



## The President's report

### Executive Committee and Council meetings May 2018

Dear All,

I would like to take the time to inform you of the different projects that the FIG is working on right now, and also of the important decisions taken at the Executive Committee and Council meetings in Istanbul in May.

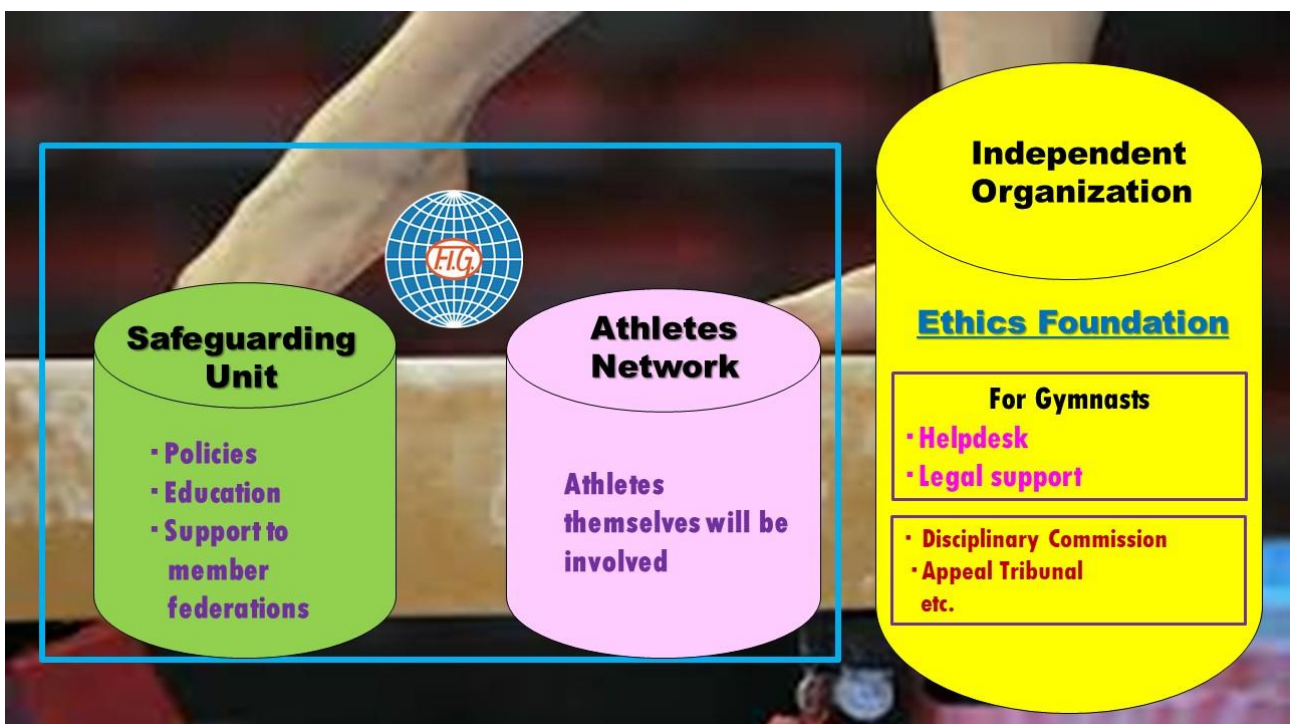
#### 1. Next Secretary General

The federation is preparing to undergo a significant change. André Gueisbuhler will step down from his role as Secretary General at the end of the year, having served the sport of Gymnastics for nearly 30 years. His successor will be the current Deputy Secretary General, Nicolas Buompane. This will guarantee an important degree of continuity in the federation's operations.

#### 2. Sexual abuse scandal in the US

In recent months, we have all been deeply shocked and saddened by the sexual abuse cases which have shaken Gymnastics in the United States. These cases happened before I became President, but that is what is at stake. If we cannot secure the safety of our children, the very existence of the FIG will come into question.

The FIG will be taking a number of preventative measures to ensure we establish an environment of safety and dignity across the entire Gymnastics community. These measures are built on three pillars.



