



FIDE ETHICS & DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION

The First Instance Chamber of the Ethics & Disciplinary Commission (hereafter called “the EDC Chamber”), sitting in the following composition -

Chairperson: Mr Khaled Arfa
Members: Mr Ali Nihat Yazici
Mr Alan Borda

during an exchange of correspondences and online meetings, made the following -

DECISION

Case no. 12/2025: "Alleged bullying by GM Vladimir Kramnik".

1. The EDC Chamber notes its establishment by the EDC Chairman on 13 November 2025.
2. The EDC Chamber notes that on the 10th November 2025 the FIDE Ethics and Disciplinary Commission (EDC) received a report from Mr Aleksandr Martynov, FIDE Legal Director, on behalf of the FIDE Management Board (FMB). In the report, it is alleged a possible violation of the principle of human dignity, particularly bullying by GM Vladimir Kramnik.
3. Mr Vladimir Kramnik is alleged to have violated articles **6.3** (Right of all individuals to dignity and to be treated with respect) read with **6.4** (Safeguarding the dignity of individuals), **6.5(a)** (Bullying) and/or **Art. 6.5(e)** (Psychological abuse), **6.10** (integrity, honesty and responsibility), **6.25** (responsibility and accountability) of the Ethics Code and/or **Art 11.6(a)** (False or unjustified accusations) of the Disciplinary Code and to impose a sanction in accordance with **Art.13** of the Disciplinary Code.
4. Additionally, The EDC Chamber received a report on 11th December 2025 from the FIDE Fair Play Commission representing a complaint pertaining to the findings and recommendations issued by the FPL-Investigatory Panel in Mr Vladimir Kramnik Case about unfounded cheating accusations & cyberbullying.



5. Following the receipt of the FIDE FPL report and in light of additional evidence, the charges have been expanded to alleged violation of articles **6.24** (Responsibility and role model behaviour) of the Ethics Code and/or **11.4(d)** (Failure to cooperate), **11.6(c)** (Causing reputational harm), **11.7(f)** (Reckless or manifestly unfounded accusations of chess cheating) of the Disciplinary Code.
6. The EDC Chamber notes that in the interest of judicial economy, and to preclude parallel proceedings arising from the same factual background and involving the same Respondent, the two complaints have been joined for adjudication in a single decision.
 - (i) The Respondent is Mr Vladimir Kramnik FIDE ID: 4101588.
 - (ii) The Complainants are the FIDE Management Board (First Complainant) and the FIDE Fair Play Commission (Second Complainant) collectively referred to as the 'Complainants'.
7. The EDC Chamber notes the contents of the following documents received as part of the case file: the report by the FIDE Management Board; two emails from Mr David Navara on 23 October and 23 November 2026; the report by the FPL; additional submissions by Mr David Navara (comprising a total of 38 documents and annexes).
8. The EDC Chamber notes that the Respondent was given the opportunity to respond to the allegations in the FIDE Management Board report and Mr David Navara emails on 24 November 2025, and subsequently to the allegations in the FPL report and the additional submissions by Mr David Navara on 30 January 2026.
9. The EDC Chamber notes that the Respondent was granted an appropriate extension of time to respond, pursuant to his request.
10. The EDC Chamber notes the receipt of various communications from the Respondent and his legal representative, Mr Nicolas F. Krauer, attorney at NEXUS Avocats SA in Lausanne, prior to counsel's discharge on 15 February 2026.

The Respondent's principal submissions regarding the respective reports were filed on the following dates:

14 December 2025: Response to the FIDE Management Board report.

15 and 22 February 2026: Responses to the FPL report.

The Respondent's additional communications will be noted and addressed during the discussion of the procedural aspects of this case.



11. The EDC Chamber notes the subject-matter of the Complaint :

11.1 On the 10th November 2025 the FIDE Management Board (FMB) filed a formal Complaint against the Respondent, GM Vladimir Kramnik, for engaging, since September 2023, in a sustained public campaign characterized by a consistent use of derogatory, insulting, and inflammatory language directed at fellow players, officials, and even the broader chess community.

11.2 The core elements of the FMB Complaint can be summarized as follows:

11.2.1 The contentious statements were disseminated via the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) between September 2023 and 21 October 2025, utilizing the account @VBkramnik.

11.2.2 The Complaint contends that verbal abuse is a defining feature of the Respondent's social media persona. Given his high stature - a former World Champion, respected intellectual, and member of the FIDE Family - and authority in chess, his repeated personal attacks cause magnified harm to his targets and severely damage the ethical fabric of the sport.

11.2.3 As a general overview, the FMB submits in his report that Since September 2023, the Respondent has "consistently focused his commentary on alleged cheating in online chess," specifically regarding Chess.com's weekly blitz event, "Titled Tuesdays". Central to the campaign is the repeated use of the term "Cheating Tuesdays," described as a "deliberately provocative and accusatory label that frames the entire event as inherently compromised".

The "statistical analyses or performance metrics" presented by the Respondent have "never been independently verified, peer-reviewed, or endorsed by any recognized anti-cheating authority". Furthermore, the metrics often remain "undefined or ambiguous" (such as "average amount of



blunders” or “time under 10 seconds”), making them "questionable and unreliable as grounds for public implication of misconduct".

The Respondent deploys an evasive rhetorical strategy where he presents data and invites the audience to make "their own conclusions" or states "I'm just asking questions" which technique is described as a "deliberate strategy to imply guilt while evading direct accountability" .

By labeling events as “Cheating Tuesdays,” "listing players by name alongside unverified metrics," and describing behaviors as "alarming" or "suspicious," the Respondent successfully created an "unmistakable narrative of wrongdoing". The Respondent’s approach deliberately "exploited the viral nature of social media, where nuance may be lost and implication treated as fact by large audiences".

The FMB report emphasizes that freedom of speech is not absolute. Citing EDC precedent—specifically the Karjakin case—it notes that controversial public statements by prominent chess figures and role models can result in disciplinary consequences.

11.2.4 Examples of the alleged violations in the FMB report include the following:

In April 2024, the Respondent intensified his anti-cheating "campaign," focusing primarily—though not exclusively—on GM Daniel Naroditsky. Subsequent tweets shifted from general integrity concerns to direct, individualized targeting. These posts combined statistics with personal attacks, often disguising accusations as rhetorical questions or invitations to "draw your own conclusions".

In summer - winter 2023, Chess.com suspended the Respondent's blog for policy violations stemming from his cheating accusations against various players. Consequently, he shifted his activities to a new Twitter (X) account.



On April 2024, the Respondent issued a series of posts on the X platform, to question if GM Naroditsky "used a chess engine during a game" in an "arrogant manner," accusing him of "hypocrisy" and suggesting an engine was "visibly running on a second monitor". The Respondent also expanded his narrative to "institutional criticism," using the hashtag "*#chessmafia*" to imply a "coordinated cover-up" and suggesting "deliberate concealment by the platform" (Chess.com).

On 17 May 2024, the Respondent published a list of twelve top players under the provocative heading '2024 all Cheating Tuesdays'. The Complaint states this phrase is "unequivocal in its implication," adding a "tone of obvious mockery" with the word "Enjoy." This act transformed a private statistical... analysis into a public accusation against a group of elite professionals.

On 20 October 2024, the Respondent directly asked Chess.com if GM Naroditsky "was allowed to use the chess engine" and published YouTube videos directly stating that Daniel "manipulates or lies".

On 24 May 2025, the Respondent published a letter to GM David Navara threatening legal action to Navara himself and to undisclosed 'chess mafia'.

On 20 October 2025, the Respondent publicly accused Mr. Naroditsky of drug use, referencing an unverified claim that he "looks like he is on some serious drugs" and stating there are "obvious long term problems of Danya becoming alarming". Furthermore, he accused "unnamed 'friends' of GM Naroditsky of 'hiding it and erase evidence,' implying a cover-up," and made a sweeping statement about 'chess mafia' being 'dangerous'.

11.2.5 The FMB report emphasizes that the impact of the Respondent's public conduct is material, not merely theoretical



The Respondent's posts are alleged to demonstrate a "sustained rhetorical strategy" which includes "presenting unverified statistical claims as objective evidence," using "provocative labels" (such as "Cheating Tuesdays"), employing "mocking or ironic language" (like "Enjoy," "Draw your own conclusions"), and "repeatedly naming specific players" while deliberately "stopping short of explicit accusations".

The Respondent's strategy caused severe, documented consequences, including "widespread public speculation and psychological and/or reputational harm."

In a blog post and email to FIDE, GM Navara detailed the "profound psychological effect" impact of the accusations, noting they caused severe sleep and concentration issues, a 68-point rapid rating drop, panic attacks, and acute suicidal thoughts in mid-June 2024.

