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## APPEAL

of public associations of the Republic of Belarus  
to the Chairperson of the International Disability Alliance (IDA)

Mr. Yannis Vardakastanis,  
Chairperson of the International Disability Alliance

We, the representatives of public associations, reiterate our call to hear the voices of people with disabilities in our country. This spring, public associations of people with disabilities asked to support Belarusian athletes with disabilities in their well-deserved aspiration to participate in international competitions. However, instead, the International Paralympic Committee decided to suspend the membership of the Paralympic Committee of Belarus.

At the same time, just a year ago, the International Olympic Committee promoted high values: sports fraternity, solidarity and the unifying power of sports. So, in 2021, the International Olympic Committee changed its motto to "Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together" (before that it was "Faster, Higher, Stronger").

This year's suspension of Belarusian Paralympic athletes deeply hurt not only the sports community, but also all caring residents of Belarus, in particular people with disabilities, for whom the victories of our athletes with disabilities in the international arena were a powerful incentive to move forward.

Our athletes with disabilities observe the principle of fair play, show respect for opponents and referees' decisions in all competitions.

The Paralympic Committees are public organizations in whose activities the state cannot interfere. However, that is exactly what is happening.

The voting results of the IPC General Assembly once again demonstrated a farce: the decision to suspend the membership of Belarus was made by a minority of votes from the total number of member countries of the International Paralympic Committee. As a result, the true principles of the Olympic movement were under attack. Political whims took precedence over reason, morality and human rights.

This step defies reasonable argumentation and common sense. We regard this as an attempt to punish, for the sake of the political ambitions of individual countries and biased sports functionaries, Paralympic athletes who devoted their whole lives to their favorite cause – sports, despite all the hardships of life that befell these people.

We would like to ask a question: what about the observance of human rights, for which all states should stand up? Where are all these lofty ideals of equality, non-discrimination and human dignity, for which, by the way, objectionable countries, including Belarus, are so often punished?

Can we say, under the conditions imposed on us, that sport unites, as it is laid down in the Olympic Charter? Unfortunately, we cannot.

We hope that the motto of the International Olympic Committee "Faster, Higher, Stronger – TOGETHER" will not remain an empty phrase, and our people with disabilities will continue to move forward in order to achieve new records, popularize and develop sports for the disabled.

We appeal to You as the Chairperson of the largest international public movement for the observance of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to call on the International Paralympic Committee to prevent discrimination of Belarusian athletes with disabilities on a national basis and infringement of their right to participate in international sports competitions and the Paralympic Games through the suspension of all membership rights of the Paralympic Committee of Belarus.

Protecting the legitimate interests of disabled people, guided by the principle of "sport is out of politics", we ask You to make every effort and support Belarusian athletes with disabilities in their well-deserved desire to participate in international competitions!

In spite of everything, Belarus will continue to make a significant contribution to international sports cooperation in order to unite countries, and not separate them!

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Chairperson of the Public Association  
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