

INTERNATIONAL CANOE FEDERATION (ICF)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

28-29 April 2023



MINUTES OF THE  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
HELD IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

28-29 April 2023

**Participants:**

Thomas Konietzko	TK	GER	President
Cecilia Farias	CF	ARG	Vice President
Lluís Rabaneda i Caselles	LRC	ESP	Vice President
Richard Pettit	RP	GBR	Secretary General
Maree Burnett	MB	NZL	Oceania Canoe Association President
João Manuel Da Costa Alegre Afonso	JDC	STP	Confederation of African Canoeing President
Jean Zoungrana	JZ	FRA	European Canoe Association President
Toshi Furuya	TF	JPN	Canoe Sprint Chair
Jean-Michel Prono	JMP	FRA	Canoe Slalom Chair
John Edwards	JE	CAN	Paracanoe Chair
Olubunmi Ola Oluode	OO	NGR	Continental Representative - AFR
Bridgitte Hartley	BH	RSA	Athlete Committee Chair
Ahmed Mahamoud Abdoukader	AMA	DJI	Continental Representative - AFR
Branko Lovric	BL	CRO	Continental Representative - EUR
Andrej Jelenc	AJ	SLO	Continental Representative - EUR
Jovana Stanojevic	JS	SRB	Continental Representative - EUR
Ruud Heijseelaar	RH	NED	Canoe Marathon
Manuela Gawehn	MG	GER	Wildwater Canoeing
Colin Simpkins	CS	RSA	Ocean Racing
Greg Smale	GS	GBR	Canoe Polo
Terry Best	TBe	GBR	Canoe Freestyle
Wai-hung Luk	WL	HKG	Dragon Boat Commission Chair
Noémi Horváth	NH	HUN	SUP Commission Chair

**Excused:**

Liu Aijie	LA	CHN	Vice President
Luciano Buonfiglio	LB	ITA	Treasurer
Chainarong Charoenruk	CC	THA	Asian Canoe Confederation President
Luciano Buonfiglio	LB	ITA	Treasurer
Victor G. Ruiz	VR	PUR	Pan American Canoe Federation President
Shao Yaping	SY	CHN	Continental Representative - ASI
Budiman Setiawan	BS	INA	Continental Representative - ASI
Danielle Woodward	DW	AUS	Continental Representative - OCE
Fatima Fernandes Vara	FFV	BRA	Continental Representative - PAM
Martha Hernandez Sanches	MHS	MEX	Continental Representative - PAM
Tim Brabants	TBr	NZL	Medical and Anti-Doping

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**Appendices:**

- Appendix 1: Board Meeting Presentation
- Appendix 2: Discipline Support Contracts
- Appendix 3 Independent Review Panel Nationality Change
- Appendix 4 Olympic Qualification System Working Group
- Appendix 5: ICF Statement regarding measures for Russian and Belorussian athletes

**1. President's Introduction:**

- Jean Zoungrana welcomed as the new President of the European Canoe Association.
- MG and AMA nominated as scrutineers.

**2. Presentation from Paris 2024:**

- Paris 2024 Sports Director Aurélie Merle and Sport Manager Cyril Nivel presented online an update of the preparations for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games including the Look and feel of the Games, the IOC New Norm and an overview of canoe sport at the Games.
- Hotel for ICF family during the Games confirmed.
- Ticketing and accreditations under process with the IOC.
- Emphasis on innovation and technology for enhanced spectator experience.
- Discussions on kayak cross, anchored gates, and boat colour.

*Decision to continue testing kayak cross anchored gates and determine a single boat colour for kayak cross boats to ensure better sports presentation.*

**3. President's Report:**

- Visits to China, Korea, and Italy discussed.
- Secured sponsorships, broadcasting rights, and development initiatives.
- Proposal for a recreational project in Seoul and Seoul's interest in bidding for the 2036 Olympic Games.
- Introduction of SUP, Canoe Polo, and Ocean Racing to the Mediterranean Games 2026.
- Request by the host for the inclusion of Dragon Boat racing in the World Games.
- Vice-President Liu Aijie's position to be considered as he is unable to continue fulfil his duties.
- Need for stronger contracts and hosting agreements.
- Discussion on the governance of the ICF Finances

*Decision to establish a Finance Commission at the next ExCo meeting.*

**4. Vice President's Reports:**

- Cecilia Farias presented updates on the Women's Symposium, Fit for Future Strategy, Safeguarding, and the Ethics Commission.
- Lluís Rabaneda I Caselles provided updates on visits to Paddle Australia and Paris, along with various initiatives and collaborations.