The first pillar is the launch of an Ethics Foundation, which will be a body that is independent from the FIG. It will provide a helpdesk offering legal support for victims of abuse and harassment. The Foundation's activities will be completely independent, meaning that neither the FIG nor the national federations will be able to intervene in them.

Once a report has been made, the Foundation will investigate the case using its own network of lawyers. If the case is confirmed, it will be dealt with according to the law. Then it will be reported to the FIG, for it to impose sanctions, a suspension or a ban.

The second pillar will be a safeguarding unit, set up within the FIG. This unit will provide information and toolkits for national federations, officials, gymnasts and coaches.

The third pillar is a network for exchanging information among the athletes themselves. Communication tools are developing at an exponential rate and the athletes, by developing their own network, can play a major role in prevention by sharing and reporting information.

This scandal which has struck Gymnastics is only the tip of the iceberg. It erupted in the USA, but now continues in other countries. Many other sports have been affected too.

I believe that the sporting community must rethink fundamentally its structure. What is the purpose of sport? This is the question to which we must find an answer. We must rethink the system, starting with coach education. I am determined to lead this effort.

### **3. Gender equality**

Gender equality is another important matter, which can also be linked to the abuse problems. We have to work towards equality. A lack of equality can open the door to abuse. The Women in Gymnastics Commission led by Slava Corn, FIG Honorary Vice President, is in the process of establishing a road map to gender equality and we aim to achieve equal representation within the Executive Committee and Council by 2028.



#### **4. Junior World Championships**

We will be organising two Junior World Championships in 2019 – for Artistic Gymnastics in Győr, Hungary and for Rhythmic Gymnastics in Moscow, Russia. We will then carry out a full evaluation of these two championships and, according to our findings, will decide whether they are to become a regular event or not. If the evaluation is positive, the 2019 Junior Worlds will be recorded as the inaugural editions.

Almost all sports organise a Junior World Championship and they are a good step in the preparation of young athletes. I believe that Junior World Championships can help motivate young gymnasts in each country, including developing nations around the world.

#### **5. Duration of World Championships**

We cannot ignore the difficulties we face regarding the World Championships. With the growing number of participants, the duration of the event has increased, and competition days start early and finish late, which puts a heavy burden on gymnasts, both mentally and physically. We also have problems in finding nations willing to host the event owing to the huge organising costs. In the future, we will have even more gymnasts taking part from Africa and Oceania so if we continue along the same path, it will become impossible to organise the Worlds.

The Executive Committee is looking at two options. The first is to turn the Continental Championships into a qualifying event for the World Championships. Currently we allow gymnasts of a beginner's level to compete alongside world champions at the Worlds. Almost all sports have qualifying stages before going to the Worlds. These phases allow for a step-by-step progression. If the continental championships become a qualifying step for the World Championships, this will give them greater marketing value.

The second option entails dividing the World Championships into two separate events. In Artistic Gymnastics, we would have one World Championship for the Team and Individual All-Around competitions in October, and another for the Apparatus events in April or May. In Rhythmic Gymnastics, we could have separate World Championships for Individual and Group events.

With this, the financial cost for the teams would be less, while the physical cost would be reduced for the athletes. Additionally, there would be more opportunities for the public to see Gymnastics which could only help with the development and popularisation of the sport.

At the same time, we must be mindful of the fact that the sporting calendar is already full. We have multisport Games, continental Games, World Cups, World Challenge Cups and countless competitions around the world. We must be judicious in spreading them out over the four-year period if we are to avoid our gymnasts becoming burned out. At the FIG we must focus on specific priority areas: the World Championships, Continental Championships and Junior World Championships.

At the moment these are purely propositions. The national federations will be invited to give their opinion at the Congress in December while gymnasts will be able to share their thoughts at a series of round tables to be staged at the time of the World Championships.

#### **6. Qualifying system for Paris 2024 Olympic Games**

We should already be thinking about the qualification system for the Paris Games. Unfortunately, the process for Tokyo 2020 is very complicated. This is the result of a complex balance between each

country's different interests. Simplicity, however, is best. We are going to make sure that both good gymnasts and gymnasts from many different federations can participate. This is my wish.

