

Lausanne, April 1st 2017

Decision by the International Canoe Federation regarding Russian canoeists

On 31 March 2017, the International Canoe Federation (ICF) rendered its decision in the cases of nine Russian canoeists (the Athletes), who were suspected to have committed anti-doping rule violations (the Decision).

The proceedings were initiated by the ICF following the supposed implication of the Athletes in an alleged institutionalized manipulation of the doping control process in Russia, as described by Prof. Richard McLaren in two reports issued on 18 July and 9 December 2016.

Three of the Athletes, Mr. Alexandr Dyachenko, gold medallist in the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Mr. Alexey Korovashkov, bronze medallist in the same Olympic Games, and Mrs. Natalya Podolskaya, multiple medallist in important international competitions, were prevented to take part in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, and were provisionally suspended for more than eight months.

The relevant part of the Decision is the following:

“The Panel, having heard the athletes and assessed the evidence available for each individual case, found that there was insufficient evidence to justify findings of individual anti-doping rule violations against any of the nine athletes named in the proceedings. Therefore, the athletes are now free to compete, subject to the additional eligibility criteria that apply to Russian athletes for International Competitions during the 2017 season.”

Considering the growing interest of the media, our clients have instructed us to issue the present statement with regard to the legal consequences of the Decision and possible further steps to be undertaken to protect their rights, which have been severely violated by the ICF.

First of all, the ICF entirely followed the Athletes’ position which, from the very beginning of the proceedings, claimed their innocence and that the evidence were absolutely not sufficient to support the ICF’s allegations against them. Our clients insist that they have never committed any anti-doping rule violation and welcome the Decision in this regard.

Although all charges pressed against the Athletes have been dropped, and their innocence confirmed, the ICF has decided to impose specific eligibility criteria to all Russian canoeists for their participation in international competitions. This might be another violation of our clients’ rights and they are envisaging the possibility to challenge this decision before any competent judicial authority.

Finally, our clients are also analysing the question of the compensation for the important damages they have suffered following their undue suspension and the impossibility for them to take part in important competitions, such as the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.

Further communication will be made in the next days, after a thorough analysis of the legal implications of the decision rendered by the ICF.



Emmanuel Kilchenmann
Attorney at Law

+41 26 510 10 20

emmanuel.kilchenmann@kilchenmann.com



Serge Vittoz
Attorney at Law

+41 21 566 11 00

s.vittoz@cpvpartners.com