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**5. Treasurer Report:** (*refer to Appendix 1*)

- Appointment of Benjamin Despont as the new Global Lead for Finance and Insight.
- Closing of 2022 accounts in progress.
- Current investments stand at 15,925,835 (February 2023).
- Digital transformation of accounting processes to be delivered by mid-2023.

**6. Secretary General Report:**

- Introduction of new team structure and new ways of working to achieve efficient delivery of the strategic vision set by the Board
- Discussions on digital asset management and esports initiatives.
- Overview of key priorities for the coming season

**7. Russian and Belarussian Statement:** (Appendix 5)

- Discussion held regarding the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes in ICF competitions. JZ emphasised the need for careful consideration and avoiding discrimination. The possibility of teams boycotting competitions was also mentioned.

*Decision: The proposal (Appendix 5) regarding the participation of Russian and Belarussian athletes in ICF competitions is approved.*

**8. Individual Neutral Athlete Eligibility Panel:**

- TK proposed the establishment of an Individual Neutral Athlete Eligibility Panel. The following members were nominated: Mario Santos, Wolfgang Over, and Albert Woods.

*Decision: The creation of the Individual Neutral Athlete Eligibility Panel and the proposed members are approved.*

**9. 100 years of the ICF discussion and working group appointment:**

- It was decided to nominate a working group to prepare for the 100-year anniversary of the ICF. Cecilia Farias (CF) will lead the working group, and the proposed members include board members, BH, OO, RP, NH, as well as external members Miroslav Havier, Albert Woods, and István Vaskuti.

*Decision: CF will establish the principles for organizing the 100-year anniversary, including the budget and framework.*

**10. Name change proposal:** (Appendix 1)

- A name change proposal was presented (refer to appendix 1, page 29).

*Decision: The majority is in favour of continuing the process of name change.*

**11. Independent Review Panel for Sporting Nationality Change:** (Appendix 3)

- Chairs of Olympic and Paralympic Disciplines were nominated as panel members for the Independent Review Panel for Sporting Nationality Change (refer to appendix 3).

*Decision: Panel agreed and will be call the Sporting Nationality Change Panel*

**12. Transgender Policy consultation timelines and working group:**



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- Led by the medical committee, a survey will be sent during the world championships to gather athlete community views. A proposal will be discussed at the next year's in-person board meeting.

**13. Discipline support contract:** (Appendix 2)

- The proposal for the creation of a discipline support contract was discussed (refer to appendix 2).

*Decision: The majority is in favour of creating the support contract with the 70:30 ratio.*

**14. Olympic Qualification System timelines and working group:** (Appendix 4)

- LRC highlighted the need to revise the Olympic Qualification Systems and increase the number of competition events included. It was proposed to establish a working group and bring the recommendations to the ExCo in March/April 2024. The working group will be led by LR and RP, with Charles Luckman, MB, JE, JS, and Peter Karai as members.
- AMA suggested involving African representatives and offered to propose names in the coming days.

*Decision: Olympic Qualification System working group and members confirmed pending African representative*

**15. ICF Competition Jury Appointments:** (Appendix 1)

- TK presented the list of selected jury members for ICF competitions (refer to appendix 1, page 17).

**16. ITO nominations for 2023 events:**

*Decision: All ITO nominations for 2023 events were approved in block according to the proposal.*

**17. Continental Reports**

**Asian Canoe Confederation:**

- Canoe polo event scheduled for October.
- Asian Games to be held in October (postponed from last year).
- Congress planned for November.

**Confederation of African Canoeing:**

- Tunisia Beach Games update provided.
- African CSP Championships planned for Nigeria in November 2023.
- CSL event considered for Morocco.
- First continental SUP competition held in Nigeria. JE highlighted good participation in paracanoe event in Nigeria.

**European Canoe Association:**

- Coordination of Development activities with ICF-ECA.
- Organised Continental Development camps.
- Discussion on future Olympic Qualification system.



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**Oceania Canoe Association:**

- Delivery of Oceania Championships in various disciplines in New Zealand and Australia.
- OCA President's participation in the Oceania National Olympic Committees annual conference and meetings with regional sports federations.
- Committee established for organising the kayak/va'a programme for the Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands, collaborating with the International Va'a Federation.
- National Federations asked to identify athlete development and support needs for upcoming canoe sprint world championships and the 2024 Olympic Qualification event.
- Emphasis on delivering the Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands and the continental development program, with a focus on the Solomon Islands National Federation.

