

WADA Athlete Council

7 October 2024

Meeting Outcomes

Athlete Council Members		Athlete Council Members	
Ryan Pini, Chair		Inaki Gomez	
Gaby Ahrens, Vice-Chair		Jennifer Harss	
Clare Egan (first half)		Humphrey Kayange	
Adriana Escobar		Yuhan Tan	
Kristen Kit		Emma Terho	
Ella Sabljak		Maja Wloszczowska	
Hong Zhang			
Apologies			
Ivan Cosic		Dora Hegyi	
Patrick O-Leary		Olumide Oyedeji	
Alessia Zecchini			
Observers			
Jitske Visser (second half)			
WADA Staff			
Witold Banka, President		Olivier Niggli, Director General	
Karine Henrie, Head of Athlete Engagement		Stacy Spletzer-Jegen, Senior Manager, Athlete Engagement	
Samantha Dubois, Governance Manager			

WADA's [Athlete Council](#) (AC) held a virtual meeting on 7 October 2024. The key outcomes of the discussions are outlined below.

Welcome:

- WADA AC Chair, Ryan Pini welcomed members to this virtual call and thanked both President Banka and Director General Niggli for their time and ongoing support for athlete matters. He also reflected on the Paris Games as a highlight of the year and thanked all members who were involved both with the Athlete Engagement Teams and Independent Observer missions. He also congratulated Kristen for winning silver at the Olympics, Jitske and Ella for winning gold and bronze respectively at the Paralympic Games.
- The Chair mentioned that the draft agenda was provided to all members two weeks prior to the meeting date as per the Terms of Reference, to ask for additions or changes. No comments were received.
- The Chair informed members that Jitske Visser finished her term on the IPC Athlete Council at the conclusion of the Paralympic Games in Paris. For this reason, her role on the WADA AC has also come to an end. She was invited to observe this WADA AC meeting in the transition period. The IPC AC is in the process of finalizing its next appointment to the WADA AC.

President and Director General Update:

- The President and Director General provided an update to the AC on current affairs, namely addressing incorrect claims reported in the recent NY Times articles and speaking to the content of the Independent Prosecutor report ('Cottier report') such as the issue of mass contamination and how WADA intends to address improvements moving forward.
- The President also thanked those on the AC that supported WADA's Athlete Engagement and Independent Observer Programs in Paris during the Olympic and Paralympics Games.
- The Chair then invited questions for the President and Director General.

Executive Committee Update, Ryan Pini:

- The Chair provided a debrief on the Executive Committee (ExCo) [meeting](#) (held on 12 September 2024) which included further discussing with members the [final report](#) that was delivered by Independent Prosecutor Mr. Eric Cottier regarding his review of WADA's handling of the China Anti-Doping Agency's (CHINADA's) case involving 23 swimmers from China in 2021. The Chair updated the group around the general discussion and questions asked during the ExCo. The Chair informed the AC that a Working Group was established to turn the findings outlined in the Cottier report (as well as those of World Aquatics) into recommendations to be reviewed by the ExCo at its December 2024 meeting. The Chair added that the Working Group is comprised of ExCo members and that he is part of the group (with AC member Gaby Ahrens, as an observer). At the time of the AC meeting, the Working Group had held its first meeting to review and finalize the Terms of Reference. Work will continue on the recommendations put forward in order to create a road map for implementation. The Chair noted that he would share relevant documentation and further information with the AC as the work of the Working Group advances.
- The Chair informed that the ExCo approved the continuation of the Ombuds Program and thanked Gaby Ahrens for her work on the Ombuds Advisory Committee.

- The Initial Human Rights Impact Assessment final timeline was discussed with its final presentation planned for the World Conference in Busan, Korea in December 2025. Members of the AC working group will continue to be involved.

Code and International Standards Update, Ryan Pini and Clare Egan:

- AC Member Clare Egan led the AC's contribution to the Code and International Standard Update, which started with sub-groups of the AC meeting with the drafting teams and then collating all feedback in September for final discussion and review by the whole AC. Minor feedback was received and incorporated into the final recommendations document. As such, the AC was asked to approve the final version which was circulated ahead of the meeting. Clare thanked members for their help and support in finalizing this substantial piece of work.
- Everyone agreed this work was monumental to influence the anti-doping landscape going forward and to ensure that the athletes voice is captured. The AC approved and endorsed the final recommendation document. As such, it was agreed the AC feedback would be uploaded to WADA Connect by 11 October 2024.
- The Chair, and members, thanked Clare for leading this important activity on behalf of the WADA AC.

AC Action Plan Update, Ryan Pini, Karine Henrie:

- The Chair provided an update on the current draft of the Action Plan for the AC which members received prior to this meeting. The preparation of the Action Plan was supported by a subgroup made up of AC members Ryan, Kristen, Clare and Adriana.
- Karine provided a brief overview of the Action Plan and reminded members of all the steps implemented to get to this draft.
- The Action Plan focused on activities for 2024 to 2025 and has identified 4 main goals:
 1. Increase athlete community participation in the Code and International Standard Update Process.
 2. Facilitate and enable the development of anti-doping related athlete commissions, councils, and/or committees and/or the inclusion of athlete representatives within existing structures.
 3. Improve and strengthen communication with the athlete community, and with established athlete commissions, councils, and/or committees.
 4. Improve Athlete Council working processes and onboarding.
- Karine highlighted that a few areas still needed AC volunteers to support some of the activities and the Chair invited members to express their interest by the end of the week.
- The Chair invited comments and questions from the members and then asked for the Action Plan to be endorsed. All members endorsed the AC Action Plan (2024 – 2025).

Health, Medical and Research Committee – AC nomination, Samantha Dubois:

- Samantha gave a brief presentation regarding the position available for an AC member to serve on the Health, Medical and Research Committee (HMRC). This position will become available on 1 January 2025. The HMRC Terms of Reference were provided to the AC ahead of the meeting.

- Samantha provided a high-level overview of the role of the HMRC, the meeting schedule, expected workload and a proposed selection process, including timelines.
- While the initial timeline to select an AC member was proposed to be by end of October 2025, one member asked whether this selection could be delayed until after the election of the eight Group 2 members was completed. This would offer an interesting opportunity to any new AC members. Although the delay in the selection process was not ideal, Samantha confirmed that it could be acceptable given the circumstances, and the AC confirmed this would be their preference. As such, the selection process and timelines will be re-visited for this position after the election and after the new members start, with the goal to confirm the HMRC athlete member by early February 2025 (before the first HMRC meeting of the year).

'Roundtable' – Member Activities Update

- Adriana gave an update on her experience as part of the Paris Athlete Engagement program and its value both to the athlete leaders on the team, and to those competing.
- Inaki gave a brief update on his role on the Independent Observer (IO) team at the Olympic Games in Paris mentioning the report is still being finalized. He would highly suggest others to get involved in this program.

Wrap Up/Meeting Adjourned

- The Chair wrapped up the meeting and reminded the group that the next in-person meeting for the AC will be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 3 December 2024 and all members will be invited to observe the Foundation Board meeting on 5 December. There will be an athlete engagement activity on 4 December for those that are not attending the ExCo meeting.