The FMB report emphasizes that Mr. Naroditsky who has passed away, endured similar harm as a result of these accusations. Close friends, namely Peter Giannatos, GM Oleksandr Bortnyk and Grant Oen, confirmed the "deep personal effect" and "devastating impact" of the allegations on the late GM Naroditsky. The controversy "eroded Daniel's joy in chess and contributed significantly to his emotional distress". He became "deeply distressed, obsessively worried about his reputation, lost weight from stress," and was "obsessed with proving his innocence".

This ultimately transformed him into someone "consumed by anxiety and self-doubt," with the "trauma" persisting until his final days.

The FMB report concludes that the Respondent's repeated public accusations caused severe psychological trauma to several FIDE members.

11.2.6 Finally, the FMB requests an investigation into the Respondent's actions under Articles 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.10,



6.25(b), 11.6(a), and 11.6(b), and the imposition of an appropriate sanction in accordance with Article 13 of the Ethics and Disciplinary Code.

11.3 The core elements of the FPL Complaint are as follows:

11.3.1 Since late 2023, the Respondent has been highly active on social media regarding cheating allegations. He frequently highlights allegedly suspicious games and players, and publicly calls for investigations.

11.3.2 A review of the Respondent's X and YouTube content indicates his assessments rely on three primary statistics: winning streaks, game accuracy, and performance ratings.

11.3.3 The FPL IP Panel conducted an expert review relying on Prof. Regan, Dr. GM Smerdon, Mr. Sonas, and the work of Prof. Rosenthal. Their methodology included cross-verifications that explicitly addressed the Respondent's criticisms, yielding the following key findings;

11.3.3.1 Experts Caution in interpreting winning streaks;

All experts agree that winning streaks must be assessed with great care. They concur that GM Nakamura's streaks do not support claims of irregular behaviour and are fully consistent with normal human play.

11.3.3.2 Support for Professor Rosenthal's analysis;

Prof. Regan and Mr. Sonas reject GM Kramnik's criticisms, confirming that Rosenthal's methodology and conclusions are sound.

11.3.3.3 Independent replication by Dr. Smerdon;

Using GM Kramnik's own parameters to analyze the top 50 Chess.com blitz players, Dr. Smerdon concluded the streaks are normal and "entirely consistent with normal statistical variations.

11.3.3.4 Limitations of accuracy and performance metrics;



The experts (Regan, Smerdon, and Sonas) object to GM Kramnik's use of accuracy metrics and performance ratings, noting they are unreliable for proving misconduct.

11.3.3.5 Prof. Regan's analysis found no evidence of cheating in GMs Nakamura and Naroditsky's Titled Tuesday games.

11.3.3.6 Duty of transparency in presenting data;

Prof. Regan and Mr. Sonas assert that GM Kramnik's public allegations require a transparent disclosure of his data, methods, and his team's qualifications, which he has thus far failed to provide.

11.3.4 As aggravating factors, the Respondent's conduct includes targeting minors (as young as ten), persistently harassing specific individuals (including GMs Nakamura, Naroditsky, and Navara), and threatening the opposition with legal action. Together, these establish an escalating pattern of behavior that has caused significant reputational and psychological harm.

11.3.5 The FPL report emphasizes that despite clear warnings that his claims lacked credible evidence, the Respondent continued to publish allegations and even retaliated by filing formal complaints against Prof. Rosenthal.

11.3.6 The FPL report notes GM Naroditsky's passing for context, without implying causation. However, it asserts that the Respondent's "sustained online activity and repeated public allegations" significantly impacted multiple players, including GM Naroditsky.

11.3.7 The FPL finds that the Respondent conduct constitutes breaches of multiple provisions of the FIDE Code, specifically Articles 11.7(f), 11.6(a) 11.6(c), 6.5(a), 6.5(e) and 11.4(d) requesting a ban of four (4) years in any FIDE chess competition or being involved in any chess-related



activity as an arbiter, organizer, coach, trainer, or representative of a chess federation alongside a fine of €25.000 as an additional sanction.

11.4 By email on 23 November 2025, GM David Navara requested a five-year order keeping the Respondent at least 5-meter radius away from his and his teammates' boards, citing mental health concerns.

12. The EDC Chamber notes the following defences provided by the Respondent :

12.1 In his response dated 14 December 2025, the Respondent submitted seven documents, detailed as follows:

The document "complainant questioning" sets forth a series of questions directed to the FIDE Management Board, and seeks an order from the Chamber to compel written answers within a period of 14 days; The document "summary dn" is about the dispute between the Respondent and GM David Navara; The document "summary dn" is about events involving Chess.com and GM Naroditsky; The document "FP violation dn" addresses fair play violations by GM Naroditsky; The document "insult dn" is about public insults directed at the Respondent by GM Naroditsky; The document "public lies dn" provides examples of public misinformation by GM Naroditsky; The document titled "main" constitutes the Respondent's principal observations regarding the FMB Complaint.

12.2 The EDC Chamber notes that the core arguments of the "main" document may be summarized as follows:

12.2.1 The Respondent denies the unsubstantiated allegations of "verbal abuse" and insulting players or officials. Conversely, he asserts he has repeatedly been the target of insults, and argues that abusive conduct does not define his social media presence.

12.2.2 The Respondent further denies any recourse to personal attacks, mockery, or degrading rhetoric, asserting that such allegations are entirely unfounded.



12.2.3 Regarding the terms 'Cheating Tuesdays,' the Respondent asserts that this humorous expression was used only a few times and cannot be characterized as central to the campaign. Furthermore, he contends that the well-founded opinion that the entire event was inherently compromised is substantiated by clear statistical evidence and shared by several top players, specifically referencing a Reddit post by GM Fabiano Caruana.

12.2.4 The Respondent asserts his statistical evidence is reliable and remains willing to submit it for independent review. However, FIDE has consistently ignored his good-faith requests for collaboration or, at minimum, consideration of his analysis.

12.2.5 The Respondent denies using rhetorical devices to evade accountability, asserting his findings are strictly preliminary and await further investigation that has never been conducted by either FIDE or Chess.com.

12.2.6 Regarding his posts naming players and using terms like "Cheating Tuesdays," the Respondent argues he is responsible only for his direct statements, not for third-party misinterpretations on social media.

12.2.7 The Respondent denies any escalation or targeting of GM Naroditsky from April 2024, asserting that during that month, he mentioned GM Naroditsky only once in the context of a group of other players whose statistics were being discussed.

12.2.8 The Respondent explains that Chess.com unjustly blocked his blog for alleged "cheating accusations" when he was merely highlighting statistical anomalies for them to investigate. The platform restored his blog a month later, implicitly admitting their error. He clarifies this was the only blog-related incident in 2023, making any other incidents cited in the Complaint misleading.



12.2.9 The Respondent states that his X post regarding GM Naroditsky was published on 13 April 2025 (not 2024) and was quoted out of context. He contends that the post was merely "mild irony," used defensively against Naroditsky's continuous personal attacks, which are documented in the file "insult dn."

12.2.10 The Respondent clarifies that the issue with GM Naroditsky is not when his chess engine was running, but how an engine on a second monitor could automatically track moves from his primary monitor in real time. While Naroditsky admits to running the engine, he has never explained this technical synchronization. Furthermore, the Respondent's statement "Danya, instead of complaining and shaming, maybe 'just do it'?" was not a demand for a cheating confession, but simply a request that Naroditsky answer this technical question rather than issuing insults.

12.2.11 Regarding the "broader institutional criticism," the Respondent argues that the chess community has a duty to demand answers about the unexplained chess engine incident to protect competitive integrity, especially since restrictive Chess.com contracts prevent many prominent players from speaking out.

12.2.12 The Respondent argues that publishing accurate player statistics does not constitute a cheating accusation, nor is he responsible if third parties misinterpret his statements. Additionally, he clarifies that the joke "Cheating Tuesday" refers to general tournament cheating issues, not specific individuals.

12.2.13 The Respondent clarifies that the "Congratulations" post used irony to highlight a highly unusual performance (a 66-7-5 record over five hours) requiring investigation. He resorted to irony only because Chess.com had consistently ignored his previous requests to investigate similar anomalies.



12.2.14 The Respondent contends that his inquiry about engine-use exemptions was reasonable because it stemmed directly from GM Naroditsky publicly admitting to using an engine during a speedrun. The Respondent notes that if Chess.com permits this practice, the platform—not the player—is responsible.

12.2.15 The Respondent argues that his two "Refuting New Lies" YouTube videos were a direct response to GM Naroditsky's public insults, specifically the false claim that the Respondent constantly lies. He emphasizes that the videos contained no personal attacks and relied solely on objective evidence to correct factual misrepresentations.

12.2.16 Regarding GM Naroditsky's commute, the Respondent argues that public maps verify his claims: driving between the venue and the residence takes at least five minutes. This estimate excludes the additional time needed to start the car, park, and enter the building.

