

Statement on solidarity with Ukraine, sanctions against Russia and Belarus, and the status of athletes from these countries

The Executive Board (EB) of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) met today to consider the unanimous conclusions of the **Olympic Summit (9 December 2022)**, which comprises the leaders of all the stakeholder groups of the Olympic Movement and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). Following this Summit, consultation calls were held with the IOC Members, the global network of athletes' representatives, the International Federations (IFs) and the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) on 17 and 19 January 2023.

The discussions had three parts: first, the sanctions against the Russian and Belarusian State and Government; second, the solidarity of the Olympic Movement with the Ukrainian athletes and the Ukrainian Olympic community; third, the possible access to sports competitions for individual athletes with Russian or Belarusian passports.

1. With regard to the sanctions, participants in each of the consultation calls unanimously reaffirmed and called for a reinforcement of the sanctions already in place:
 - a. No international sports events being organised or supported by an IF or NOC in Russia or Belarus.

- b. No flag, anthem, colours or any other identifications whatsoever of these countries being displayed at any sports event or meeting, including the entire venue.
 - c. No Russian and Belarusian Government or State official should be invited to or accredited for any international sports event or meeting.
2. With regard to the solidarity with Ukrainian athletes and the Ukrainian Olympic community, there was also unanimous support to:
- a. Continue and even strengthen the full and unwavering commitment to solidarity with the Ukrainian athletes and the Ukrainian Olympic community in order to have a strong team from the NOC of Ukraine at the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026.
 - b. Encourage all IFs, NOCs and sports event organisers to undertake all possible efforts to facilitate the training, preparation and participation of Ukrainian athletes in international sports events.
3. With regard to the individual athletes with Russian or Belarusian passports, the vast majority of the participants in each of the consultation calls expressed the following:
- a. Strong commitment to the unifying mission of the Olympic Movement, requesting and encouraging it to live up to this unifying mission, particularly in these times of division, confrontation and war.
 - b. Respect the rights of all athletes to be treated without any discrimination, in accordance with the Olympic Charter. Governments must not decide which athletes can participate in which competition and which athletes cannot.

- c. No athlete should be prevented from competing just because of their passport.
- d. A pathway for athletes' participation in competition under strict conditions should therefore be further explored.
- e. Such strict conditions being:
 - i. athletes would participate in competitions as "neutral athletes" and in no way represent their state or any other organisation in their country, as is already happening in professional leagues, particularly in Europe, the United States and Canada, and in some individual professional sports.
 - ii. only athletes who fully respect the Olympic Charter would participate. This means in particular: first, only those who have not acted against the peace mission of the IOC by actively supporting the war in Ukraine could compete. Second, only athletes who fully comply with the World Anti-Doping Code and all relevant anti-doping rules and regulations would be eligible. There must be individual checks carried out for all entered athletes.
- f. In the event of any athlete failing to respect the eligibility criteria or failing to respect the strict participation conditions as set out above, the IF and/or the sports event organiser concerned should immediately remove them from the competition, suspend them from further competitions and report the incident to the IOC for its consideration for further measures and sanctions.
- g. Welcomed and appreciated the offer from the Olympic Council of Asia to give these athletes access to Asian competitions.

The vast majority in each of the consultation meetings requested the IOC to continue the exploration of the above-mentioned concept by way of bilateral consultation, with

each International Federation being the sole authority for its international competitions.

The participants' deliberations were informed by a number of documents, including but not limited to the following:

1. A letter from the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance of the United Nations Human Rights Council.
 - The letter from the Special Rapporteurs states: “We express serious concern, however, about the recommendation to ban Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials such as judges from international competitions, based solely on their nationality, as a matter of principle. This raises serious issues of non-discrimination.”
2. The UN General Assembly resolution A/77/L.28: “Sport as an enabler of sustainable development” adopted by consensus by all UN Member States on 1 December 2022, including Ukraine, Russia and Belarus.
 - The Resolution recognised that major international sports events “should be organised in the spirit of peace” and that “the unifying and conciliative nature of such events should be respected”.
 - It also supported the political neutrality of the Olympic Movement and “the independence and autonomy of sport as well as the mission of the International Olympic Committee in leading the Olympic Movement”.

- Opening the debate in the UN General Assembly, the President of the 77th Session of the UNGA said: “I encourage all Member States to preserve the unifying spirit of sports and the Olympic Movement. It is far more promising to the world if nations compete on the fields of sports than on the battle fields. The former makes us more noble and stronger, the latter leaves death and devastation behind.”

3. Reference was made to the situation regarding the participation of individual athletes from the former Yugoslavia at the Olympic Games Barcelona 1992.

- At the time – contrary to the situation today – there were United Nations sanctions in place against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, calling on all Member States to: “Take the necessary steps to prevent the participation in sporting events on their territory of persons or groups representing the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.” However, even under this UN sanction regime, the participation of “independent athletes” was allowed at the Olympic Games Barcelona 1992.