

Condemning International Olympic Committee on Allowing Russian and Belarusian Athletes To Compete as Neutrals

Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Paris, France (22/04/2023)

Recognizing that:

- Russia started its war of aggression against Ukraine in 2014 by illegally occupying its territories. In February 2022, Russia escalated this war into a full-scale invasion, destroying Ukrainian cities, attacking its people and culture, targeting civilians and killing innocent people, including children.
- After the full-scale invasion, multiple international organisations, including sports organisations, sanctioned Russia. For example, International Paralympic Committee (IPC) banned Russian athletes from participating in the Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022 and FIFA and UEFA suspended all Russian international and club teams from their competitions.¹
- The European Parliament adopted a joint motion for resolution that condemns the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) move to explore ways for Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete at next year's Olympic Games in Paris. IOC decision was labelled as "an embarrassment to the international world of sport."²
- The European People's Party (EPP) released a statement on April 3rd condemning the IOC's recommendations to allow Russian and Belarussian athletes to compete in international sports competitions as neutral athletes if they comply with a set of conditions including not being affiliated to the army or actively supportive of the war against Ukraine.³

Acknowledging that:

- On 28 March, International Olympic Committee (IOC) recommended allowing Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete as neutrals in the upcoming Olympic Games despite the war of aggression that Russia started and that Belarus is closely supporting.⁴
- On the very next day, the Ukrainian Ministry of Youth and Sports condemned the IOC's decision, stating that "We have consistently advocated and will continue to insist that under the conditions of the unprecedented unprovoked military aggression of the Russian Federation with the support of the Republic of Belarus against Ukraine, which contradicts the principles of the Olympic Charter, representatives of aggressor states should not be present at international sports arenas."⁵

¹ <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/01/sport/sports-russia-banned-from-football-rugby-spt-intl/index.html>

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2023-0123_EN.html

³ <https://www.eppgroup.eu/newsroom/opinions/ban-russian-and-belarusian-athletes-from-the-2024-olympics>

⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/iocs-bach-says-russian-participation-sports-works-despite-war-2023-03-28/>

⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/ukraine-condemns-ioc-recommendations-russian-belarusian-athletes-2023-03-29/>

- IOC's three values are excellence, friendship and respect. Following these values and allowing athletes from countries that have started unprovoked, unjustified and illegal wars of aggression cannot happen at the same time. ⁶
- There are close ties between the Russian government and Russian athletes and sports, through eg. the CSKA (Central Sports club of the Army).

YEPP calls on:

- EPP to mobilize the international community and jointly exert pressure on the IOC to reverse the decision on **(CHANGE, ONNED)** recommending allowing Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete as neutrals in the upcoming Olympic Games.
- EPP to condemn any international organisations that treat Russian and Belarusian athletes as neutrals.
- The International Olympic Committee to revoke its recommendation on allowing Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete as neutrals in the upcoming Olympic Games.
- The International Olympic Committee to exclude Russian and Belarusian officials from top positions in international sports federations reserving them the same treatment as the athletes.

⁶ <https://olympics.com/ioc/principles>