**18. Discipline Reports**

**Canoe Slalom**

- Key objective is to ensure fair Olympic Games qualifier competitions for 2023/4.
- Finalising preparations for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games Canoe slalom competitions.
- Monitoring CSL rules evolution beyond Paris 2024.

**Paracanoe**

- West Africa Development Project update.
- Asian Paralympic Games to be included in the program for the first time in October.
- Focus on Universal Boat Development.

**Canoe Marathon**

- Ensuring high-level commentary for live streaming.
- Working to lower costs for athletes.
- Targeting countries where marathon is less known.
- Appointing regional marathon advisors for World Cup races on all continents.

**Canoe Sprint**

- Future of Olympic Games program discussions ongoing.
- Revision of ranking system.
- Working towards fair and attractive Olympic Qualifications.
- Reviewing Sports Presentation and exploring new technologies for improved event delivery.

**Wildwater Canoeing**

- Revision of bidding process and technical deliverables.
- Introduction of class380 to bridge gap between recreational and high-performance paddling.
- Rules revision.

**Ocean Racing**

- Ocean Racing World Championships confirmed as an open event.
- World Championships to be held in Australia.
- World Cup race planned in Mauritius.



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**Canoe Polo**

- Development coaching camp in Poland before the 2023 European CAP championships.
- Coaching and Referee courses progressing.
- Site visit to Germany regarding 2026 World Championships.
- Appointment of Technical Delegates for competitions.

**Canoe Freestyle**

- Working on delivering the 2023 World Championships and securing future World Championships and World Cups.
- Conducting ITO Seminars.
- Organizing Athlete Development Camps.
- Developing a 4-year development plan.

**Dragon Boat**

- Continuing progress with the World Games.
- Encouraging NFs to organize future World Cups or leagues.
- Discussing strategy for DBR boats and paddles to support discipline's growth.

**Stand-Up Paddle Board**

- Focusing on high-level events and increasing the number of participating NFs.
- Updating ITO seminar educational material.
- Developing stand-up paddling at NFs, including preparing a beginner level instructor certificate.
- First European championships planned for Szeged with canoe sprint.
- Continental championships on all 5 continents.

**Medical and Anti-Doping, and Athletes' Committee**

No report provided.

**19. Fit For Future**

- Richard Pettit, Secretary General, provided an overview of the progress of the Fit for Future strategy.
- Michel Alarcon, Head of Sport Development & Games Operations:
  - o Covered development, education, and sustainability development.
  - o Emphasised the need to focus on strategies aligned with paddlers' interest in sustainability.
  - o Shared updates on Paris 2024, including accommodation, accreditation, and ticket distribution.
- Balint Vekassy, Global Director of Events:
  - o Highlighted challenges such as calendar conflicts and enhancing event experiences.
  - o Stressed the importance of improving agreements with service providers and hosts.
  - o Discussed long-term goals, including better planning, consistency across disciplines, and a professional look for ICF events.
- Stuart Roach, Global Director of Growth & Communications:



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- Introduced a recast of the platform with innovative ambitions.
- Emphasised the significance of meaningful relationships, new partnerships, and data analysis.
- Provided an update on the growing number of broadcasters taking ICF major events.

**23. Other business**

- Canoe Freestyle Committee Advisor Change
- Proposal to replace Magnus Karlsson (SWE) with Matt Hamilton (CAN)

*Decision: approved*

**24. Next Board of Directors Meeting**

- Proposal from British Canoeing to host the 2024 ICF Board Meeting Approved dates to be coordinated by ICF Headquarters staff.

**25. Bid Presentations**

Selected hosts of International Canoe Federation Competitions

Event	City	NF
2027 ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships	Szeged	HUN
2027 ICF Junior & U23 Canoe Sprint World Championships	Plovdiv	BUL
2027 ICF Canoe Slalom & Canoe Freestyle & Wildwater Canoeing World Championships	La Seu	ESP
2027 ICF Canoe Marathon World Championships	Silkeborg	DEN
2025 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cups	Prague	CZE
2025 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cups	La Seu	ESP
2025 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cups	Pau	FRA
2025 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cups	Augsburg	GER
2025 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cups	Tacen	SLO
2025 ICF Canoe Sprint World Cups	Szeged	HUN
2025 ICF Canoe Sprint World Cups	Poznan	POL