12.2.17 Regarding his communications to GM David Navara, the Respondent states he has fully addressed this matter with FIDE and publicly. He confirms filing a civil defamation lawsuit in Geneva against GM Navara, Chess.com, and Chessdom.com. The Respondent argues he is the victim of a coordinated defamatory attack that caused significant reputational and financial harm. Because the parties refused to retract their statements despite his documentary evidence, he contends civil litigation was his only recourse.

12.2.18 Regarding allegations of GM Naroditsky's substance use, the Respondent claims his comments on X were motivated entirely by genuine concern for the player's well-being. He argues that GM Naroditsky's extreme 20- to 36-hour playing schedules strongly suggest the use of high-risk stimulants. The Respondent asserts his plea for intervention was unfairly mischaracterized as an attack, and he laments



being the only person advocating for the player's health while others deleted the stream recordings to hide evidence.

12.2.19 The Respondent denies any misconduct toward GM Navara, stating their interactions were respectful and contained no cheating accusations. He argues that Navara publicly attributed his psychological distress to FIDE, not to the Respondent. While Navara misunderstood one of the Respondent's tweets, the Respondent promptly clarified his intent through public posts and a personal letter. Consequently, he denies any liability for Navara's mental health. Additionally, the Respondent dismisses the Reddit-based "independent analyses" cited by Navara, arguing they were flawed because they misunderstood his methodology and used incorrect timeframes—such as including late-2024 matches to dispute a May 2024 analysis.

12.2.20 The Respondent categorically denies that his statements caused GM Naroditsky's passing, arguing there is no evidence linking his conduct to the tragedy. He notes that GM Naroditsky continued his professional duties uninterrupted and appeared in excellent spirits during an October 2025 broadcast. Finally, the Respondent dismisses all opposing testimonies as unsubstantiated, inadmissible personal opinions.

12.3 The EDC Chamber notes that, with respect to the specific violations of the FIDE Ethics & Disciplinary Code, the Respondent's core arguments are as follows:

12.3.1 Violation of Article 6.3 (Human Dignity / Respect);

The Respondent denies making any public accusations about Mr. Naroditsky's personal life or health. Instead, he provides evidence that Mr. Naroditsky repeatedly insulted his mental health, causing the Respondent and his family substantial reputational harm and psychological distress.

12.3.2 Violation of Article 6.4 (Prohibition of Harassment);



The Respondent denies ever linking the common "chess mafia" meme to Mr. Naroditsky. Furthermore, regarding personal health, he asserts that Mr. Naroditsky was the one who repeatedly attacked him, not the reverse.

12.3.3 Violation of Article 6.5 (bullying and psychological abuse);

The Respondent argues that the provided documents contain no factual evidence of this violation. Conversely, he is submitting substantial documentation proving the exact opposite.

12.3.4 Violation of Article 6.10 (Integrity / Honesty);

The Respondent strongly denies the allegation. He argues that because Chess.com and FIDE refuse to verify the statistics, the claim remains merely the Complainant's personal opinion.

12.3.5 Violation of Article 6.25 (b) (Responsibility - Accountability);

The Respondent argues that, he was acting as other players and officials did multiple times.

12.3.6 Violation of Article 11.6(a) (Offences causing reputational harm - False or unjustified accusations);

The Respondent denies making any false or unjustified statements and stresses that there were no accusations at all.

12.3.7 Violation of Article 11.6(b) (Offences causing reputational harm - Disparagement of FIDE's Reputation and Interests);

The Respondent argues that this claim violates Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which guarantees the fundamental right to freedom of opinion and expression across all media.

12.4 On 15 and 23 February 2026, the Respondent submitted eleven documents. One document is a Revocation of Power of Attorney, and nine address specific annexes of the FPL report. The final document, titled "SUMMARY," contains the Respondent's core arguments regarding the FPL report.



12.5 The EDC Chamber notes that the Respondent's principal arguments in response to the FPL Report can be summarized as follows:

12.5.1 The Respondent argues that the FPL lacks jurisdiction because its authority is strictly limited to concrete cheating incidents in FIDE events. Because this investigation does not involve such incidents, he asserts the FPL Report is procedurally flawed, illegitimate, and non-binding on the EDC.

12.5.2 The Respondent argues the Investigatory Panel (IP) review violated FIDE Anti-Cheating Regulations, noting he never received a formal document defining the investigation's exact scope. Furthermore, he emphasizes that non-cheating breaches, like harassment, fall exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Ethics and Disciplinary Commission (EDC). Due to these procedural flaws, the Respondent deemed the IP examination invalid and refused to answer its questions.

12.5.3 The Respondent maintains that his data-driven reports are requests for investigation, not cheating accusations, but claims FIDE and Chess.com have ignored his findings. Additionally, he denies cyberbullying allegations, arguing that his actions were strictly defensive responses to slander and personal attacks from GMs Nakamura, Naroditsky, and Navara.

12.5.4 The Respondent argues that the FPL Report is fundamentally flawed because it misrepresents his assessment criteria. He clarifies that his analysis focuses on "overperforming streaks" rather than "winning streaks," and emphasizes that the specific application of accuracy metrics is what matters. Ultimately, he asserts the authors ignored his extensive publications and completely misrepresented his methodology.



12.5.5 The Respondent charges the report's authors with deliberately misleading the First Instance Chamber by falsely attributing claims to him and making incorrect, unsupported interpretations of his conduct.

12.5.6 The Respondent contends that the report relies on false, unverified third-party claims to allege misconduct on his part, while actively refusing to acknowledge his direct public refutations.

12.5.7 The Respondent argues that the Investigatory Panel (IP) failed its mandate by finding misconduct without actually analyzing Fair Play violations. He further asserts the report violates scientific standards because its data and methodology cannot be independently replicated.

12.5.8 The Respondent asserts that the report is compromised by severe personal bias, particularly from Mr. Regan, and relies on flawed or fabricated research from Dr. Smerdon and Mr. Rosenthal. He also contends the authors falsely claimed to review his work while actively ignoring his public methodology and counter-evidence.

12.5.9 The Respondent concludes that he formally requests a FIDE internal investigation into the FPL and the Investigatory Panel to examine their impartiality, integrity, and procedural fairness.

13. Upon due consideration, the EDC Chamber, by **unanimity** of its members, **finds regarding the admissibility of the complaint** that:

13.1 The complaint before the EDC was filed by the FIDE Management Board, an organ representing the general interests of FIDE in accordance with Article 5.2(c) of the FIDE Ethics Code.

13.2 The initial complaint was joined and supported by a report constituting a formal complaint, issued by the FPL, an organ representing FIDE's general interests within a specific domain of sports governance and, specifically, tasked with overseeing all cheating-related matters and



ensuring that fair play standards are upheld in chess, in accordance with Article 5.2(d) of the FIDE Ethics Code.

13.3 The Respondent is a grandmaster and former World Champion, i.e FIDE titled and rated player registered in the FIDE database and as such a member of the FIDE family over which the EDC exercises jurisdiction.

13.4 The statements prima facie has the potential to constitute a violation of conduct prohibited in articles **6.3** (Right of all individuals to dignity and to be treated with respect) read with **6.4** (Safeguarding the dignity of individuals), **6.5(a)** (Bullying) and/or Art. **6.5(e)** (Psychological abuse), **6.10** (integrity, honesty and responsibility), **6.24** (Responsibility and role model behaviour), **6.25** (responsibility and accountability) of the Ethics Code and/or Art **11.6(a)** (False or unjustified accusations), **11.6(c)** (Causing reputational harm), **11.7(f)** (Reckless or manifestly unfounded accusations of chess cheating) and **11.4(d)** (Failure to cooperate) of the Disciplinary Code.

13.5 The potential transgressions took place in the international sphere, having regard to their publication across general social media platforms such as X, YouTube, and Reddit, as well as chess-specific platforms including Chess.com and Lichess.org, with the involvement of players from multiple National Federations, and therefore fall under the jurisdiction of the FIDE Ethics and Disciplinary Commission (EDC).

13.6 The Respondent has questioned the authority of the FPL and its Investigatory Panel (IP), and, consequently, the admissibility of their submitted report, as described in paragraphs 12.5.1 and 12.5.2.

13.7 The EDC Chamber notes the following regarding the jurisdiction of the FPL:

13.7.1 The FPL is an organ of FIDE established under the FIDE Charter. Specifically, Article 29.4 provides: 'The composition and the competences of the Fair Play Commission are specified in the Procedural Rules of the Fair Play Commission.'

13.7.2 The FIDE Handbook, in Art. 2.6 about the FPL responsibilities reads:



“FPL has the following ongoing responsibilities: ...

