

## **RUSSIA TASKFORCE REPORT TO THE 53<sup>rd</sup> WORLD ATHLETICS CONGRESS, 2021**

This is now the third Congress to which I have reported, as independent chair of the Russia Taskforce appointed by Council in 2015 to oversee RusAF's efforts to be reinstated as a full member of World Athletics.

RusAF was originally suspended from membership in November 2015, after a WADA Commission concluded that there was a deeply-rooted culture of doping in Russian athletics. Council determined that, in order to be reinstated to membership, RusAF must satisfy various requirements designed to rehabilitate RusAF and to ensure that:

1. RusAF establishes a culture of zero tolerance towards doping in Russian athletics.
2. RusAF, RUSADA, and the public authorities in Russia work together to create an effective anti-doping infrastructure that allows them and World Athletics (now the AIU) to work effectively on anti-doping activities in Russia and in respect of Russian athletes.
3. World Athletics and its members can accordingly be satisfied that the reintegration of Russian athletes into international competitions will not jeopardise the integrity of those competitions.

In 2016, Council determined that even while RusAF remains suspended, Russian athletes who can show they are not tainted by the culture of doping may apply to compete in international competitions (including the Olympics and the World Championships) as 'Authorised Neutral Athletes'.

The 2017 Congress and the 2019 Congress endorsed and ratified Council's decisions, and put the onus on RusAF to satisfy Council that the conditions set for its reinstatement have been satisfied.

This strong stance has won World Athletics and its member federations the respect of many observers, who believe this is exactly what is needed to protect public confidence in the integrity of the sport – an example that other sports should follow.

At the 2019 Congress, in Doha, I emphasised that changes to policies and procedures at RusAF will only work if RusAF's stakeholders are truly committed to a new and genuine culture of zero tolerance for doping. I noted that the AIU had just announced that it was investigating an apparent cover-up by the then-RusAF President and his officials of a whereabouts violation by high jumper Danil Lysenko. I said that allegation suggested that the change in culture required within RusAF may not have happened yet.

As you will recall, the RusAF President (Dmitri Shlyakhtin) and his alleged co-conspirators subsequently resigned their posts, and an independent disciplinary tribunal upheld the various charges against them and imposed lengthy bans from the sport. RusAF admitted the charges against it (failing to report anti-doping rule violations and interfering with the AIU's investigation of those ADRVs), and subsequently paid World Athletics a \$5 million fine (with another \$5 million suspended) plus \$1.3 million in costs. As a result, Council decided not to propose expulsion of RusAF, provided that RusAF developed a new reinstatement plan, setting out a series of detailed requirements to embed the required change in culture, together with milestones and Key Performance Indicators that would allow the Russia Taskforce to ensure RusAF was making steady progress towards meeting those requirements.

In November 2020, Peter Ivanov was elected as RusAF's new president. He had to step down in early 2021 when he was appointed deputy head of the federal government's Competition Commission (because the CAS decision in the WADA/RUSADA case stops Russian government officials serving as sport officials for two years), but Irina Privalova stepped in as acting president until Mr Ivanov's planned return in November 2022, and she has proved to be an able deputy.

Under the guidance first of Mr Ivanov and then of Ms Privalova, and with the input of three international experts appointed by World Athletics, RusAF developed a detailed reinstatement plan that was accepted by Council on the recommendation of the Taskforce in March 2021.

Importantly the three international experts have since remained in post, and they have been able to provide detailed reports and advice to the Taskforce. One of those experts is in Moscow all of the time, another is there for much of the time, and between them they are able to observe directly what is happening at RusAF, and so are able to comment on whether the changes that are being made are just superficial, or whether they signal a real change in culture.

The Taskforce has been in regular communication with Ms Privalova and her colleagues at RusAF, and we have also received weekly reports from the international experts. Each month RusAF has provided a formal written report on the progress made against the Reinstatement Plan, and the international experts have provided their feedback on each of those reports. The Taskforce has also convened periodic calls with the international experts to discuss those reports and to address any issues as they arise.

Based on these reports and this feedback, I can report that:

- RusAF has made steady progress towards meeting the conditions set for its reinstatement to membership of World Athletics. The key milestones to date have been met, as well as the various key performance indicators set out in the Reinstatement Plan.
- Furthermore, based on input from the international experts, the Taskforce does feel that these changes are reflective of a new culture within RusAF, one that is generally looking to reject the doping practices of the past and to commit to competing clean moving forward, as a trusted member of the international community, and a trusted ally to the AIU in its efforts to protect the integrity of the sport.
- There are still people in Russian athletics who have not embraced this new culture, and there is still much work for RusAF to do to ensure that they do not exercise influence, and instead it is the new generation of athletes and coaches that push Russian athletics forward. But the new RusAF leadership has shown what seems to be a genuine commitment to lead this change and ensure it becomes deep-rooted in Russian athletics.
- The status of RUSADA, the Russian national anti-doping organisation, remains an issue of concern. In December 2020, the CAS declared RUSADA non-compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code and imposed a series of consequences and reinstatement conditions that have to be met in order for RUSADA to be reinstated in December 2022. It is not clear, however, whether

those reinstatement conditions are being met or whether RUSADA is able to perform its role as the independent Russian NADO effectively. In the meantime, to try to help fill the gap, RusAF has agreed to the AIU conducting extra testing of RusAF's athletes, at RusAF's cost.

- Importantly, the new RusAF leadership has recognised that a true change in culture will take years to achieve, and it has therefore engaged very positively with the Taskforce and the experts to develop a series of measures to apply after RusAF has been reinstated, to ensure that there is no back-sliding once reinstatement has been achieved. The Taskforce is encouraged by RusAF's positive approach on this issue, as it believes that such post-reinstatement measures will be really important to give Council and the member federations of World Athletics comfort that progress towards a genuine change in culture will continue in Russia even after reinstatement has been achieved.
- It is important also to note that to date RusAF has also reimbursed World Athletics for all of the costs of the reinstatement process, so that World Athletics and its member federations are not out of pocket as a result of RusAF's actions.

Based on all of these factors, I strongly encourage Congress to adopt the resolution proposed by Council, i.e., to resolve, in exercise of its powers under Article 13.7 of the World Athletics Constitution, that the suspension of RusAF's membership of World Athletics will continue until Council decides that all of the conditions set by Council from time to time for the revocation of RusAF's suspension and the consequent reinstatement of RusAF's membership have been met. Those conditions will include agreement on the post-reinstatement measures that I have referred to above.

Rune Andersen, Taskforce Chair  
2 November 2021