC is often the topic of conversation. Eduard further added that even the IC choosing someone as GA Chair could create a perception of bias.

Jhonatan suggested that the Chair of IOI also be the GA Chair. Fredrik rejected this idea because the Chair of IOI is usually incredibly busy. Ben added that it also has the problem that the host is also almost always under discussion.

Fredrik said he would contemplate a regulation change whereby IC proposes a GA Chair in consultation with the host for approval by GA.

#### *Diversity on IC*

To address the current lack of diversity on IC, Wolfgang asked if we should use statute S2.8 and invite some adjuncts to join the committee for the next year. J.P. expressed some awkwardness about finding unelected people. Wolfgang countered that this would serve a different role. Both Fredrik and Ben agreed with this saying it has happened previously and worked well. Convinced, J.P. suggested everyone muse what diversity gaps exist on the IC and to consider how they might be filled.

### **ISC Report Received After IOI 2025 (as requested)**

The task preparation timeline up to the IOI 2025 competition, as agreed upon during the March meeting, was followed with some noticeable delays with respect to the original plan, yet all the scheduled preparation goals were achieved before the IOI, particularly including multiple rounds of beta testing.

The IOI 2025 Contests were carried out very smoothly from a scientific point of view. Feedback on the

task quality has been excellent so far. In particular, we had no major objections to the tasks, appeals or time extensions this year.

The biggest challenge on the contest floor was of a technical nature, revolving around a Day 1 power failure. Had the power failure extended for 10 more minutes, contestants would have been affected.

We make special note of how useful it was to have systematic testing of the problem set from relatively early stages of preparation, and recommend future hosts to keep that practice.

During the March meeting we stressed the importance of communicating the critical rules (e.g. no backpacks / phones allowed at all in contest area) to local volunteers and team leaders, as well as having an ISC member present at the contestant entrance to the competition hall in case that any last-minute decision must be made, and to ensure rule compliance in this critical step. This was carried out successfully as outlined in March. Following our recommendations from the experience from 2024, the host volunteers were able to do an excellent job during the entry of contestants to the contest hall, resulting in fast entry while still enforcing the rules.

ISC discussed potential syllabus changes, but decided to leave the current version as is.

Regarding the AI participation option, ISC recommends having only the on-site format of AI participation going forward as a contest result officially accepted by IOI.

We repeat once again our two important goals for AI participation rules:

Minimize any kind of interference with the "human IOI" (i.e. the whole IOI proceeds essentially as always for delegations, especially contestants)

Guarantee that AI participation is well controlled and there is no room for cheating (e.g. no chance of uncontrolled human intervention / task leaking)

The IOI survey 2025 has been sent, with 120 responses received already by August 10.

IOI 2025 editorials writing has been assigned and is underway. They are expected to be ready for publication in the next couple of weeks following IOI.

### **ITC Report Received After IOI 2025 (as requested)**

There was an unusually high activity in software development before the IOI:

- Luca helped revive CMS development. Changes from the past IOIs were either integrated as-is or replaced by better solutions. This IOI was the first one in years to run on the upstream version of CMS without need for local patching.
- CMS got an API for use by AI contestants.
- `ioisubmit` (which was previously a hack) now has a much cleaner implementation on the top of the CMS API.
- The translation system gained new features. In particular, we added promises and machine translation using DeepL.
- We have a new system for management of mailing lists and Matrix rooms based on Kim's new registration system.
- There is the new election system. The Matrix bot also received some care, but it's mostly internal changes.

At the IOI itself, the ITC was involved much more than usual. Many things were in a rather bad shape, going from mostly unprepared (notably the setup of the contest hall and network in the GA hall) ranging from unreliable (printers – on average we had two out of promised four) to completely failing (backup power in the contest hall).

Still, with the great help of several very cooperative HTC members, we managed to improvise solutions to all problems well enough for the contestants not to notice (except for a minor network outage).

So overall, it was a success that hopefully won't be repeated. :)

It will bring a couple of new entries on the IOI Technical Checklist, and we are going to emphasize some of them to the next host at the February meeting.

Thinking about the cause of this year's problems: I think that the main reason was lack of IOI experience of most HTC members – they are competent in computer and network administration, but they haven't seen much of an actual IOI before.

Future hosts, please make sure that you have a representative in the ITC, who gets involved in the actual work as early as possible.