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Statement by Mr Gilad Ofir – Chairman of the Israel Bridge Federation

Nearly a year ago, immediately after the accusations of illicit actions by the pair Fisher-Schwartz, the Israel Bridge Federation (IBF) was the first authority to react, and it set up a Special Ethics Committee (SEC) to examine the issue.

Today the SEC published its verdict determining that this pair is guilty of actions whose purpose was illegally passing information from one to the other..

The members of the SEC have reached this conclusion after a long year during which they worked without any remuneration. They spent hundreds of hours, examining the material and throughout took care to ensure a fair and open process of the highest standards.

A top objective for the IBF and the SEC was to allow the pair the opportunity to fully present their claims and explanations and to ensure fair due process without preconceived opinions based on the various processes being conducted in parallel by other international and national bodies. The SEC achieved this difficult mission with success.

The sentence will be handed out later but the guilty decision strengthens our shared aspiration – we must fight with all available measures against every attempt to tarnish the image of bridge as a fantastic and clean game.

With this in mind, following the verdict returned and independently of the sentence to be given later, the IBF has decided to inform the European Bridge League that it is renouncing the European titles won by Israeli teams, which included the pair Fisher-Schwartz.

- European Open Teams Championship, Croatia 2014
- European Junior Teams Championship, Bulgaria 2011

The IBF was the first authority to act on this issue. On its own initiative, it announced its withdrawal from the World Championship and set up an open, transparent and comprehensive process of which it can be proud. The IBF is in the process of changing its statutes, which will enable it to safeguard the future cleanliness of the game. We are sure that Israeli bridge and its players will continue to bring respect and honor and to represent Israel with success in the International field.

On behalf of the 6000 members of the IBF we thank the members of the SEC for their difficult and demanding work (which is not yet concluded): Attorney David Fohrer (chairman). Attorney Asher Axelrod, Mr Modi Kenigsberg, Mr Eitan Levy and Mr Adrian Schwartz.

Gilad Ofir, Chairman

