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## PRESS-RELEASE

### **Armenia President Serzh Sargsyan opened the 2016 FIDE Candidates Tournament in Moscow**

March 11th - 2016 FIDE Candidates Tournament started in Moscow's DI Telegraph, organized by WORLD CHESS by Agon Ltd. Tournament General Partner is Tashir Group. President of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan kicked off the Tournament by making the first move on Levon Aronian's board.

The official press-conference was hold before the ceremony, where FIDE's supervisor Zurab Azmaiparashvili, RCF president Andrey Filatov and World Chess by Agon Limited CEO Ilya Merenzon spoke.

FIDE's supervisor Zurab Azmaiparashvili thanked the organizers, having noticed the great organization. He then explained why current #2, Vladimir Kramnik is not among the participants.

*“Kramnik is one of the world’s strongest grandmasters, though his level decreased exactly at the moment the participants were pinned down. Despite it Moscow’s Tournament still has tough competition – eight leading world grandmasters will fight for the win”, - FIDE's supervisor Zurab Azmaiparashvili said.*

RCF President Andrey Filatov also talked about his expectations from the Tournament.

*«I will support the Russian chess players and I hope that one of them will finally go to New York to play against the reigning champion Magnus Karlsen», - he said.*

CEO WORLD CHESS – Chess Championship cycle organizer – Ilya Merenzon told about the way this important Tournament was organized.

*«For the first time in history of such events we are doing the public program. It will help us to involve the whole city in the chess game, to get everyone acquainted with chess. Moreover we are organizing several events for business elite, which are not only an opportunity to play with each other but to have business conversations» – told Ilya Merenzon.*

He added that chess tournaments are starting to catch establishment's attention. The game is interactive, increasing its presence in the Internet and the mobile apps. Thanks to that average amount of chess fans is up to 1 billion.

President of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan, Aide to the President of the Russia Igor Levitin, Russian Olympic Committee President Alexander Zhukov, FIDE President Kirsan Iluymzhinov were the guests of honor at the Opening Ceremony. Russian businessmen – especially General Partner's, Tashir Group representatives were also among the guests of the ceremony.

*«Since its foundation, Tashir Group has devoted significant attention to charitable and sponsored activities along with its business development. These activities have long included support of sports, which is why participation in the 2016 Chess Candidates Tournament is not just a promotional project, but is driven primarily by a desire to popularize chess in our country and abroad. This is especially true in Armenia, where chess occupies a special place-with Armenia being the first country in the world where chess was included as part of the official school curriculum. All of this leads us here at Tashir Group to be the General Partner of the Tournament», - said Zara Agemian, Head of marketing and corporate communications in Tashir Group. » - said Zara Agemian, Head of Marketing and Communications Department.*

After the press-conference finished guests and the media stepped into the game hall, where everything was prepared for the Opening Ceremony. President of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan, Armenia, guests and organizers listened to FIDE Anthem, shook hands with each of eight grandmasters and Armenia President himself made the first move at Levon Aronian's board. After that Moscow Candidates Tournament – 2016 was officially opened.

## **Organizers and partners of Candidates Tournament:**

### **FIDE**

The World Chess Federation or Fédération Internationale des Echecs, (FIDE), is recognised by its members and the International Olympic Committee as the international federation in the domain of chess, the supreme body responsible for the sport of chess and its Championships. FIDE has the sole rights to organise the World Chess Championships and the Chess Olympiads.

### **Agon Limited**

Agon Limited is the official partner of World Chess Federation (FIDE) and owner the WORLD CHESS brand as well as of commercial rights to the World Chess Championship cycle. The company aims to develop and commercialize chess, create favorable environment for partners, players, and brands, and to significantly expand the broadcast coverage of the sport.

Agon Limited became owner of commercial rights in 2012. The company successfully managed the 2012-2013 Grand Prix cycle, the 2014 World Championship Match, and the 2015 Rapid and Blitz World Championships. The company operates **worldchess.com** website that is the official broadcasting platform of the Championship cycle.

### **Tashir Group**

Tashir is a diversified industrial holding founded in 1999 and comprised of over 200 companies in various sectors of Russian economy, including construction, manufacturing, finance, energy, development, and retail. The company employs over 45,000 people and has offices in over 25 cities in Russia and neighboring states. 'Tashir Group's founder and president is Samvel Karapetyan. The company is headquartered in Moscow.

Tashir Group's primary business focus is development and management of commercial real estate projects, including retail. Tashir is a leading developer in Russia and has built over 2.5 million square meters of commercial and residential real estate.