

**17 September 2018**

## **iNADO Dismayed at WADA Compromise with Russia**

The WADA Executive Committee (ExCo), at its meeting this Thursday, will consider a last minute and hastily prepared recommendation that the Russian Anti-Doping Organisation (RUSADA) be deemed compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code. This despite WADA officials, as recently as last week, assuring European Government representatives that the matter would not be for decision at the upcoming meeting.

This matter has taken an enormous toll on the foundations of sport for almost 3 years. Given the many months of prior silence it is hard not to be cynical that a proposal, based on weakened terms to accommodate Russia, comes before ExCo at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. Delegates, as representative of specific constituencies and regions, will not have opportunity to consult with those they represent nor adequately prepare for the upcoming discussion and perhaps the most crucial decision WADA has ever faced.

The sporting community is eager to see Russia return as an equal participant but not at any cost. When the satisfactory conclusion of the current Russian sanction occurs, it is something that should be able to withstand wide scrutiny and be accepted broadly by that sporting community. The present situation does anything but.

Both the process and the recommendation itself have been roundly criticised by numerous athlete and anti-doping organisations. Indeed, the fact that these pivotal groups in anti-doping will have no say in a decision which has enormous repercussions for them demonstrates fundamental flaws in the construct of WADA governance.

WADA must adhere to the principles of good governance. Such principles would not allow, for example, WADA to assure a party (Russia) that a favourable outcome will be the result before the decision-making body (ExCo) have discussed the alterations. They would ensure such a crucial decision would have ample time for adequate consultation and consideration. They would not resort to semantics to bring about what was clearly not the originally intended position. The Code provides no opportunity for those bound (notably athletes) to negotiate changes in the wording of the Code to suit their purpose. The Code stands and must be adhered to and so should the “Road Map” for Compliance (as WADA had assured the world it would be).

iNADO looks forward to the full return of RUSADA to compliance at the earliest legitimate moment. However, based on the letters exchanged by Russia and WADA, any reasonable person would conclude that Russia has not yet fulfilled its obligations to the global sporting community. WADA must make its decisions based on consistent application of principles and not simply out of expedience pandering to the will of a powerful nation.

The athletes of the world came together at the 1<sup>st</sup> WADA Global Athlete Forum in Calgary, Canada in June of this year and strongly called for the Roadmap to be enforced. iNADO has consistently supported WADA’s enforcement of the Roadmap and this remains as critical now as it was at the outset. This matter cannot be resolved using an approach of ‘who blinks first’.

It is time for WADA to step back in order for it and its constituents and stakeholders in global sport to carefully consider these developments and determine if a dilution of the Road Map is indeed the proper path. It is time for a well-considered position that reinforces WADA's role as an unbending supporter of the rights of clean athletes.

**iNADO is the international member association of NADOs. NADOs have the sole and unequivocal mandate to protect clean athletes, without conflicting responsibilities such as promoting sport. iNADO's 67 Members represent all Olympic Regions and conduct the majority of anti-doping work world-wide each year.**