- **Carry out independent investigations on violations of the Ethics & Disciplinary Code concerning fair-play related matters, including but not limited to match fixing, suspected fair play violation, assumed cheating and cheating.**
- **Submit motivated reports to the Ethics and Disciplinary Commission or to national competent bodies, when relevant.**
- **Oversee the general implementation of fair play related provisions in the FIDE Charter and Ethics & Disciplinary Code, including the investigation of alleged cheating cases by way of Investigatory Panels and the imposition of limited sanctions for the violation of other fair play rules in competition, as determined by the Fair Play Panel for the competition.”**

13.7.3 The Fair Play Regulations Approved by FIDE Council on 10/11/2024 and Applied from 18 November, 2024, further provides in Art. 2.1: **“The Fair Play Commission (FPL) has jurisdiction in all cheating-related matters, including false accusations.”**

13.7.4 According to The Fair Play Commission Procedural Rules the FPL is tasked with “The fight against cheating in all its manifestations” (Art. 1.2) and “shall be responsible for analyzing and designing measures and tools aimed at preventing cheating in chess” (Art. 1.6).

Articles 5.1 and 5.2 of the FPL Procedural Rules related to Investigatory Panels provide as follows:

“FPL shall carry out independent investigations on violations of the Ethics & Disciplinary Code concerning cheating and shall have the possibility to submit motivated reports to the Ethics and Disciplinary Commission (EDC) or to competent national bodies, when relevant. Motivated



reports must include factual disclosures, technical expertise, and all results of the instigated investigations” (Art. 5.1) and “For the investigation of cheating allegations an Investigatory Panel (IP) is formed” (Art. 5.2).

13.8 The EDC Chamber finds regarding the jurisdiction of the FPL:

13.8.1 That it is evident from the entirety of the aforementioned provisions that the mandate, powers, and jurisdiction of the FPL extend well beyond the restriction to 'concrete cases of alleged cheating incidents in FIDE related over the board and online events exclusively'. The general terms used, such as 'all cheating-related matters' and 'cheating in all its manifestations', confers an exceptionally broad scope of authority upon the FPL. Concerning the present case, the task entails, inter alia, analyzing and verifying the reliability of the anti-cheating system promoted and developed by the Respondent. This specific mandate is explicitly delegated to the FPL by the cited regulations, particularly given that the FPL maintains exclusive responsibility for proposing rule amendments and adopting new anti-cheating systems should the evaluated system proves effective."

13.8.2 Furthermore, contrary to the Respondent's assertions regarding the scope of violations that may be investigated by the FPL and Investigatory Panels (IPs), Article 5.2 of the FPL Procedural Rules provides that the 'FPL shall carry out independent investigations on violations of the Ethics & Disciplinary Code concerning cheating'. In alignment with the FPL's extensive powers regarding cheating, the terms 'violations concerning cheating' must be interpreted very broadly to encompass any Code violation possessing a nexus of any kind with cheating, be it principal, secondary, ancillary, or related. In other words, while a standard violation of the Ethics Code falls under the jurisdiction of the EDC, if that same violation bears any relation to a



matter of cheating, it triggers the investigative jurisdiction of the FPL. A prime example, as in the present case, is the offense of bullying and cyber bullying; when connected to accusations, suspicions, or even rumors of cheating, it falls squarely within the investigative authority of the FPL. Consequently, all arguments raised by the Respondent in this regard must be rejected.

14. Based on the above, the EDC Chamber **unanimously** finds that **the consolidated complaints** brought by the FMB and the FPL against the Respondent **are admissible**.

15. The EDC Chamber **notes** the request filed by GM David Navara as described in paragraph 11.4 and **finds** that the status of GM Navara as a mere witness in this matter is incompatible with such a motion; therefore, the EDC Chamber cannot grant his request. Nevertheless, it bears emphasizing that GM Navara remains fully entitled to lodge a separate complaint and present his request within that framework.

16. Upon due consideration, the EDC Chamber, **observes and finds** regarding the issue of **the Respondents' guilt** as follows:

16.1 Upon due consideration of all the facts, allegations, and evidence submitted by both parties in the present proceedings, the EDC Chamber refers in its written decision only to the relevant submissions and evidence it considers necessary to explain its reasoning.

16.2 The EDC Chamber notes that two preliminary matters must be addressed. The first relates to the status of the evidence in the present case, while the second pertains to the report submitted by the FPL and its bearing on the adjudication of the case.

16.3 With respect to the status of the evidence in the present matter, the Chamber notes:

16.3.1 That the complaint lodged by the FMB relied primarily (with the exception of annexed testimonies) upon multiple hyperlinks cited within the complaint, which are purported to direct to the evidence substantiating the allegations.



Contrary to this practice, the evidentiary framework established under the Ethics Code and the Procedural Rules does not permit reliance on a simple hyperlink; Article 9.5 of the EDC Procedural Rules clearly provides: “Documentary proof such as letters, reports, e-mail exchanges, text messages, Internet articles, webpage images and social media copies may be used as exhibits to the report and must be separately marked with an identifying number and submitted in PDF”. Additionally, Article 57.7 stipulates: “Documents shall be submitted to the EDC in PDF format, subject to that each document shall be clearly identified”.

16.3.2 The underlying rationale for these evidentiary rules is clear and stems from the concept of a 'sufficient assurance of reliability,' as articulated in Article 16.8 of the Ethics Code. Indeed, evidence must not merely be referenced or pointed to via a hyperlink; rather, its content must be presented and reproduced in a format that makes it an integral part of the case file, directly accessible to the members of the EDC Chamber adjudicating the matter. This is the sole mechanism to guarantee a minimum standard of reliability, ensuring that the evidence remains accessible under the exact same conditions in the event of an appeal or recourse before the CAS. Providing a hyperlink alongside the actual content of the source, reproduced in a format that can be annexed to the record, enables the Chamber to verify that the submitted evidence accurately reflects the source material. Conversely, submitting a mere hyperlink without reproducing its content in a durable and permanent format poses significant procedural risks and jeopardizes the rights of the parties, given the inherently temporary and volatile nature of hyperlinks. A link accessible at the first instance may become broken on appeal; it carries the risk of disappearing entirely, having its content deleted, or being



subsequently altered, which could ultimately lead to a divergent ruling.

Furthermore, Legal proceedings require evidence to be "frozen in time" to prove exactly what existed at the moment of the alleged violation. A live hyperlink is dynamic, lacking a reliable chain of custody, which makes it highly vulnerable to evidentiary objections regarding its authenticity.

16.3.3 It is important to note that these observations regarding the status of the evidence in the present matter are not limited to the FMB's initial complaint; they remain applicable, albeit to a lesser extent, to the FPL report and the Respondent's submissions. Consequently, the EDC Chamber has decided to set aside any evidence that fails to meet the minimum standard of 'sufficient assurance of reliability'.

16.4 With respect to the report submitted by the FPL and its bearing on the adjudication of the case, the Chamber notes the following:

16.4.1 It is undeniable that the report submitted by the FPL is largely of a technical nature, grounded in the scientific assessments of acknowledged experts. The scientific approach adopted by the FPL was driven by a rigorous underlying logic: before any conclusions can be drawn regarding potential violations of the Ethics and Disciplinary Code, it is crucial to understand the methodology employed by GM Kramnik in formulating his public statements.

16.4.2 However, this objective faced major obstacles, namely:

- Because the Respondent's system is not thoroughly documented, the experts had to base their analysis on fragmented data. Prof. Regan and Mr. Sonas highlighted that GM Kramnik failed to disclose both his methodology and his team's qualifications.



- The lack of cooperation from the Respondent, who explained in his submissions that he challenges the jurisdiction of the FPL and alleges procedural irregularities by the IP, and as a direct consequence, he declined to provide responses to the IP's questions.
- The Respondent's contestation of the primary assessment criteria clarifying that his analysis focuses on 'overperforming streaks' rather than merely 'winning' streaks, thereby highlighting a mischaracterization of his methodology. Additionally, he notes that while accuracy and performance metrics are utilized in every anti-cheating system, the crucial factor lies in exactly how those metrics are applied".

16.4.3 The Chamber finds that all these elements combined do not create the requisite conditions to produce a report that definitively proves the unreliability of the system promoted by the Respondent, so long as the components of this system have not been fully disclosed. However, the benefit of the doubt afforded to the Respondent in no way diminishes the exceptional quality of the work provided in the report, which remains fundamental as a solid foundation for any future supplementary investigation or cooperation in the field.

16.4.4 The Chamber must further emphasize that scientific truth and legal liability are distinct concepts. Just as a scientific controversy is not automatically a disciplinary violation, a scientifically reliable system does not excuse the Respondent from committing disciplinary offenses or breaches.

16.4.5 Finally, it must be clarified that the previous findings unequivocally show that the FPL report's scientific conclusion does not dictate a finding of guilt. Conversely,



the rest of the report regarding the actual violations remains reliable and will be discussed during the assessment of the specific charges.

FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE CHARGES

First Charge: Violation of Article 6.3 (Right of all individuals to dignity and to be treated with respect)

17. The EDC Chamber, **by a majority** of its members, **observes** and **finds** as follows regarding the issue of the **Respondent's guilt on the first charge**:

17.1 Article 6.3 establishes a broad obligation requiring all members of the FIDE Family to respect the dignity of others and to behave respectfully. Its protection is not confined to discrimination or other specific categories of misconduct but extends to any conduct objectively capable of undermining an individual's dignity, professional reputation, or personal integrity. The Chamber therefore rejects a restrictive interpretation limiting the provision solely to discriminatory conduct. Nor does it consider EDC Case 3/2023 to require proof of a specific subjective intention in every case. Where repeated public conduct objectively undermines another person's dignity or integrity, the absence of proven intent does not preclude liability.

17.2 The Chamber finds that the Respondent repeatedly published statements linking identifiable players with alleged irregularities and suspicious performances. Regardless of whether presented as statistical observations, these statements objectively cast doubt upon the honesty and integrity of the individuals concerned. Applying the standard of a reasonable observer, the Chamber concludes that repeatedly associating named players with cheating suspicions, particularly through public communications by a highly influential former World Champion, was incompatible with the obligation under Article 6.3 to respect the dignity and self-esteem of others.

17.3 For these reasons, the EDC Chamber, **by a majority of its members** **finds** that the **Respondent's conduct constitutes a breach of Article 6.3 (Right to dignity and to be treated with respect)**.

17.4 The EDC Panel Chairperson Mr. Khaled Arfa is of a **dissenting opinion** regarding the guilt under the First Charge:



17.5 The conditions for guilt under Article 6.3 are clearly outlined in the precedent established by Case 3/2023 (Mr. Mikhail Kobalia v. Mr. Kirill Shevchenko) as paragraph 7.2 explicitly states: “Regarding articles 6.3 “disrespect of opponent” and 6.4 “Safeguarding dignity of individuals” of the Ethics Code and art. 11.9(j) of the Disciplinary Code “Attempt to Undermine Honour”, the EDC Panel draws attention that liability, as per the previous articles, must satisfy two main prerequisites. Firstly, it requires an active, physical, and voluntary act or conduct, as per the "*actus reus*" principle. Secondly, it requires the intention to achieve at least one of the specified purposes, such as discrimination, attempting dignity, or undermining the honour of a person.”

In the present case, considering the allegations made by the Complainants and the lack of sufficient evidence to support them, the Respondent's conduct, motivated by an intention to inform about 'overperforming streaks' and to prompt further investigations by platforms such as Chess.com or FIDE, it is the opinion of the dissenting Chamber member that it in no way demonstrates the will or intent to achieve at least one of the specified purposes, such as violating dignity, undermining the honor of a person or discrimination (accusations, suspicions, or insinuations of cheating being analyzed under a separate charge). Consequently, this does not support a finding of guilt to the comfortable satisfaction of the dissenting opinion under this first charge.

Second Charge: Violation of Article 6.4 (Safeguarding the dignity of individuals)

18. The EDC Chamber, **by a majority** of its members, **observes** and **finds** as follows regarding the issue of **the Respondent's guilt on the second charge**:

18.1 Article 6.4 broadly prohibits harassment, vilification and abusive conduct capable of causing mental harm or creating a hostile environment. The Chamber considers that the provision is assessed objectively and does not require proof of a specific intention to harass. The decisive question is whether the conduct, viewed in its context, was capable of undermining the dignity and psychological well-being of the persons concerned.

18.2 The Chamber finds that the Respondent repeatedly and publicly associated identifiable individuals with alleged irregularities through



widely accessible social media platforms. This conduct exceeded legitimate analytical commentary by creating a continuing atmosphere of suspicion capable of causing reputational and psychological harm. The case file further contains sufficient evidence that at least one individual experienced significant mental distress. Although such consequences are not essential to establish a violation, they reinforce the harmful nature of the conduct.

18.3 The Chamber also attaches weight to the Respondent's exceptional standing within the chess community, which substantially amplified the credibility and impact of his public statements.

18.4 Taking the evidence as a whole, the Chamber concludes that the Respondent's repeated public conduct constituted harassment and vilification within the meaning of Article 6.4.

18.5 The EDC Chamber, **by a majority of its members finds** that the **Respondent's conduct constitutes a breach of Article 6.4 (Safeguarding the dignity of individuals).**

18.6 The EDC Panel Chairperson Mr. Khaled Arfa is of a **dissenting opinion** regarding the guilt under the second charge for the same reasons set forth in paragraph 17.4, as the intentional condition of Art. 6.4 remains unmet and there is insufficient reliable evidence to support a finding of guilt.

Third Charge: Violation of Article 6.5(a) (Bullying)

19. The EDC Chamber, **by a unanimity of its members, observes and finds** as follows regarding the issue of the **Respondent's guilt on the third charge:**

19.1 The EDC Chamber notes that the primary substantive element of the offense is a demonstrable pattern of conduct. By employing the statutory descriptors 'systematic' and 'repeated,' the Code dictates that bullying cannot be predicated upon a singular, isolated occurrence unless proven to be part of a broader, sustained course of conduct.

19.2 The EDC Chamber finds that it is indisputable from the evidence submitted into the record, as well as the Respondent's own submissions, that he has committed himself to the fight against cheating in chess; that in this capacity, acting as Project Lead, he developed an anti-cheating system to detect atypical behaviours or situations (including, inter alia, the metric



he coined as '*overperformance streaks*'); and that it was strictly within this framework that he published an extensive series of posts and videos on the subject, substantiated by statistical data.

19.3 Accordingly, the EDC Chamber is satisfied as to the existence of a pattern of conduct, one inherently dictated by the Respondent's own objectives—namely: (i) regularly and systematically publishing content to introduce his system to the wider chess community; (ii) promoting the system and demonstrating its reliability; and (iii) establishing himself as an authority in the field. Moreover, the admitted facts permit the reasonable inference of collateral motives: specifically, a desire to demonstrate that Chess.com and FIDE erred in ignoring his proposals of collaboration, coupled with an intent to foster a favorable body of public opinion capable of subsequently operating as a pressure group.

19.4 Taken together, these factors illustrate that a sustained course of conduct was organic to the Respondent's goals, driving the systematic and repeated actions evidenced on the record. The Chamber therefore concludes that the primary requisite of the offense is established.

19.5 The EDC Chamber finds that while the Respondent contends his publications were entirely neutral, disclaiming any responsibility for third-party interpretations thereof, the evidentiary record demonstrates the contrary. These communications provoked immediate disapproval and a substantial volume of unwanted reactions across the chess community, to such a degree that the Respondent, by his own admission, found himself compelled to adopt a defensive posture, alleging that he had become the target of an orchestrated campaign. In the view of the Chamber, a reasonable person within the FIDE Family, upon encountering this initial wave of reprobation, would have instantly perceived the risk of escalation and either ceased publishing such material or, at a minimum, adapted his conduct accordingly.

Instead, the ensuing cycle of exchanges served only to stoke the controversy. The record captures the Respondent deploying overt accusations of lying and defamation; explicit allegations of cheating (e.g., "Cheating Tuesdays"); conspiratorial insinuations of criminal association (e.g., "chess mafia"); disparaging or sarcastic posts and commentary; and



provocative, open-ended invitations such as “draw your own conclusions” or “Enjoy”. Far from acting as a detached analyst, the Respondent actively fostered a dynamic that falls squarely within the established paradigm of cyber bullying, satisfying the requisite criteria of “unwanted, repeated and intentional, aggressive behavior”.

19.6 With respect to the intentional element of the violation, the EDC Chamber finds it fully established that the Respondent acted knowingly and deliberately, even when characterizing his actions as purely defensive. The core legal question thus turns upon his specific intent, namely his contention that he never held the subjective desire to engage in bullying, nor did he intend to bring about its resultant effects.

19.7 In the EDC Chamber’s assessment, these subjective disclaimers are legally immaterial. While criminal law strictly evaluates intent—whether general or specific—from the internal perspective of the accused, sports disciplinary law operates under a fundamentally different paradigm. In disciplinary proceedings, intent is measured either objectively, by reference to the standard of the reasonable person, or contextually from the perspective of the victim—specifically, whether the actions can reasonably be experienced by the victim as “unwanted, repeated and intentional, aggressive behaviour.” This principle was articulated in Case 05/2024 (addressing an analogous form of harassment under Article 6.5), wherein the Chamber held: "Consequently, the criterion is not the intent of the perpetrator, but rather the assessment of whether the conduct is undesirable or offensive, as viewed by the victim compared to the assessment of the reasonable person". Accordingly, the Chamber finds that the intentional element has been fully satisfied.

19.8 The EDC Chamber notes that as the misconduct occurred across digital platforms, it properly attracts the characterization of cyber bullying. Crucially, this conduct occurred between elite peers—specifically renowned Grandmasters—within a dynamic defined by a real or perceived disparity of power. This imbalance is substantiated by the interview of 27 October 2024 cited in the FPL Complaint (the existence of which the Respondent expressly acknowledged in his submissions; document: public



lies dn.pdf) wherein GM Naroditsky observed about the Respondent: “He has a lot of authority, he is a...world champion”.

