



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

Commissioner Glenn Micallef
European Commission
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Dear Commissioner Glenn Micallef,

We sincerely appreciate your active support for Ukraine and your commitment to preventing the use of international sports by Russia and Belarus for political purposes.

Despite repeated statements and calls by the Ministers of the European Union and other countries, including at the most recent meetings of European Council¹ and the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council of the Council of the European Union², urging international sports organizations not to permit Russian and Belarusian athletes, coaches, referees, and officials to participate in international sporting competitions until Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has ended, International Olympic Committee and certain international sports organisations, such as the World Aquatics and the International Gymnastics Federation, have chosen a different course.

These statements reflect the reality that Ukrainian athletes are unable to train and prepare under equal conditions. Many have been displaced, directly affected by the destruction caused by the war, or have chosen to defend their country and fellow citizens. In this context, any assertions that sport can be separated from politics ring hollow when thousands of innocent Ukrainians have lost their lives and when sport continues to be instrumentalised by the Russian and Belarusian regimes.

Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine, enabled by the Belarusian government, is abhorrent and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and fundamental international obligations. Respect for human rights, the rule of law, and peaceful relations between nations are among the core principles underpinning international sport and the Olympic movement. While fully respecting the autonomy of sports organizations, the EU Sports Ministers have consistently called on international sports bodies to uphold and defend these principles.

We would like to express serious concern that certain international sports organisations have chosen not to align their decisions with these fundamental values. By doing so, they have demonstrated a clear divergence from the values on which the European Union is founded.

In light of the recent tendencies, including IOC's decisions of the 7th of May³ and 7th of July⁴, and while continuing to respect the autonomy of sports organisations, we would ask the European

¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/06/18/european-council-conclusions-on-ukraine-and-on-european-defence-and-security/>

² [Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council \(Culture and Sport\) - Consilium](#)

³ [IOC no longer recommends restrictions on Belarusian athletes' participation](#)

⁴ <https://www.olympics.com/ioc/news/ioc-provisionally-lifts-suspension-of-russian-olympic-committee-recommendations-to-ifs-with-regard-to-russian-athletes-participation-no-longer-applicable>

Commission to consider the necessary steps to ensure that organisations whose actions are inconsistent with the values of the European Union do not benefit from EU financial support. This should include, in particular, funding under the Erasmus+ programme and other relevant EU programmes, and to ensure that they do not play a prominent role in relevant EU forums and cooperation platforms, including the EU Sport Forum.

It is regrettable that such measures should need to be considered. However, where these organisations choose not to uphold the values that the European Union seeks to promote and defend, access to EU funding and related benefits should remain suspended until they demonstrate a renewed commitment to those principles.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Zenia Stampe
Minister for Culture
Denmark

Ms. Heidy Purga
Minister of Culture
Estonia

Mr. Mika Poutala
Minister of Youth, Sport and Physical
Activity
Finland

Ms. Ilze Indriksone
Minister of Education and Science
Latvia

Mr. Jakob Forssmed
Minister for Social Affairs and Public Health
Sweden

Ms. Raminta Popovienė
Minister of Education, Science and Sport
Lithuania

Ms. Mirjam Sterk
Minister of Long-term Care, Youth and
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The Netherlands

Mr. Jakub Rutnicki
Minister of Sport and Tourism
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Mr. Constantin – Bogdan Matei
President of the National Sports Agency
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