

Committee: International Olympic Committee (IOC)

Member : *Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI)*

Delegate: Lo Guillaume / Université Libre de Bruxelles

Topic A: « Harnessing sport diplomacy for the advancement of democracy and human rights »

« Strava, running, cycling, and social media ». Sport has never been as popular as it has been in recent years. The delegation of Union Cycliste Internationale recognizes how important sports diplomacy is in everyday life. Therefore, UCI is honored to be able to participate in discussions with other delegations on how to advance respect for human rights and democracy through sports diplomacy.

Diplomacy through sport helps to ensure better relations between states, but also between federations. It is therefore essential to focus on this type of federation, given the importance of sport around the world. Too many children still do not have access to sport. For example, 45% do not have access to sport in France. Although the International Olympic Committee is not legally bound to respect human rights, since access to sport is a human right, the committee is at least indirectly bound to do so. Furthermore, the International Olympic Committee is aligned with UN guidelines on human rights. It therefore goes without saying that human rights have a central place in sport. Additionally, although the Committee aims to remain politically neutral, it nevertheless raises many issues that are essential in today's society, such as diversity, the prohibition of harassment, the fight against racism, and the desire to make sport accessible to all.

Finally, the delegation of the Union Cycliste Internationale would like to highlight the importance of social media in recent years. Most top athletes are followed by millions of people and have a positive influence on them, especially young people. On the one hand, this can be positive, as when certain athletes wanted to boycott the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. On the other hand, it can also be negative, particularly when these stars promote sporting competitions in countries that do not respect human rights, without warning users about this issue, or when stars are paid by countries to advertise them.

As a delegation working to improve cycling practices, UCI knows how important it is to continually adapt to changes in society. UCI has therefore already adopted a code of ethics and set up a commission to ensure respect for diversity and the principle of equality guaranteed by articles 2 and 26 ICCPR, as well as to prevent corruption and remain politically neutral. Furthermore, UCI realizes that it is no longer possible to remain politically neutral at this time. That is why we are committed to ensuring that important future decisions by the UCI are made with the utmost care and consideration. The delegation of Union Cycliste Internationale wants to combat sportswashing and avoid situations such as the World Championships in Rwanda or the controversy surrounding the Israeli team from happening again. In this way, we, the delegation of the Union Cycliste Internationale, are campaigning for serious but achievable measures to be taken. Representing our international working groups and committees, the delegation of Union Cycliste Internationale is proposing the following solutions: the creation of a legal basis setting out general principles to be respected by all sports federations; the creation of an International Olympic Court to settle disputes between states and federations; the obligation for states hosting international sporting competitions to bear the burden of proof regarding respect for fundamental rights; to consider the place of Olympic athletes on social media; and a public commitment by all federations to guarantee transparency and a willingness to move forward.

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Topic B: « The inclusion of transgender, intersex and non-binary athletes in competitive sports »

“My femininity makes me a better man,” this quote from Mars Wright resonates like a drop of water falling into the well of the debate concerning transgender people in sport. While nearly 1% of the population consider themselves transgender, there has been much controversy and hatred in recent years. Detractors believe that these individuals will come into schools to convert everyone, that athletes will cheat by entering the opposite gender category, or that "these" people are only doing it to get attention. Even if the delegation of Union Cycliste Internationale condemned it, too much violence is distracting us from the real issue: how can we include transgender, non-binary, and intersex people in society and in competitions, while ensuring fairness and justice for other athletes?

In an increasingly separatist world, it is important to bring people together and include everyone. Therefore, it is essential that transgender people be able to participate in sports like any other human being. However, it is also important to ensure fairness so that transgender people do not have a disproportionate advantage over other female athletes in the same category. The problem is that the scientific community is still waiting for long-term studies on this subject. Political detractors love to use broad generalizations that come out of nowhere to discredit these individuals without any real basis, which is problematic because it fuels hatred towards them.

Currently, some studies show that transgender women have disadvantages after their transition that cisgender women do not have, as shown in the BMJ study in 2024. Furthermore, other studies, such as the one by Emma Hilton and Tommy Lundberg in 2021, have also shown the positive impacts that testosterone and body type have on performance in certain sports. These controversies show that further studies have to be launched to explore the subject further.

The delegation of Union Cycliste Internationale, although it has implemented regulations for the inclusion of transgender people in 2023, is aware of its current shortcomings but also wants to ensure fairness in cycling. Our sport still experiences significant differences in performance levels between men and women, which can be explained by the lack of development of the sport among women and accessibility issues, but also by differences in physical abilities, as shown by Xavier Bigard's study in 2024. By the same time, the UCI feels it is important to point out that Belgium recently condemned the delegation in 2025 for automatically banning transgender women from women's sports competitions, arguing that the criterion of transitioning before the age of 12 was not based on any proven scientific evidence. Therefore, the delegation of Union Cycliste Internationale insists that objective criteria be put in place, based on current knowledge, without subjectively discriminating against transgender people. The UCI also recognizes that this debate raises many philosophical questions: a fairer sport, but sport is already physically unfair; a transgender woman will not necessarily win medals; what about all the training beforehand; what about amateur and non-international competitions? In conclusion, the delegation of Union Cycliste Internationale looks forward to discussing this with other federations and athletes in order to gain a more complete picture of the situation and find solutions together.

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