## 7. Planning the Rhythmic Gymnastics of the future

We have also embarked on a wide-reaching discussion regarding the reform of Rhythmic Gymnastics. We are inviting opinions not only from the world of sport, but also from the media and IT industries. We will try to see how we might improve the rules in order to make the sport more easily understandable for the general public. If this exercise proves worthwhile with Rhythmic Gymnastics, we could extend it to other disciplines.



## 8. Parkour

In April, we saw the launch of the Parkour World Cup. The first stage of the 2018 series proved a big hit with the public, with more than 85,000 spectators attending the competition in Hiroshima, Japan. This success drew the attention of the International Olympic Committee and the Olympic movement, with Parkour selected to be part of the sport initiation activities at the Youth Olympic Games in October.

At its general assembly this year, the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) decided to launch the selection process for the host city of its first World Urban Games, and we are delighted to inform you that Parkour will be part of this prestigious new competition along with other very attractive urban sports.

I can also inform you that the International World Games Association (IWGA) will soon finalise a detailed programme of the sports which will feature at the 2021 World Games in Birmingham (USA) and that Parkour has been embraced by both the IWGA and the Local Organising Committee.

We intend to launch shortly the bidding process for hosting the 1st FIG Parkour World Championships in 2020 and we hope that many of you will show an interest in this opportunity. In my view, this urban discipline, which has many keen devotees among the young generation, can bring a fresh perspective to our sport.



### 9. Acrobatic Gymnastics World Championships in Antwerp

Just as the 2015 Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in Glasgow provided a turning point in the staging of that event, with a new focus on making it more attractive to the public, so these 2018 Worlds in Antwerp will go down as a reference point for Acro.

It was a competition organised with the spectators – and their viewpoint – in mind. The stands were full and the public were able to appreciate more fully the beauty of the sport, and to really marvel at the gymnasts' performances.



For me it was a glimpse of the future possibilities for Acrobatic Gymnastics and I invite everybody to help support this discipline. I would also like to take the opportunity to give my thanks once again to Rosy Taeymans, President of the Acrobatic Gymnastics Technical Committee, along with the local organising committee and the Royal Belgian Gymnastics Federation.

## **10. Selection of technical committee members**

At the 2016 Congress, the Executive Committee proposed that the presidents and members of each technical committee be selected by nominations, rather than elections. This would correspond with the demand of the IOC, which warned the FIG about possible conflicts of interest. I agree with the IOC's position. In today's climate, we cannot ignore the principles of good governance and compliance.

At the next Congress, I would like to make another proposal which separates the methods used to choose the technical committee presidents and members.

The candidates would be proposed by the affiliated federations. The most necessary quality for a TC president is knowing how to manage –not only the committee members but many judges – and so the Gymnastics family should be able to elect good managers as presidents.

With the TC members, what is important is their technical ability as judges – therefore, the results achieved in their judging certificates and experience. The Executive Committee would name a selection committee charged to propose names according to selection criteria defined in advance and the EC would give final approval to these names.

## **11. Advertising**

Up until now, the advertising space on gymnast' uniforms has been very restricted. We are going to increase this space and the details will be decided by the Executive Committee at its next meeting in July.

## **12. Support for the federations and unions**

The next Executive Committee meeting will take place at the end of July in Fiji, Oceania, and in 2019 we will have another meeting in Nicaragua, part of the Pan-American Gymnastics Union. The choice of these countries reflects our desire to work more closely with regions where the sport is in its development stage.



Last year's Presidential Commission meeting in Cameroon and the Executive Committee meeting in Benin had a significant impact in both of those countries. Benin's minister for sport promised to add Gymnastics to the compulsory school curriculum, and the number of Gymnastics-related activities in both countries has grown considerably since our visit.

We will also ensure stronger ties with the continental unions through an internship system inside the FIG. One representative from each continent, starting with the African Union, will come to our headquarters in Lausanne for a regular series of work placements, and thereby contribute to finding solutions to the problems found in their union.

My wish is for our federation to be open to all. In this context, the FIG will henceforth allow all national federations in good standing to be represented at our Congress, by providing one plane ticket and accommodation costs for one delegate each. I am delighted to know we will all be able to meet up as one big family at the Congress in Baku.

Thank you for your support and for your participation in helping our sport to flourish.