



# LATVIJAS ALPĪNISTU SAVIENĪBA

LATVIAN ALPINIST ASSOCIATION

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IFSC president Marco Scolaris  
IFSC executive board  
IFSC members

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We all here believe in fair sport and it's one of the values of IFSC and Olympic movement. From one side we see athletes that can do proper training at the convenience of their home cities, they can compete at national championships and a lot of other events and the only thing they miss is international events. On the other side, we see athletes that have ruined training bases, whose participation in national championship in 2022 was more than a miracle, who have to train under threat of Russian bombing, that are forced to leave their country to go on with their dreams and some of them are left at mercy of other national federations. The possibility to compete at the international level is a small prize for them that I believe they would be ready to give away to restore peace in their home cities. Can we compare situation of both national teams, and could competition among them be considered as fair?

IFSC before Covid has been "a little bit dependent" on Russia for it organizing several big climbing events in a row. I feel that some people at IFSC think that we own Russia for this. There is a saying that a drop of tar can spoil a barrel with honey. There has been a lot of tar during the last year. So IFSC owns nothing and I don't believe we will see any international climbing events in Russia in near future.

Currently, we have no rules in place to allow Russian athletes to participate in competitions at the international level under the neutral or Olympic flag. The only way we can do it is by restoring Russian as a full member of IFSC. Meanwhile RCF main sponsor is Russian Railway that is under EU sanctions for supporting war and is the company that transports most of military machinery from Russia to Ukraine. We can say that indirectly Russian climbing federation and Russian athletes are benefiting from ongoing war. Would this neutral status protect everybody from Russian propaganda? Will neutral status stop Russian government from using sport for its purposes? We see how difficult this is in other sports. Everybody knows that behind every neutral athlete is athlete from Russia or Belarus.

IOC wrote in their announcement: "only those who have not acted against the peace mission of the IOC by actively supporting the war in Ukraine could compete"

Who will decide of weather Russian athlete is for or against war? Most Russian athletes represent army sports clubs, the same army that attacks Ukraine. How they can express their position against war if they

live in Russia? Can they be part of Russian climbing team if they express opinions against war? That is criminal offence in Russia. Or would it mean that if Russian athlete is in Olympics he is against war and thus he is criminal back home and the only reason he will not be punished is because sport is such a big part of Russian politics? In fact those who were against war have already left Russian climbing team.

And most important how Will Ukraine athletes feel about that? Or we don't care?

I also believe that we are taking a huge reputation risk as well. Imagine the title even in a single newspaper saying "IFSC supports Russia" during times when the almost whole world is doing the opposite. Are you sure we will have our sponsors?

In an ideal world decision for this issue should be given to Ukrainian federation for them to decide.

Mr. President, Executive Board of IFSC - While thinking about return of Russian athletes and taking decisions or reporting to IOC ***please think with once who suffer in mind*** more than once who live on with their lives as if nothing is happening. By looking for the ways to bring back athletes of terrorist country we may split existing team spirit that may end at a lot more countries not participating in Olympics.

At the end I will conclude with abstracts of announcement from Latvian Olympic committee that we as Latvian alpinist association give full support: "While there is a war in Ukraine under no circumstances Russian and Belarus athletes must be part of Olympic games. NOC Latvia believes that any actions aimed at returning the Russian and Belarusian athletes and sports representatives to international sports arena – in the framework of competitions or otherwise, under their national flags or any other symbols – is anything but encouragement for further escalation of warfare, and normalization of war crimes and brutal violence. The Latvian Olympic Committee (NOC Latvia) believes that Latvian athletes and sports representatives should not participate in the same competitions as athletes and representatives of Russia and Belarus."\*

\*<https://ej.uz/announcement>

President of Latvian Alpinist association

Normunds Reinbergs