19.9 The EDC Chamber holds that the list of prohibited acts set forth in Article 6.5(a) is illustrative rather than exhaustive, as evidenced by the drafters’ explicit use of the permissive phrasing “may include”.

Consequently, the provision captures any similar conduct engendering the same proscribed effects, such as the publication of statistical data to insinuate cheating, or the targeting of specific players. In the present case, the Respondent’s methodology, focusing inter alia on the detection of "overperformance streaks", inherently and inevitably targeted a distinct class of players: namely, those who play extended, consecutive game sequences while live-streaming, or compete in particular tournament formats.

19.10 Furthermore, the Chamber observes that while multiple anti-cheating models are currently in use, most notably the methodology developed by Professor Kenneth Regan alongside other proprietary platform algorithms, no one responsible for these systems uses them to publish named individual data having regard to the clear risks of this practice, and the profound impact that cheating issues have on a player’s career.

19.11 For the foregoing reasons, the EDC Chamber **unanimously finds** that the **Respondent’s conduct constitutes a breach of Article 6.5(a) (Cyber bullying)**.

Fourth Charge: Violation of Article 6.5(e) (Psychological abuse)

20. The EDC Chamber, **by a majority** of its members, **observes** and **finds** as follows regarding the issue of the **Respondent's guilt on the fourth charge**:

20.1 Article 6.5(e) prohibits conduct that objectively diminishes an individual's dignity, identity or self-worth, including conduct resulting in humiliation, isolation or psychological harm. The Chamber does not consider proof of a specific intention to harm, nor expert psychiatric evidence, to be indispensable. The decisive question is whether the conduct, viewed objectively and in its context, was reasonably capable of producing the forms of psychological harm identified in the Code.



- 20.2 The Chamber finds that the Respondent repeatedly and publicly associated identifiable individuals with allegations or suspicions of cheating, thereby exposing them to continuing public scrutiny and reputational pressure. Such conduct was inherently capable of undermining their dignity, self-esteem and professional standing.
- 20.3 The EDC Chamber finds that the Respondent repeatedly made public statements linking particular individuals to accusations or suspicions of cheating. These statements were widely broadcast, subjecting the individuals to ongoing public examination.
- 20.4 The evidence further demonstrates that at least one affected individual experienced significant psychological distress, including panic attacks and withdrawal from competition. Although such consequences are not required to establish a violation, they strongly confirm the harmful impact of the Respondent's conduct. The Chamber also attaches weight to the Respondent's exceptional standing within the chess community, which substantially amplified the reach and impact of his statements.
- 20.5 Taking all circumstances into account, the Chamber concludes that the Respondent's conduct constituted psychological abuse within the meaning of Article 6.5(e).
- 20.6 The EDC Chamber, **by a majority of its members** finds that the **Respondent's conduct constitutes a breach of Article 6.5(e) (Psychological abuse).**
- 20.7 The EDC Panel Chairperson Mr. Khaled Arfa is of a **dissenting opinion** regarding the guilt under the fourth charge for the following reasons:
- 20.8 It is indisputable that the intentional element is a *sine qua non* for all the various forms of harassment described in Article 6.25. This Article expressly provides: 'Harassment refers to systematic, hostile and repeated acts **intended** to isolate or ostracise...' Thus, **the intent requirement** applies to all forms of harassment detailed in subsections 6.25(a) through 6.25(g).
- 20.9 It is well established in the case file that the sole intention motivating the Respondent was to prompt further investigations about 'overperforming streaks' and in no way demonstrates the will or intent to achieve at least



one of the specified purposes listed in Art. 6.25(e), such as diminishing the sense of identity, dignity or self-worth of an individual.

Furthermore, there is no reliable evidence substantiating the existence of such actions.

20.10 Additionally, damages, if any exist, can only be raised by the victim themselves or their representative. Since the two Complainants in this matter are invoking the general interest of FIDE, they cannot base their complaint on the harm of third parties whom they do not represent.

20.11 Consequently, taking all these reasons into consideration, it is not possible, in the view of the dissenting opinion, to conclude that there is a finding of guilt under this fourth charge.

Fifth Charge: Violation of Article 6.10 (integrity, honesty and responsibility)

21. The EDC Chamber, **by a majority** of its members, **observes** and **finds** as follows regarding the issue of **the Respondent's guilt on the fifth charge**:

21.1 Article 6.10 is a general rule, aiming to protect the overall reputation of FIDE and the sport of chess.

21.2 The EDC Chamber finds that neither of the consolidated Complaints has substantiated which specific acts of the Respondent, or by what mechanism such acts, constitute a violation of Article 6.10 supra. On the contrary, the correspondence on record demonstrates that the Respondent acted with the utmost integrity, honesty and responsibility by proactively offering his cooperation to FIDE's anti-cheating initiatives, utilizing the system he had developed; an offer that nothing came of.

21.3 Furthermore, the EDC Chamber finds that the Respondent's publication of his statistical outputs on social media—while generating consternation among certain players and subsequently escalating into a broader dispute—does not, *ipso facto*, constitute conduct prejudicial to the reputation of FIDE. A horizontal dispute between players, regardless of its magnitude, remains fundamentally a private matter, save in exceptional circumstances. That this friction may have generated actual or perceived harm confers a cause of action solely upon those claiming to be aggrieved; this is particularly true given that allegations and suspicions of cheating fall under separate heads of charge. The Chamber finds that none of the



Respondent's actions targeted the institutional reputation of FIDE or the sport of chess at large. In this regard, the Complainants' reliance on Case 02/2022 (Karjakin) is non-dispositive, as the conduct in that matter involved direct defiance of an express resolution of the FIDE Council.

21.4 Finally, the EDC Chamber finds that the tardy initiation of these proceedings, concerning underlying facts dating back to 2023 and 2024, indicates that FIDE itself perceived no immediate urgency, nor any institutional injury to its reputation. While the Complaint was technically lodged within the statutory limitation period, the chronology strongly suggests its filing was catalyzed by the profound emotional distress following the tragic announcement of GM Naroditsky's passing.

21.5 For all of the foregoing reasons, the EDC Chamber **by a majority of its members** holds that the requisites for a violation of Article 6.10 have not been met.

21.6 The EDC Panel member Mr. Alan Borda is of a **dissenting opinion** regarding the guilt under the fourth charge for the following reasons:

21.7 I consider the Respondent responsible for violating Article 6.10 because he publicly disseminated suspicions and claims of cheating based on his own invalidated methodology, which was seriously questioned in the investigation, and he did so in a manner incompatible with the duties of integrity, honesty, and responsibility required by the Code. Furthermore, this conduct was objectively likely to negatively affect the reputation of chess and FIDE.

Sixth Charge: Violation of Article 6.25 (responsibility and accountability)

22. The EDC Chamber, **by a majority** of its members, **observes** and **finds** as follows regarding the issue of **the Respondent's guilt on the Sixth charge**:

22.1 The EDC Chamber refers to its reasoning set forth in paragraphs 21.1 to 21.6 concerning Article 6.10, a provision with which Article 6.25 shares extensive threshold criteria, mirroring its wording in several material respects.

Applying this same rationale, the Chamber concludes that a violation of Article 6.25 has not been established to its comfortable satisfaction.



22.2 Accordingly, the EDC Chamber **by a majority of its members** holds that the Respondent is not liable under Article 6.25.

22.3 The EDC Panel member Mr. Alan Borda is of a **dissenting opinion** regarding the guilt under the fourth charge for the following reasons:

22.4 I consider the Respondent responsible for violating Article 6.25 because he repeatedly made public statements, including via social media, that were objectively likely to harm identifiable members of the FIDE Family and to discredit chess by publicly associating them with suspicions of cheating without a sufficiently solid basis. Given his particular visibility and influence within the chess community, his duty of prudence and responsibility in issuing such communications was especially high. However, I recognize that this is a broader and more complementary provision than other, more specific rules applied in this case, and therefore its application can also reasonably be understood in connection with those primary violations.

Seventh Charge: Violation of Article 11.6(a) (False or unjustified accusations)

23. The EDC Chamber, **by a majority** of its members, **observes** and **finds** as follows regarding the issue of **the Respondent's guilt on the Seventh charge**:

23.1 Article 11.6(a) prohibits false or unjustified accusations. The Chamber considers the wording of the provision to be disjunctive: an accusation need only be false or unjustified. Accordingly, the decisive issue is whether the Respondent's allegations were supported by objectively reasonable and verifiable grounds, rather than whether they were ultimately true.

23.2 The Chamber rejects the argument that Article 11.6(a) applies only during tournaments. Nothing in its wording limits its application to tournament play, and such an interpretation would undermine the protective purpose of the provision in an era where public online communications may have an even greater reputational impact.

