



INTERNATIONAL TABLE TENNIS FEDERATION
Headquarters, Operations and Olympic/Paralympic Games

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By e-mail only

Lausanne, Thursday, 30th March 2023

TO: ITTF Member Associations
ITTF Executive Board
ITTF Council
ITTF Honorary Presidents
ITTF Personal Honorary Members
ITTF Committee Chairs
ITTF Commissioners
ITTF Senior Staff

CC: International Olympic Committee

Re: Participation of athletes, support personnel, and technical officials from Belarus and Russia in ITTF competitions

Dear Presidents, dear Secretaries General, dear ITTF Family members,

The International Olympic Committee released a statement this week regarding the potential status of athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport in international competitions. The ITTF Executive Board has both taken note and endorsed this statement.

The ITTF wants to reiterate its call for peace and unequivocally condemns the war in Ukraine. We stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and will continue to unequivocally support the Ukrainian table tennis community, making the utmost effort to ensure all Ukrainian athletes can participate in table tennis, para table tennis and youth events, worldwide.

A pillar of the sport movement remains the autonomy that sports organisations must have. They should have sole responsibility for deciding which athletes can participate in international competitions based on their sporting merits and not on political grounds or because of their passports.

Having celebrated the 50th anniversary of Ping Pong Diplomacy recently, the table tennis family is acutely aware of the potential dialogues sport can create. It can build bridges, leading to better understanding among peoples, and open the door for peacebuilding in ways that exclusion and division cannot.

Table Tennis has a long history of bringing countries together even when political ties have been tenuous. In addition to the historic visit of American table tennis athletes to China in the early 1970s, the sport has helped bring dialogue to the Korean Peninsula after the 2018 Winter Olympics with the creation of a united Korean team that competed at the World Championships.



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Noting this, the ITTF Executive Board supports the admission of athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport to international table tennis competitions organised by the ITTF and World Table Tennis under strict conditions of neutrality.

The IOC Executive Board issued the following Recommended Conditions of Participation:

1. Athletes with a Russian or a Belarusian passport must compete only as Individual Neutral Athletes.
2. Teams of athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport cannot be considered.
3. Athletes who actively support the war cannot compete. Support personnel who actively support the war cannot be entered.
4. Athletes who are contracted to the Russian or Belarusian military or national security agencies cannot compete. Support personnel who are contracted to the Russian or Belarusian military or national security agencies cannot be entered.
5. Any such Individual Neutral Athlete, like all the other participating athletes, must meet all anti-doping requirements applicable to them and particularly those set out in the anti-doping rules of the IFs.
6. The sanctions against those responsible for the war, the Russian and Belarusian states and governments, must remain in place:
 - a. No international sports events organised or supported by an IF or NOC in Russia or Belarus.
 - b. No flag, anthem, colours or any other identifications whatsoever of these countries displayed at any sports event or meeting, including the entire venue.
 - c. No Russian and Belarusian government or state official can be invited to or accredited for any international sports event or meeting.

For a more detailed information please visit the [Recommended Conditions of Participation for Athletes and Athlete Support Personnel with a Russian or Belarusian Passport in International Sports Competitions Organised by the International Federations and International Sports Event Organisers](#).

The ITTF Task Force created in the wake of the outbreak of the war in Ukraine will review these recommendations and create official guidelines that spell out explicit conditions of participation for athletes and support personnel with a Russian or Belarusian passport:

Given the constraints of the current schedule, if all conditions are met, the earliest athletes with Russian and Belarusian passports could participate in an event is:

- Para table tennis: ITTF Fa20 Montenegro Para Championships 2023 (MNE, 4-7 May)
- WTT Youth Series: WTT Youth Contender Platja D'Aro (ESP, 10-16 May)
- WTT Series: WTT Contender Lagos (NGR, 12-18 June)



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As qualification for the ITTF World Table Tennis Championships Finals Durban 2023 has passed, athletes with Russian and Belarusian passports will be unable to participate.

While a pathway for athletes and support officials is being considered, the ITTF Executive Board will continue to keep sanctions against the Russian and Belarusian governments in place as decided on 1 March 2022. These sanctions include:

- No Russian or Belarusian government or state officials will be allowed in events organised by the ITTF and World Table Tennis
- No Russian or Belarusian national symbols, colours, flags, or anthems will be displayed at events organised by the ITTF and World Table Tennis

We sincerely appreciate your valuable attention to this critical matter. If you have any additional questions, concerns, or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the ITTF.

We remain at your disposal to provide any assistance you may need.

Yours sincerely,


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