

Statement by the Latvian Olympic Committee

Riga, February 1st, 2023

Condemning the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, its independence and territorial integrity, as well as terrorism and brutal violence turned against the people in Ukraine, the Latvian Olympic Committee (NOC Latvia) believes that Latvian athletes and sports representatives should not participate in the same competitions and as athletes and representatives of Russia and Belarus.

The position of NOC Latvia has been, is and will be unwavering and principal – for as long as there is an ongoing war in Ukraine, participation of the Russian and Belarusian athletes in the Olympic Games under any flag is unacceptable.

Thus, the Olympic movement in Latvia demonstrates a nationally united position that clearly and unambiguously defines the stance towards Russia's military aggression in Ukraine and the brutal events in the neighbourhood.

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. It is our duty to draw the attention of our members and our foreign colleagues to these aspects based on our experience obtained during the years of totalitarian Soviet occupation and seem self-evident for us, but unbelievable for representatives of western democracies.

Believing that the current priority is solidarity with the Ukrainian nation and Ukrainian sports, it is necessary to make decisive steps to restrict the “soft power” of Russia and Belarus in both Latvia's and international sports arenas, therefore NOC Latvia calls on the Olympic sports federations, in cooperation with the Ukrainian, Baltic, Nordic, Polish, French, British, Canadian and any other like-minded organizations, to address in writing the relevant International Federations in order to prevent participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes in any kind of Olympic qualification competitions and the Olympic Games.

NOC Latvia recommends that every Olympic sports federation publicly expresses the organization's position on the inadmissibility of participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes, informing their athletes and coaches thereof.

NOC Latvia deems unacceptable for Latvian teams and individual athletes to participate in such international sports competitions that have not expelled Russian and Belarusian athletes from the participation, including the Olympic qualifications competitions.

Zorzs Tikmers
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Zorzs Tikmers", written over a horizontal line.