23.3 The Chamber finds that the Respondent relied upon a self-developed statistical methodology that had not been scientifically validated and was substantially criticised by independent experts and by the FPL investigation. The methodology therefore did not provide an adequate



evidentiary basis for publicly associating identifiable players with cheating.

23.4 The Chamber further considers it significant that the Respondent chose to publicise his suspicions rather than use FIDE's established confidential anti-cheating procedures. By publicly presenting allegations without institutional verification or adequate evidentiary support, he exposed identifiable players to unjustified reputational harm and undermined the safeguards established by the disciplinary framework.

23.5 In light of these considerations, the EDC Chamber concludes **by a majority of its members** that the Respondent's statements constitute unjustified accusations within the meaning of Article 11.6(a).

23.6 The EDC Panel Chairperson Mr. Khaled Arfa is of a **dissenting opinion** regarding the guilt under the seventh charge for the following reasons:

23.7 Article 11.6(a) in the Ethics Code reads:

"Players or members of their delegations must not make unjustified accusations of any nature towards other players, officials, organisers or sponsors."

23.8 It appears clearly from the use of the terms "Players or members of their delegations" that the context is one of either individual or team tournaments involving delegation members. This is confirmed by the remainder of the article's text, which continues immediately after setting forth the obligation to refrain from making "unjustified accusations of any nature" against "other players, officials, organisers or sponsors"—that is to say, the other constituent components of the same Tournament.

A literal analysis of Article 11.6(a) inevitably leads to the conclusion that the scope of application of this provision is confined to interactions between players and members of delegations within tournaments.

23.9 This interpretation of Article 11.6(a) is confirmed by a reading of its predecessor, Article 2.2.9 of the old Code of Ethics, which adopts the exact same terms while adding a significant explanation as follows: "All protests must be referred directly to the arbiter or the Technical Director of the tournament." This establishes conclusively that the framework is indeed that of a Tournament, and that in the event of any dispute whatsoever,



recourse must be referred to the "arbiter or the Technical Director of the tournament.

23.10 Finally, had the Code intended to confer a general scope upon this provision, it would have been drafted in alternative, more general terms, such as: "Members of the FIDE family must not make unjustified accusations towards other members..."

23.11 Consequently, Article 11.6(a) is inapplicable to this case, wherein the underlying facts occurred in the cyberspace.

Eighth Charge: Violation of Article 6.24 (Responsibility and role model behaviour)

24. The EDC Chamber, **by unanimity** of its members, **observes** and **finds** as follows regarding the issue of **the Respondent's guilt on the eighth charge:**

24.1 Article 6.24 in the Ethics Code reads:

“Each member of the FIDE Family must take responsibility for his or her own actions and be a positive role model at all times.”

24.2 The EDC Chamber notes that the EDC Code provides neither a definition of a 'role model' nor a benchmark for the standard of conduct. However, this concept was clarified in EDC Case 02/2022 (Karjakin), where the Chamber held as follows:

“International grandmasters and other title holders may be seen as informal ambassadors of the game of chess. This is especially valid for grandmasters, belonging to the world elite and competing for the world championship title, such as Sergey Karjakin. In other words, such members of the FIDE Family can be seen as role models in the game of chess. A high level of conduct may be expected from such prominent members of the FIDE Family”.

24.3 The EDC Chamber notes that the concept of a 'role model', as articulated above, manifestly encompasses the Respondent, Mr Vladimir Kramnik, all the more so given his stature as a former World Chess Champion.

24.4 The EDC Chamber notes this standard of behaviour must be observed whether in 'on-field conduct' (on the playing field or in its vicinity, usually witnessed by other players, officials, or spectators) or 'off-field conduct'



(away from the competition venue, whether taking place in private or in public).

24.5 The EDC Chamber finds that upon the initial signs of criticism of his statistical outputs, the Respondent failed to adapt his conduct to his status as a 'role model'. Consequently, he found himself at the center of a dispute in which he resorted to modes of defense incompatible with that standing, when he should have anticipated the escalation and used established disciplinary channels instead.

24.6 Furthermore, the EDC Chamber holds that the strategy deployed by the Respondent to promote his anti-cheating system, as detailed in paragraph 19.10, is fundamentally inconsistent with the duty of care incumbent upon a 'role model'.

24.7 Accordingly, the EDC Chamber **unanimously** finds that the Respondent failed to uphold his status as a 'role model' and has consequently breached Article 6.24 of the Ethics Code.

Ninth Charge: Violation of Article 11.4(d) (Failure to cooperate)

25. The EDC Chamber, by **a majority** of its members, **observes** and **finds** as follows regarding the issue of **the Respondent's guilt on the ninth charge**:

25.1 Article 11.4(d) in the EDC Code is aimed at preventing unwillingness to cooperate with investigations carried out in relation to possible breaches of the EDC Code, e.g. by failing to provide timely, accurate and complete information. The article contains a clarification to the effect that the rule is without prejudice to the right of a party suspected of an offence under the EDC Code not to be compelled to incriminate him/herself.

25.2 The EDC Chamber notes the following statements in the FPL report:
“GM Kramnik initially indicated on several occasions that he was willing to cooperate with the investigation and respond to the IP’s questions. At his request, the deadline for submission of answers was extended from 21 November to 5 December.” “However, this position changed in mid-November, when he began to challenge the IP’s jurisdiction and expressed confusion about the holding in abeyance of the MB case.” Consequently, he did not respond to any of the questions posed by the IP.



25.3 The EDC Chamber notes that in his responses to the EDC, the Respondent confirmed these facts in the following statement: “Consequently, I declined to provide responses to the IP's questions, particularly as many of them plainly exceeded its jurisdictional limits and pertained to matters reserved for the EDC”.

25.4 The EDC Chamber notes that the justification raised by the Respondent for not cooperating with the IP was found to be inconsistent as detailed in paragraphs 13.6 to 13.8 above.

25.5 The EDC Chamber notes that the Respondent did not invoke the exception and right not to incriminate him/herself set forth in Article 11.4(d).

25.6 The EDC Chamber **finds by a majority of its members** that the Respondent without justification has failed to cooperate with the FPL and has consequently breached article 11.4(d) in the EDC Code.

25.7 The EDC Panel member Mr. Alan Borda is of a **dissenting opinion** regarding the guilt under the seventh charge for the following reasons:

I do not consider a violation of Article 11.4(d) to be proven, because the record does not clearly demonstrate a lack of cooperation without convincing justification. The quality or extent of the cooperation provided by the Respondent may be debated, but the available material shows interaction with the proceedings and not a clear, unequivocal, or unjustified refusal to cooperate as required by the rule.

Tenth Charge: Violation of Article 11.6(c) (Causing reputational harm)

26. The EDC Chamber, by **a majority** of its members, **observes** and **finds** as follows regarding the issue of the Respondent's guilt on the tenth charge:

26.1 The EDC Chamber refers to its reasoning set forth in paragraphs 21.1 to 21.6 (Sixth charge), in which the allegation of discrediting FIDE's reputation was rejected.

26.2 The EDC Chamber finds that there was no substantiated injury or discredit to FIDE events, organizers, or sponsors.

26.3 The Chamber notes that the core question under Article 11.6(c) concerns any conduct by the Respondent likely to improperly harm or discredit the reputation of participants or players (whether OTB or online).



26.4 The EDC Chamber notes that the dispute occurred strictly between peers. Consequently, any resulting harm must be claimed by the putative victim—yet no such claim exists.

This approach aligns with EDC precedent, under which complaints against individuals pursuant to Article 11.6(c) have consistently been brought by the allegedly aggrieved party (see EDC Cases 07/2022 and 04/2023).

26.5 Consequently, the Chamber finds, **by a majority of its members**, that Article 11.6(c) is inapplicable to this case and that the Respondent is not guilty of any violation thereunder.

26.6 The EDC Panel member Mr. Alan Borda is of a **dissenting opinion** regarding the guilt under the seventh charge for the following reasons:

26.7 I consider Mr. Kramnik liable for violating Article 11.6(c) because his repeated publications and statements were objectively likely to unduly damage or discredit the reputations of identifiable players by publicly associating them with suspicions of cheating without sufficient grounds. In this instance, the improper reputational damage was not incidental but a foreseeable consequence of the manner in which those communications were disseminated.

Eleventh Charge: Violation of Article 11.7(f) (Reckless or manifestly unfounded accusations of chess cheating)

27. The EDC Chamber, **by a majority** of its members, observes and finds as follows regarding the issue of the Respondent's guilt on the eleventh charge:

27.1 Article 11.7(f) prohibits reckless or manifestly unfounded accusations of cheating. The provision is disjunctive, meaning that either element is sufficient to establish liability. Its purpose is to prevent damaging allegations of cheating from being advanced publicly without adequate grounds.

