



Statement of the WBQA President about the WBC in Saidia 2013

Dear Presidents, dear BBQ friends,

It was a dream for me to organize the WBC in my country. I knew pertinently that it wouldn't be easy but we were ready for the challenge. Becoming member of WBQA enabled me to make a lot of friends around the world and I am proud to belong to WBQA family. During my mandate as Secretary General of WBQA, I have worked with a lot of engagement and self-abnegation. I really appreciated the acknowledgment of the board members when they elected me as president of WBQA. Everything seemed to be under control and the WBC in Saidia was really promising to be one of the best ever organized.

At the beginning of the year, Moroccan authorities gave me all the warranties that I can count on their full support. I was promised 500.000 E as a global budget for the championships. Based on that promise, we decided in WBQA Morocco to offer all the teams and judges free accommodation and for some of them 100% sponsoring (accommodation, transportation, transfer and no entry fee).

My main objective as President of WBQA was to bring continents together and enable teams from Australia, South Africa, Argentina, Japan, USA, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire...to participate for the first time ever in a WBQA Championships. That what explains my generous offer even if most of the teams were in position to pay for their own accommodation. In my opinion, WBQA should expand and grow quickly, thus, we can have more fans, media and sponsors. I have a lot of goodwill and dreams for the future of WBQA.

But unfortunately, Moroccan authorities let me down at the very last moment. Most of the public sponsors started to withdraw one after the other for unknown reasons and the most reliable of them (they always supported WBQA Morocco) lowered their participation by 50% and in some cases by 80%. So, 10 days before the event, we found ourselves with a budget of 95.000 Euros instead of 500.000 Euros and little cash flow. The first reaction was to cancel the 1st World Mechoui Championships to try to reduce our costs. But it wasn't enough. We had an urgent meeting in WBQA Morocco and we decided to maintain the event and not to cancel it because it was too late. In addition, the contract we signed with the hotel states that in case of cancellation 15 days before the event, we have to pay 70% of the whole amount (400 rooms booked for 3 nights in all inclusive). Lot of teams and judges had already purchased their air tickets and were looking forward to visit Morocco and meet and make new friends from all over the world. So we couldn't deceive them.



So the decision was taken to organize the Championships and manage to reduce the costs to the maximum. We decided to cancel many entertainment activities and look for new suppliers offering lower prices. It wasn't easy to meet the Governor but through his personal assistant many contacts were made in order to help us overcome this situation and he was always promising that the Governor will personally be in charge of this matter. But he never did anything. On Wednesday 22nd, I could meet the Governor at the hotel during a conference he was attending to and he ordered the Mayor of Saidia to offer the welcome Couscous and the Gala Dinner. We were forced to organize the welcome couscous at the hotel as the Mayor wasn't answering me on his mobile for more than 3 days. We were also unable to organize the gala dinner for the same reason. The gala match between Moroccan Mechoui and the Argentine Asado was supposed to be one of the highlights of the event with a lot of oriental decoration, traditional tents, fireworks, special lights... Everybody was looking forward to meet the Argentine Team but unfortunately things went wrong. I was really upset and disappointed that we couldn't make because of politicians unrespect promises.

When the convoy arrived in Saidia, there were no officials to welcome it and even in the seaport of Melilla, no one offered its assistance. Hopefully, the Bikers of Goldwings Club Maroc could make the boarding process easier and quicker through their connections. Unfortunately, the rest of the convoy, that couldn't board the first time, couldn't enter Morocco because there was no assistance. Though, the Governor promised me, early this year, his full support for the convoy and a police escort. Nothing was done.

You cannot imagine how angry I am. My heart is broken because I was working on this event since more than 1 year. So many efforts, time and money lost because of some details. It was the first international World Barbecue Championships ever organized. I was really glad that we could finally bring Australia, America and Asia together with Europe and Africa. I was really proud and excited about the job done and the future perspectives. I am really sorry that many friends was deceived.

To try to explain more what happened, the sponsors in Morocco pay with a lot of delay and at a certain moment we had no cash flow and we couldn't go further. Even the program was printed but we couldn't give it to the participants because it was changing every hour. We had to deal with a different issue every hour. My team wasn't motivated anymore as we had no support. I couldn't stand this situation anymore because many people were asking for money, payment, information and better accommodation... I was under huge pressure from all parts and I made the wrong decision to leave the hotel for a while. Now I know that it was a mistake and I apologize for that. Maybe I had to talk to some of you about the situation and try to find a solution. Anyway, at that moment, my brain couldn't function anymore.



I hope that with this statement you will understand a little bit what really happened in Saida. For those among you who know me a little bit well can understand that I did my best and fought until the very last minute in order to make it a successful championship. But my own people let me down. Now, we need to keep believing in our motto “make people happy, let’s barbecue and make friends around the world”. What happened in Saida should give us a lesson. What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger. Now we need to provide our full support to Poland the European Barbecue Championships in 2014 and to Sweden for the World Barbecue Championship in 2015.

Many people want to hold me accountable for what happened. Now, I lost my company, my money and with a lot of debts that I am unable to pay for the moment. In Morocco we say “when the cow is down, many knives come around in a hurry”. The most important for me at the moment, is to recover my integrity. An official letter and report should be sent to the Royal Cabinet in order to request an inquiry about what happened.

In the meanwhile, I decided to resign from the presidency of WBQA and remain at its disposal. I would accept any decision taken by the Board. I hope that I still can count on your support in these difficult moments. I beg your pardon and still want to keep you as BBQ friends.

Younes Foudil