



Charles Michel
President of the European Council

Brussels, 3rd of February, 2023

Dear President Michel,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, would like to draw your attention to the fact that the decision by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to allow athletes from aggressor states Russia and Belarus to participate in the 2024 Paris Olympic Games goes against our democratic values which are based on peace and respect for international law.

This decision by the IOC diminishes the international recognition and condemnation of war crimes and genocide in Ukraine. With this decision the IOC distances itself from our common values and effectively turns a blind eye to tens of thousands of Ukrainian casualties, many of them innocent civilians.

On the 23rd of November 2022 the European Parliament adopted a resolution declaring Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism¹. This resolution emphasizes that Russia is committing war crimes in Ukraine using “means of terrorism” and calls for the initiation of “a comprehensive international isolation of the Russian Federation, including with regard to Russia’s membership of international organisations and bodies”.

It is usual for dictators and authoritarian regimes to weaponize sport as an instrument of expanding their influence. For Russia and the Putin regime sport is primarily a political tool; this has been clearly demonstrated by the fact that Russia has a state-sponsored doping programme².

The European Council has to lead by example and clearly stand on the side of Ukraine. Which is why we call upon European leaders gathering at this February’s European Council to support the exclusion of Russian and Belarusian athletes from all international athletic competitions.

There are ample precedents in this field. South Africa was not invited to the 1964 Olympic Games due to apartheid. In 1980 over 60 countries boycotted the Olympic Games after the USA took the lead on this initiative. This was to protest the arms race and the Soviet Union’s aggression in Afghanistan.

In the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games Russian athletes took home 71 medals. Over half of those medals went to Russian athletes whose background is linked to the Central Sports Club of the Army. Through the hands of this same army countless innocent Ukrainian civilians have been murdered and raped, and

¹ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20221118IPR55707/european-parliament-declares-russia-to-be-a-state-sponsor-of-terrorism>

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/olympics/2022/02/11/russia-olympics-doping-scandal/>

civilian infrastructure has been destroyed with complete disregard for international and humanitarian law.

European countries have the moral obligation to stand for peace in Europe and they simply cannot refrain from acting when the IOC decides to allow aggressor states' athletes to participate in the 2024 Olympic Games. Furthermore, it is time to remind the IOC that their decision is contrary to their own official values: "The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world [...] The IOC encourages all UN Member States to sign the Olympic Truce and find peaceful and diplomatic solutions to conflicts around the world."³

Therefore, we, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, call on European leaders to do their utmost to ensure that the IOC excludes Russian and Belarussian athletes from the 2024 Olympic Games.

Sincerely,

Riho Terras
Urmas Paet
Bart Groothuis
Ivars Ijabs
Henna Virkkunen
David Lega
Petras Auštrevičius
Tomáš Zdechovský
Inese Vaidere
Roberts Zīle
Dace Melbārde
Janusz Lewandowski
Luděk Niedermayer
Elżbieta Kruk
Sandra Kalniete
Jaak Madison
Witold Jan Waszczykowski
Johan Nissinen
Dominik Tarczyński
Aušra Maldeikienė
Dragoș Tudorache
Beata Kempa
Karen Melchior
Vlad Gheorghe
Sven Mikser
Andrius Kubilius
Kosma Złotowski
Laura Huhtasaari
Romana Tomc
Anna Zalewska
Teuvo Hakkarainen

³ <https://olympics.com/ioc/beyond-the-games>

Milan Zver
Marek Belka
Andrus Ansip
Karin Karlsbro
Viola von Cramon-Taubadel
Andrey Kovatchev
Zdzisław Krasnodębski
Ivan Štefanec
Thijs Reuten
Michaela Šojdrová
Michael Gahler
Juozas Olekas
Bergur Løkke Rasmussen
Colm Markey
Rasa Juknevičienė
Charlie Weimers
Jacek Saryusz-Wolski
Janina Ochojska
Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov
Anna Fotyga
Zbigniew Kuźmiuk
Andrzej Halicki
Liudas Mažylis
Łukasz Kohut
Seán Kelly
Michal Šimečka
Michal Wiezik
Martin Hojsík
Krzysztof Hetman
Robert Biedroń
Siegfried Mureşan
Tomasz Frankowski
Eva Maydell
Vladimír Bilčík
Miriam Lexmann
Bronis Ropé
Joachim Stanisław Brudziński
Ryszard Antoni Legutko
Yannik Jadot
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė
Petri Sarvamaa
Peter Pollák
Ryszard Czarnecki
Asim Ademov
Patryk Jaki
Alexandr Vondra
Veronika Vrecionová
Christophe Hansen

Jadwiga Wiśniewska
Jerzy Buzek
Adam Bielan
Tomasz Piotr Poręba