

Ref.# 410 dated May 24, 2023

Mr. Jose Antonio PEREZ PRIEGO
IWWF President

Mr. Louis POLOME
IWWF Secretary General

IWWF Executive Board Members

Re.: Position of Russian Water Ski Federation on IWWF Statement of May 1, 2023

Dear Mr. President,
Dear Mr. Secretary General,
Dear Members of the Executive Board,

The Russian Water Ski Federation (RUWF) appreciates the opportunity to be able to contact the International Waterski and Wakeboard Federation (IWWF) executives and to express its feedback on IWWF statements and decisions.

RUWF and Russian athletes have explored the position of IWWF published on the official website on May 1, 2023, namely “...continue to exclude Russian and Belarusian athletes from all IWWF events.” We cannot avoid feeling disconcerted and disappointed by this statement.

The Russian Water Ski Federation herewith pronounces its position on the IWWF decision to exclude the Russian athletes from IWWF events:

RUWF alongside with IWWF and all other national federations strives to become a part of the Olympic family. To that end, we sincerely follow the Olympic principles and fully support the cornerstone axioms of Olympism, such as “... *enjoyment of the right and freedom set forth in this Olympic Charter (that) shall be secured without discrimination of any kind, such as race, color, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status*”. We understand that IWWF, being the sole international authority governing all towed water sports, and recognized by the International Olympic Committee, must act in full accordance with the Olympic Charter. **The ban imposed by the IWWF against the Russian athletes directly contradicts the cornerstone Olympic principles.**

The IWWF decision to exclude Russian athletes from IWWF events remains dubious. The fact that only one side has been penalized appears completely inappropriate. Instead of promoting cooperation between athletes and federations, and principles of political neutrality and impartiality, IWWF has made a biased political statement and has taken a clearly prejudiced position. We believe that this course of action is not fit for any sports organization. It is our understanding that this is the first time a national federation has been banned from IWWF events based on political reasons since the foundation of IWWF

in 1946. Previously IWWF has allowed the national federations of other countries to freely participate in any events despite international controversy. We are appalled by the fact that IWWF didn't even try to conduct any kind of discussion with all the involved parties to find an acceptable solution. Therefore, we consider **the decision against the Russian athletes discriminating and disproportionate**. Moreover, discrimination of individuals based on their nationality directly contravenes the principles set in UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It should be emphasized that principles of political neutrality, impartiality, and supremacy of human rights take major part in the fundamental documents of IWWF. As stated in Clause A of IWWF Code of Ethics, "*Any form of discrimination between countries or participants on the basis of race, gender, ethnic origin, religion, philosophical or political opinion, marital status, sexual orientation or any grounds other than merit and performance is incompatible with the Olympic Charter and will not be tolerated*". **The ban imposed on the Russian athletes defies the principle of political neutrality of IWWF.** This principle was approved by numerous CAS decisions stating that sports organizations must be able freely to organize their sports without any political bias.

Given the abovementioned circumstances, RUWF would like to ask IWWF to:

1. Consider the position of RUWF and revoke the ban against the Russian athletes as soon as practically possible.
2. Communicate the position of RUWF to other national federations.
3. Send the official protocol of the IWWF Executive Board decision dated May 1, 2023, to the official email address of RUWF.

We would like to declare once more that RUWF, like any other national federation, consists of athletes of different ethnic background, with different political stands and religious beliefs. Nevertheless, we are united, and the one thing that unites us is our true love for waterskiing and wakeboarding. We strongly believe that every individual deserves the right to compete in the sport they devoted their lives to, and we believe that IWWF should be a firm supporter of this endeavor.

We remain at your full disposal should you require any additional information or clarification of the RUWF position.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Chernov', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Alexey CHERNOV
RUWF President