27.2 The Chamber considers that an accusation need not consist of an express statement that a player cheated. The assessment must be objective and based on the overall substance and foreseeable meaning of the communication. Repeated public statements linking identifiable players to suspicious performances and inviting cheating-related conclusions may objectively amount to accusations of cheating.



27.3 The Chamber further finds that general concerns about online cheating cannot constitute acceptable grounds for publicly accusing particular individuals. Article 11.7(f) requires objectively sufficient grounds relating to the specific players concerned.

27.4 The Respondent publicly associated identifiable players with cheating suspicions on the basis of a self-developed methodology that had not been scientifically validated, was not recognised within FIDE's anti-cheating framework, and was substantially criticised by qualified experts. The Chamber therefore concludes that the Respondent lacked an adequate evidentiary foundation for making such public allegations.

27.5 The Chamber also attaches significant weight to the existence of FIDE's formal and confidential reporting mechanisms. Rather than using those procedures, the Respondent publicly advanced allegations based upon his own unverified methodology, thereby exposing identifiable players to serious reputational harm without the procedural safeguards required in cheating investigations.

27.6 The Chamber therefore concludes that the Respondent acted recklessly within the meaning of Article 11.7(f). Personal suspicion or self-generated statistical concerns cannot amount to acceptable grounds for publicly alleging cheating. Even assuming that the Respondent's analysis justified further private inquiry, it did not justify public accusations. The methodological shortcomings identified by the evidence further reinforce this conclusion.

27.7 In light of these considerations, the EDC Chamber **finds by a majority of its members** that the Respondent's has committed a breach of Article 11.7(f) (Reckless or manifestly unfounded accusations of chess cheating).

27.8 The EDC Panel Chairperson Mr. Khaled Arfa is of a **dissenting opinion** regarding the guilt under the seventh charge for the following reasons:

27.9 Any alleged violation of this provision must be evaluated in light of the robust jurisprudence established by the FIDE Ethics and Disciplinary Commission (EDC), most notably: EDC Case 3/2015, EDC Case 5/2017, and EDC Case 2/2023.



27.10 EDC Case 3/2015 serves as the seminal precedent establishing the applicable legal principles and the requisite standard of care. This decision articulated the "objective standard," dictating that an offense is established only if a neutral, reasonable observer would conclude that the accused individual might be engaging in cheating.

27.11 Furthermore, EDC Case 2/2023 recognized an intermediate evidentiary scenario wherein, despite the presence of sufficient grounds for a reasonable suspicion of cheating, a comprehensive inquiry ultimately reveals no actual occurrence of cheating.

27.12 The present matter is fundamentally comparable to this intermediate scenario. The Respondent merely published statistical data regarding online play, highlighting instances of overperformance streaks. There is no reliable evidence of public accusations or allegations of cheating; therefore, the first prerequisite of Art. 11.7(f) is not met.

27.13 Relying upon paragraph 13.4 of EDC Case 2/2023, an examination of the chronology of events begs the question of what legally constitutes an "accusation" of cheating. Specifically, is a mere withdrawal from a tournament (or, *mutatis mutandis*, the publication of statistical data) tantamount to an accusation of cheating without any express words to that nature? When the Respondent published statistics about overperforming streaks, his actions provoked speculation of cheating on some players' part. Properly assessed, the mere publication of statistics cannot in itself constitute an accusation or allegation of cheating. Consequently, consistent with the ruling in EDC Case 2/2023, a finding of guilt cannot be sustained against the Respondent on this charge.

27.14 Moreover, even assuming "*arguendo*" that the first condition of article 11.7(f) were satisfied, the charge must still fail under the second condition, which mandates the absence of "acceptable grounds existing for a reasonable suspicion of cheating."

27.15 In this regard, it would be erroneous to insist that the Respondent is relying on an unverified system, particularly when the Fair Play (FPL) report itself was predicated upon fragmented elements inherently incapable of refuting the Respondent's analytical model (see paragraphs 16.4.2 to 16.4.5). Such an assessment would improperly exclude the supporting



evidence brought forward by the Respondent. The record includes, for example: explicit public statements on Reddit by Fabiano Caruana expressing a lack of respect for the “Titled Tuesday” tournaments due to unchecked cheating; commentary by Anish Giri referencing a 'chess mafia'; and video excerpts of Alireza Firouzja raising concerns regarding Daniel Naroditsky, stating, “This guy should be banned or something”.

27.16 Viewed in their totality, these evidentiary elements comfortably satisfy the threshold of "acceptable grounds existing for a reasonable suspicion of cheating" pursuant to Article 11.7(f).

27.17 Accordingly, the Respondent should be found not guilty of the charges alleged under Article 11.7(f).

Conclusion

28. In summary, the EDC Chamber **finds by unanimity of its members** that the Respondent **is guilty** of violations of the following articles of the EDC Code: **6.5(a)** (Bullying & Cyber Bullying) and **6.24** (Responsibility and role model behaviour).

29. The EDC Chamber **finds by a majority of its members** that the Respondent **is guilty** of violations of the following articles of the EDC Code: **6.3** (Right of all individuals to dignity and to be treated with respect), **6.4** (Safeguarding the dignity of individuals), **6.5(e)** (Psychological abuse), **Art 11.6(a)** (False or unjustified accusations), **11.4(d)** (Failure to cooperate), and **11.7(f)** (Reckless or manifestly unfounded accusations of chess cheating).

30. The EDC Chamber **finds by a majority of its members** that the Respondent **is not guilty** of violations of the following articles of the EDC Code: **6.10** (integrity, honesty and responsibility), **6.25** (responsibility and accountability) and **11.6(c)** (Causing reputational harm).

31. Upon due consideration, the EDC Chamber, **by unanimity** of its members, **finds** regarding the matter of **an appropriate sanction** that:

31.1 The EDC Chamber notes that, in its report, the FPL recommended a sanction consisting of a four-year ban coupled with a fine of 25,000 Euros.



31.2 The EDC Chamber finds that the proper construction of Article 13 of the FIDE Ethics and Disciplinary Code precludes the cumulative imposition of two principal sanctions under Article 13.1, such as a ban and a fine, for the same disciplinary breach.

31.3 Pursuant to a correct textual and systematic interpretation of the provision, the disciplinary authority must select a single principal sanction from Article 13.1 and may, where justified, combine that sanction only with one or more supplementary sanctions expressly provided under Article 13.2.

31.4 In determining the sanction, the EDC Chamber must take into consideration all relevant aspects of the case.

31.5 To the knowledge of the members of the EDC Chamber, the Respondent is a first time offender.

31.6 The offenses were nevertheless of a serious nature as committed by a member of the FIDE Family supposed to act as a 'role model'.

32. Accordingly, and considering all of the above, the EDC Chamber **decides** as follows:

32.1 Mr Vladimir Kramnik, **by unanimity** of the EDC Chamber members, **is found guilty** of violations of Articles **6.5(a)** and **6.24** of the Ethics and Disciplinary Code.

32.2 Mr Vladimir Kramnik, **by majority** of the EDC Chamber members, **is found not guilty** of violation of Article **6.10, 6.25** and **11.6(c)** of the Ethics and Disciplinary Code.

32.3 Mr Vladimir Kramnik, **by majority** of the EDC Chamber members, **is found guilty** of violations of Articles **6.3, 6.4, 6.5(e), 11.6(a), 11.4(d),** and **11.7(f)** of the Ethics and Disciplinary Code.

32.4 Mr Vladimir Kramnik is sanctioned **unanimously** to a worldwide ban of **two (2) years** from participating in any FIDE chess competition or being involved in any chess-related activity as an arbiter, organizer, coach, trainer, or representative of a chess federation, save as otherwise provided in paragraph 32.5, to take effect from the date of this decision, with last 12 months of the ban suspended for a probationary period of 3 years on



condition that Mr Vladimir Kramnik does not commit another breach of the FIDE Ethics and Disciplinary Code within the probationary period.

32.5 Additionally, the Chamber imposes a supplementary sanction upon Mr. Vladimir Kramnik in accordance with Article 13.2(e) of the Disciplinary Code, consisting of twelve (12) months of unpaid service (social work) for the benefit of the chess community.

33. The parties are referred to Chapter 7 of the EDC Procedural Rules and advised that this decision may be appealed to the EDC Appeal Chamber by giving written notice of such appeal to the EDC Chairman (ethics@fide.com) within 21 days from the date upon which this decision is received. The notice of appeal must clearly state all the grounds for the appeal. An appeal lodgment fee of 500 EUROS must at the same time be paid to the FIDE Financial Department. Failing the due exercise of this right of appeal, the EDC Chamber's decision will become final.

34. The EDC Chamber requests the FIDE Secretariat to communicate forthwith the decision to the FIDE Management Board, the FPL and the Respondent and to publish in due course the decision on the FIDE website.

DATED ON THIS 3rd of July 2026

Mr Khaled Arfa

CHAMBER CHAIRPERSON

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

FIDE ETHICS & DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION