18th European Small Federations Games

# Bulletin 1

TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2026

## Welcome to Dubrovnik and to the Small Federations Games!



SUNSHINE AFTER THE STORM

**After days of rain and storms, Dubrovnik is now welcoming participants to the 18th European Small Bridge Federations Games with glorious sunshine! ☀️**

## Practical information

TODAY & TOMORROW

TODAY · 16:30

### Opening ceremony & dinner

A bus will be waiting outside the **Royal Princess Hotel at 16:30** to take all players to **Sponza Palace** for the Opening Ceremony.

After the ceremony, the bus will take everyone to the **Royal Neptun Hotel**, where we will have dinner together.

REVISED

### Schedule

Following the withdrawal of the Romanian team, the schedule has been revised. Please check the updated schedule here:

Updated schedule →

championships.eurobridge.org/2026-european-small-federations-games/schedule

WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER

### Public holiday tomorrow

Tomorrow, **18 November**, is a public holiday in Croatia, and most shops will be closed. If you need anything, please make sure to **buy it today**.

# Welcome message

FROM THE EBL PRESIDENT



**Eric Laurant**
PRESIDENT
EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

## Dear Friends,

Welcome to Dubrovnik and to the 18th European Small Federations Games.

I am sorry I cannot be with you in Dubrovnik, as I am travelling to South Korea to explore a possible new venue for future championships, but I wish you all an excellent event. I leave you in the very good hands of Peter Belcak, member of the EBL Executive Committee and Chair of the EBL Small Federations Committee, and Igor Chalupec, EBL Treasurer and First Vice-President.

This is an event for Small Federations, but one marked by a great spirit of friendship and sportsmanship, which makes the atmosphere particularly friendly, warm and like a family.

Dubrovnik is a splendid city, and I am grateful that it has once again opened its doors to bridge. Few places combine the ancient history of such a wonderful old town with such a magnificent view of the sea.

A big thank you to Jurica Carić, President of the Croatian Bridge Federation, to Joško Dilković, our local organiser, and to all of the local staff.

I am also happy to announce that the next edition is already confirmed: the contract was signed in these very days, and the 19th European Small Federations Games will be held in **Varna, Bulgaria, from 4 to 6 November 2027**.

I wish everyone good luck, great bridge and a wonderful stay.

**Eric Laurant**
President, European Bridge League

# Opening speech

EBL SMALL FEDERATIONS COMMITTEE



**Peter Belcak**

MEMBER OF THE EBL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIR OF THE EBL SMALL FEDERATIONS COMMITTEE

**WhatsApp channel**
Scan to join

**Microsite**
Results, schedule & news

## Dear players, coaches, dear participants,

Welcome to the 2026 edition of the European Small Federations Games.

On behalf of the European Bridge League, I would like to thank the Croatian Bridge Federation and its President, Mr Jurica Carić, for the offer to organize this championship and to welcome us in the beautiful town of Dubrovnik, and all the local and distant volunteers who have spent countless hours on the preparations and arrangements necessary for you to enjoy your time.

This is the second time this event is organized in Dubrovnik. This year we have 14 teams; unfortunately, two teams that originally registered had to withdraw for various reasons on their side.

After an exception in 2025, when the event was moved to May, we are back to our traditional period: the crowded summer season is over and there is enough time before starting to think about Christmas presents.

The ESFG has also been following the new web design of EBL championships, with all the information at your fingertips on the **championship microsite**. If you have any suggestions for future improvements for you, the participants, feel free to stop by and talk to Francesca or me.

With 14 teams we will have a full round robin, with five rounds on Day 1 and four rounds on Days 2 and 3. Very important information for you: **on all three days play starts at 9:30**.

You can follow this, as well as all other information from the organizers, on the **EBL – European Bridge Small Federations WhatsApp channel** that has been set up for us. Use it for sharing fancy pictures, for helpful links, for anything you use WhatsApp for. Remember, we are all friends here, a community that you appreciate meeting and spending a few days with each year, either at the bridge table or at the bar one.

I am sure that you will enjoy your stay: the heart of Dubrovnik has many sights to see, this wonderful medieval Sponza Palace being just one of them. Let me wish you all a very successful championship, and I hope you will carry with you many nice memories of your time here. Good luck.

**Peter Belcak**
Chair of the EBL Small Federations Committee

A BRIDGE PLAYER'S GUIDE TO DUBROVNIK

# Exploring Dubrovnik

by **Francesca Canali**

> Bridge takes us everywhere and, unless we are careful, shows us nothing. A short guide to getting from our hotel to the Old Town and, more importantly, to getting off the bus.

I always remember something the celebrated journalist and player Barry Rigal once told me: *"I have wasted at least half of my destinations."* It is the most honest travel review ever written by a bridge player. Our game takes us all over the world and then, with remarkable consistency, takes us nowhere at all: from airport to hotel, from hotel to playing room, from playing room to bar, and back to the airport. We could be anywhere. Frequently, we are.

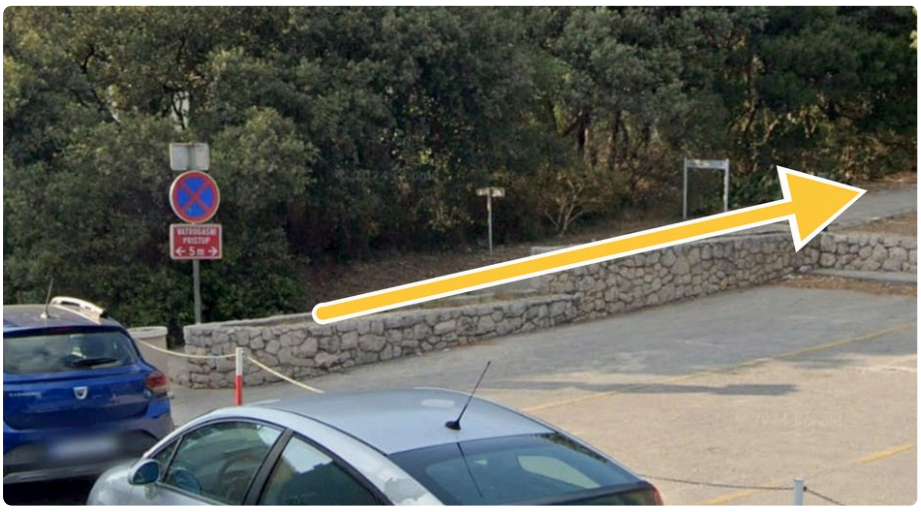
A very crowded calendar brought part of the EBL staff to Dubrovnik straight from Zurich, where the European Champions' Cup has just been played. There we made the first discovery of the trip: it was warmer in Zurich than in Dubrovnik. One travels a thousand kilometres south to the Adriatic only to wish one had packed for Switzerland. Nature, like a good declarer, enjoys a little deception.

The second paradox is more agreeable. Having no time, it turns out, means having more of it. With no time to fly home between the two events, we found ourselves with something rare in our profession: an entire free day in the host city. So, the rain notwithstanding (and there was a great deal of it to withstand), I set out to explore, in order to share a few tips in this bulletin. One should always suffer for one's readers; it is the only kind of suffering that gets published.

## Getting there

The Old Town is remarkably easy to reach from our hotel. Leave the reception with your back to the desk and walk to the left for a couple of minutes at most, until you reach the main reception of the hotel complex. Directly opposite, a small uphill path (see the photo) leads straight to the stop for **bus number 6**.

Where to get off? Very simple: at the terminus. With these instructions, it is perfectly possible to ride the whole loop and find yourself back at the very stop you started from (a true story, whose protagonist shall remain anonymous). The terminus is **Pile**, and the bus does not really stop there to let everyone off; it pauses by the city walls and then carries on. So when you see the walls, get off. Hesitation can be fatal in bridge and on public transport alike.



**Follow the arrow**

Opposite the main reception of the hotel complex, this little path leads up to the stop for bus no. 6.

IMAGE: GOOGLE STREET VIEW

Still, that long ride was anything but wasted. Nothing is more fruitful than the (apparently) unfruitful. From the window I watched children of six or seven, school bags on their backs, making their way home alone, on foot or by bus: a scene that has become rare almost everywhere, and which says a great deal about how safe parents feel this city to be. Then, while we were waiting at a stop, a girl dropped her bus pass right under the bus. Without a moment's thought, a man crouched down on the wet asphalt and slid beneath the vehicle to retrieve it for her, a sight that made me fear for his safety while filling me with admiration for his kindness. How kind Dubrovnik is!

## Through the Pile Gate

Cross the stone bridge and walk through the **Pile Gate**, the main entrance to the walled city since the sixteenth century. Look up before you go in: from the niche above the arch, **St Blaise** (Sveti Vlaho, patron saint of the city) has been inspecting visitors for nearly five hundred years, and he has seen worse weather than ours. Just outside, on its own rock above the sea, stands the fortress of **Lovrijenac**, whose gate carries the motto of the old Republic of Ragusa:

> ***Non bene pro toto libertas venditur auro***
>
> FREEDOM IS NOT TO BE SOLD FOR ALL THE GOLD IN THE WORLD

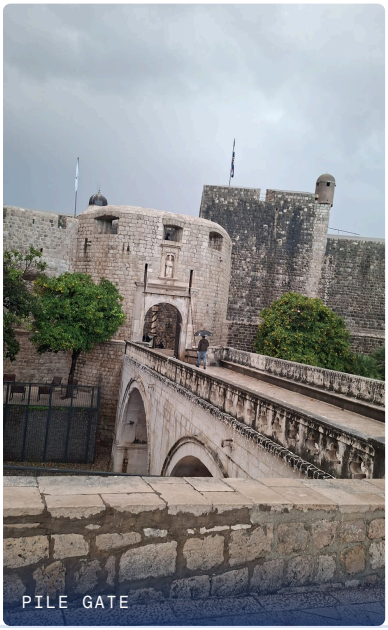
Inside, you are greeted by **Onofrio's Great Fountain**, built in 1438 by the Neapolitan architect Onofrio della Cava to bring fresh water into the city. Beside it stands the small **Church of St Saviour**, raised as a thank-offering after the earthquake of 1520, and one of the few buildings to survive the far worse one of 1667. Next door, the **Franciscan Monastery** houses one of the oldest pharmacies in Europe, in business since 1317.

From there the **Stradun**, properly called Placa, runs for about 300 metres through the heart of the Old Town, its limestone polished by centuries of footsteps. At the far end lies Luža Square, with **Orlando's Column**, the baroque **Church of St Blaise**, rebuilt in the early eighteenth century, and the **Sponza Palace**, the Gothic-Renaissance jewel where tonight's opening ceremony takes place. It once housed the customs office and the mint, where the Republic struck its own coins: in Dubrovnik, counting carefully has always been a serious business, just as it will be at our tables this week. Around the corner is the **Rector's Palace**, seat of government of the old Republic.

Now that the sun is back, walk a stretch of the **city walls**: almost two kilometres of them, among the finest fortifications in Europe. And should the rain return while you are strolling, watch your step: the polished stone paving can be really slippery.

One last note: tomorrow, 18 November, is Croatia's Remembrance Day for the victims of the Homeland War and of Vukovar and Škabrnja, which explains the closed shops, and the candles you may see in front of churches.

## Welcome to Dubrovnik!


PILE GATE


ONOFRIO'S FOUNTAIN & ST SAVIOUR


STRADUN IN THE RAIN


CHURCH OF ST BLAISE

# Where to eat

RECOMMENDED RESTAURANTS

A selection of restaurants recommended by the organizers. Scan the code to open each place in Google Maps for directions, opening hours and reviews. Ratings from Google as of 17 November 2026.

TAVERN · BABIN KUK

## Pivnica Dubrava

**4.6** ★★★★½ 1,436 Google reviews

A favourite with locals for grilled meats and peka (veal, lamb or octopus slow-cooked under an iron bell), served with homemade bread.

Mali Stradun b.b.

OPEN IN MAPS

RESTAURANT · BABIN KUK

## Restaurant Piramida

**4.5** ★★★★½ 871 Google reviews

Relaxed, family-friendly spot near the hotels on Mali Stradun: sandwiches, pizza and pasta, through to grilled meat and fish.

Ul. Iva Dulčića 106

OPEN IN MAPS

RESTAURANT · LAPAD BAY

## Pino's Fun and Dine

**4.8** ★★★★★ 1,065 Google reviews

Lively place on the Lapad Bay promenade, with Mediterranean cooking, pizzas, burgers and risotto.

Šetalište kralja Zvonimira 2b

OPEN IN MAPS

PIZZERIA · LAPAD BAY

## Pizzeria Mamma Mia

**4.4** ★★★★½ 2,144 Google reviews

One of the oldest pizzerias in Dubrovnik, open since 1998. Big pizzas (try the “Mamma Mia” or “Dalmatia”), plus pasta, lasagne, meat and fish.

Šetalište kralja Zvonimira 2

OPEN IN MAPS

BISTRO · LAPAD

## Restaurant Maskeron

**4.7** ★★★★★ 1,915 Google reviews

Family-run bistro with homemade Mediterranean food: pizza, grill, seafood and local wines, at reasonable prices.

Ul. kneza Domagoja 1b

OPEN IN MAPS

SEAFRONT RESTAURANT · LAPAD

## Levanat

**4.2** ★★★★☆ 1,961 Google reviews

On the coastal footpath between Lapad and Babin Kuk, with terraces above the sea. Dubrovnik cuisine and fish; at its best at sunset.

Šetalište Nika i Meda Pucića 15

OPEN IN MAPS

**Tomorrow is a public holiday** · Most shops will be closed on 18 November; restaurants may have different opening hours, so check before you go.

# Upcoming EBL & WBF events

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **NOVEMBER 2026** | | | |
| **18** NOV | **WBF Academy: Teacher Webinar**<br>In Spanish · Lecturer Luc Soudan · 17:00 CET · Discovery program, introduction | Online · Zoom | |
| **26–29** NOV | **11th EBL/WBF TD Workshop**<br>In memory of Ton Kooijman | Istanbul, Türkiye | |
| **DECEMBER 2026** | | | |
| **12** DEC | **Under 14 Minibridge Championship**<br>14:00 CET | Online · RealBridge | |
| **JANUARY 2027** | | | |
| **8–10** JAN | **4th WBF Online Women's Teams** | Online · RealBridge | |
| **FEBRUARY 2027** | | | |
| **5–7** FEB | **European Online Senior Transnational Teams Championship** | Online · RealBridge | |
| **11–25** FEB | **European Winter Transnational Championships** | Prague, Czech Republic | |
| **APRIL 2027** | | | |
| **9–11** APR | **European Online Women's Transnational Team Championship** | Online · RealBridge | |
| **12–18** APR | **WBF Women's Online Festival, Spring 2027** | Online · BBO | |
| **MAY 2027** | | | |
| **21–23** MAY | **European Online Mixed Transnational Team Championship** | Online · RealBridge | |
| **JUNE - JULY 2027** | | | |
| **23 Jun – 7 Jul** | **European Transnational Championships** | Wrocław, Poland | |
| **AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2027** | | | |
| **1–7** AUG | **World National Youth Teams Championships** | Herning, Denmark | |
| **8–13** AUG | **European National Youth Pairs Championships** | Herning, Denmark | |
| **23 Aug – 4 Sep** | **2027 World Teams Championships**<br>Opening ceremony on 23 August · Play starts on 24 August | Bridgetown, Barbados | |
| **NOVEMBER 2027** | | | |
| **4–6** NOV | **19th European Small Federations Games**<br>NEXT EDITION | Varna, Bulgaria | |
| **11–13** NOV | **European Open and Women's Champions Cups** | Venue to be announced | |

Full calendar and updates: **worldbridge.org/calendar** · **eurobridge.org**