



PARLIAMENT  
OF ESTONIA

**Mr Emmanuel Macron**  
President of France

19 December 2023

**Mr Luc Lamirault**  
President of the France-Estonia friendship group in the National Assembly

Dear President Macron  
Dear Deputy Lamirault

On behalf of the Estonia-France parliamentary friendship group, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that the decision by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to allow athletes from aggressor states Russia and Belarus to participate in the 2024 Paris Olympic Games as „neutral“ athletes goes against our values.

IOC decision to let “neutral” individuals to take part was described as “respecting human rights.” We think that murder, destruction, and terror does not go together with Olympic principles. Since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the office of the Ukrainian Prosecutor General has recorded more than 110,000 cases of war crimes. That is why we think that until the war is brought to an end, Russian and Belarussian athletes should not be allowed to take part in international competition, including the Olympic Games, the world’s foremost sports competition.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2022 the Estonian Parliament declared Russia a terrorist regime and the Russian Federation a country that supports terrorism, whose actions must be confronted together.

It is usual for dictators and authoritarian regimes to weaponize sport as an instrument of expanding their influence. For Russia and the Putin regime sport is primarily a political tool; this has been clearly demonstrated by the fact that Russia has a state-sponsored doping programme. We cannot ignore the fact that those athletes are supported by their governments, as well as businesses backing up current regimes in Russia and Belarus. Moreover, we have seen over recent years that Russia has been exploiting the presence of “neutral“ athletes at international competitions in its state propaganda, which includes glorifying the aggressor’s military and promoting military recruitment. A ban on Russian athletes currently serving in the military does not adequately prevent that.

Estonian Parliament sees that we have the moral obligation to stand for peace in Europe and cannot simply refrain from acting when the IOC decides to allow aggressor states’ athletes to participate in the 2024 Olympic Games. Furthermore, it is time to remind the IOC that their decision is contrary to their own official values: “The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world [...] The IOC encourages all UN Member States to sign the Olympic Truce and find peaceful and diplomatic solutions to conflicts around the world.”<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, we, the undersigned Members of the Estonian Parliament, call on Republic of France as host country to not let athletes with Russian and Belarussian passport to enter France in 2024 for the Olympic Games. This has to be done for the sake of the Ukrainian sporting community, athletes around the world, and future generations who deserve to live in a world where aggression as a political tool has been completely discredited and the values we hold dear as part of the Olympic movement have been maintained.

Yours sincerely



**Andres Sutt**

President of the Estonia-France Parliamentary Friendship Group

Members of the Estonia-France Parliamentary Friendship Group

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