



7 December 2023

The position of the CFR on the ban of Russian athletes from the IFSC events

Background

2 March 2022: The IFSC (International Federation of Sport Climbing) made a decision to suspend all Russian athletes and team officials from IFSC competitions until further notice, to suspend all IFSC competitions scheduled to be held in Russia and to suspend Russian IFSC officials from IFSC competitions:

<https://www.ifsc-climbing.org/index.php/news/679-ifsc-official-statement-5>

4 March 2022: The IFSC suspended all representatives of the CFR that were part of IFSC's commissions and working groups and revoked the invitation to the CFR to attend the XVIII IFSC General Assembly in Salt Lake City, USA on 18-19 March 2022:

<https://www.ifsc-climbing.org/index.php/news/680-ifsc-extends-suspension-to-russian-and-belarusian-members-of-ifsc-commissions-and-working-groups>

18-19 March 2022: XVIII IFSC General Assembly suspended the membership of the CFR:

https://www.ifsc-climbing.org/images/Website/2022_IFSC_GA_Major_Decisions.pdf

13 April 2022: The CFR sent to the IFSC an official protest against the suspension of CFR's membership based on the facts of the IFSC's violation of their own charter.

14 June 2022: The IFSC replied that they had no legal right to consider the protest and suggested that the CFR should go to CAS.

Next, as a result of negotiations with the IFSC, the CFR developed a draft roadmap for reinstatement of the Russian athletes' participation in IFSC events and presented it to the IFSC in November 2022. A joint decision was made to work out further actions on the roadmap.

Among other things, the IFSC suggested that the CFR should get letters from the national climbing federations in support of the Russian athletes. The CFR provided the IFSC with letters of support from 8 national federations, but it did not entail any actions on the part of the IFSC.



16 February 2023: The IFSC held a meeting with the national climbing federations (the CFR was not allowed to participate), in which representatives of the IOC also took part. Afterwards the CFR received a report about this meeting. During the meeting the IOC emphasized that athletes should not be put in a situation when their participation or non-participation in competitions is politically influenced, and that there are many armed conflicts in the world today, therefore none of them can be treated as unique.

12 June 2023: The IFSC announced that its Executive Board had approved to start a process for the reinstatement of athletes holding Russian or Belarusian passports as neutral athletes starting from 2024:

<https://www.ifsc-climbing.org/index.php/news/968-executive-board-approves-to-start-a-process-for-the-reinstatement-of-athletes-with-russian-and-belarusian-passports-as-neutral-athletes-starting-from-2024>

13 September 2023: The IFSC approved and published a declaration and a policy for the participation of Russian athletes in international competitions:

<https://www.ifsc-climbing.org/index.php/news/2-uncategorised/49-athletes>

The wording of these documents contradicts the legislation of the Russian Federation and therefore they cannot be signed by Russian athletes.

The CFR is negotiating with the IFSC to amend the text of the declaration and the policy so that the Russian athletes can sign them without violating the state legislation. As of 7 December 2023, this goal has not been achieved.

However, the CFR has reached an agreement with the IFSC on the possibility of a flexible schedule for athletes to apply for IFSC competitions. This positive step makes it possible to continue negotiations, since previously the IFSC required that all athletes be registered at once for the entire 2024 season, and in the absence of such an application by 9 October 2023, all Russian athletes would have been deprived of any opportunity to participate.

As the beginning of the next stage of action, the CFR considers it necessary to express its position:

1. The decisions of the IFSC regarding the participation of Russian athletes in international competitions, including its declaration and policy on the participation of Russian athletes in international competitions in 2024 dated 13 September 2023, contradict the Olympic Charter, Russian legislation and constitute discrimination on the basis of nationality.
2. The actions of the CFR in the negotiations with the IFSC, aimed to combat this discrimination and reinstate the participation of Russian athletes in international competitions, currently continue to face refusal.
3. Russian athletes cannot sign the IFSC declaration and policy as is, as this would be a violation of Russian law for which they would be held accountable by the state.
4. The CFR continues and will continue to use all legal opportunities to resume the participation of Russian athletes in international competitions, including (but not limited to):
 - negotiations with the IFSC;
 - communication with national climbing federations and other members of the international sports community to form an information field that adequately reflects reality, as well as for their possible assistance to the CFR;
 - joint work with the Russian Ministry of Sports, the Russian Olympic Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in these areas.

The CFR is convinced that the current practice of athletes' discrimination, based on nationality, poses a significant threat to the world sports system.

Athletes should not be deprived of the opportunity to do their life's work, especially for political reasons, which are beyond their control.

The CFR does and will always do everything possible to defend the rights of the Russian athletes in the international arena and protect them from any violations and injustice.

Dmitrii Bychkov
CFR President

