

Speech by WADA President, Witold Bańka European Union Anti-Doping Conference, National Sports Agency of the Czech Republic

Monday, 7 November 2022: Prague, Czech Republic

Dear Professor Valdimír Balaš, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport in the Government of the Czech Republic; Mr. Filip Neusser, President of the Czech National Sports Agency, Mr. Georg Haeusler, Director for Culture, Creativity and Sport, at the European Commission's Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I wish to thank you for the opportunity to come here to the historic city of Prague to deliver one of the opening speeches.. In particular, I thank Mr. Neusser and his team for this invitation and for your commitment to anti-doping in this country and around the continent.

WADA has always recognized the importance of partnerships in the pursuit of clean sport. The European Union is a key partner for us. You play a major leadership role in this region. You make an important contribution to the anti-doping landscape. Our ambitions to address doping in sport are also yours. The solutions are found not by working alone but by joining forces... by collaborating. That is why I want to thank the National Sports Agency for running this conference as part of the Czech Republic's Presidency of the Council of the EU. Also, thanks to the Czech National Anti-Doping Organization for its role in making this conference happen. It is a great opportunity to listen to one another, strengthen existing connections, make new ones and reflect on our role as leaders of the anti-doping movement. All this with the objective of raising the game for athletes, wherever they happen to be. More broadly, WADA appreciates the EU's other efforts to promote international cooperation in the region.

A perfect example of that commitment is the EU grant that was awarded to WADA in June of this year. This will be used to develop a very worthy project aimed at expanding the intelligence and investigative capabilities of Anti-Doping Organizations across the continent.

I would also like to highlight the fact that WADA is an official partner of the European Commission's European Week of Sport. This great annual event promotes sport and physical activity across Europe, regardless of age, social background or fitness level. This year, its inauguration took place here in Prague and WADA is proud to support this worthy initiative. We also pledged to support the two-year 'Healthy Lifestyle 4 All' campaign that showcases the European Commission's commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles.

As you can see, the Europe region is playing its part in strengthening the global anti-doping movement. It is great to see the Governments, sports organizations, National Anti-Doping Organizations, and WADA all working together for the good of the overall system.

Today's forum is an opportunity to take a step back from the day-to-day business and reflect on what we should be doing as a community. This conference will help to make our global anti-doping community stronger. WADA is here to support in every way we can. We will continue to encourage clean sport as we highlight the values of honesty, respect and integrity. This is this

same philosophy that led to WADA's creation 23 years ago, and it remains true today. If we work together as one, we can achieve anything.

I expect that this conference will be a catalyst for even more collaboration between us all. It is with that in mind that I would like the protection of clean sport to become a reference point for all future Presidencies of the EU. I would like it to remain high on the agenda. Although WADA has been collaborating directly and indirectly with the European Union and its Member States on many initiatives, I still believe anti-doping has not been fully addressed. For example, the European Union Work Plan for Sport for the years 2021 to 2024 does not cover anti-doping. There is no doubt that doping in sport is a matter of public interest and deserves an appropriate response. I hope this conference will enable us to further align our goals and efforts to make a more significant contribution to the anti-doping landscape. As a result, I hope that the protection of clean sport will be an integral part of the next Work Plan for Sport.

This will help to unite stakeholders and rally them behind WADA's mission in leading the global collaborative movement for doping-free sport.

To achieve this, we all must be ready to evolve. For WADA that means always having the right structure in place. One achievement that I am proud of is the work we and our stakeholders have undertaken since 2016 to reform our governance model. In May, WADA's Foundation Board approved a final round of reforms that are bringing a significant swing towards more independence and enhanced representation for athletes and NADOs.

While these latest reforms represent the end of this process for now, WADA will continue to review how it is governed so that it can remain a modern, athlete-centered, well-structured organization that is fully equipped to fulfil our mission.

Another important area which will require creativity and a capacity to adapt is funding. To deliver on our mission, WADA must be adequately resourced. Our 2022 budget is USD 46 million, which is modest when one considers the scale of our mission to protect athletes in all sports and from all countries.

Every year, WADA is being asked to do more and more to protect athletes around the world. We are up for the challenge. This is why it was so rewarding to receive the full support of our Foundation Board members in May as they approved increases to WADA's budget of 8%, 6% and 6% for the next three years, from 2023-25. We are encouraged and grateful to receive this financial commitment from Governments and the Sport Movement. It is a clear endorsement of the work being done and a vote of confidence in our ability to deliver on our strategic and operational plan.

One would hope that the work that you are conducting on the funding formula will not negatively impact WADA's funding basis. But moving forward, it is very important to find new ways of generating resources so that governments and sports do not shoulder the burden alone. We are actively pursuing private funding from other sources and we recently announced a sponsorship deal, with South African broadcaster, SuperSport. Although the current economic environment is very difficult, we are confident that there will be other partners that will join us.

Additional funding will strengthen WADA's and the community's ability to deliver in important areas such as:

- Intelligence and Investigations;
- Compliance monitoring – making sure high standards are maintained all over the world;

- The capacity of Anti-Doping Organizations;
- Values-based anti-doping education; and
- Scientific research and innovation.

Speaking of scientific research, this is extremely important for the future of WADA and the success of the anti-doping system. Research grants are critical because they increase the volume of research dedicated to developing new and improved detection methods for performance-enhancing substances and methods. They also attract high-level researchers to this cause. That is why we are going to invest up to USD 4.5 million in the next three years. But this amount is still very limited and that is why WADA is seeking to partner with existing research funds or governmental programs that so far do not focus on anti-doping in sport. We have been successful in partnering with the Fonds de Recherche du Québec. We are currently in discussion with the National Institute on Drugs Abuse in the United States. But we do not want Europe to be left out. We hope you will support us in that effort.

Before closing, I want to say something about education. I know this is one of the topics up for discussion today and it is very important. In September, we held a landmark Global Education Conference in Sydney, Australia, where I called on Anti-Doping Organizations to focus more on education and make it one of the key pillars of their strategic plans.

Put simply, education is the single best long-term solution that we have for protecting the values of sport – clean sport. It is a critical component of the global anti-doping system. Testing and investigations are important – of course they are – but detection and punishment cannot be the only angle of attack. More and more, we are seeing the real results that education delivers in preventing doping and supporting athletes in their efforts to compete clean throughout their careers. We need to balance the anti-doping system between ‘catch and punish’ and ‘support and prevent’. This is the new era.

That is why education is a central part of WADA’s core functions. It is the key to providing athletes with the support they need to compete clean throughout their careers. It is time to put it front and center and take it as seriously as we take other key areas of anti-doping, like science, medicine and the law.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we all know, the world is in a precarious situation with the war initiated by Russia against Ukraine, not very far from where we gather today. I condemn the actions that led to this war. However, I do note it has brought out the best in the rest of the global anti-doping community. Great solidarity is being shown in standing by athletes and clean sport colleagues from Ukraine. At times like these, it is important that we stand united with Ukrainian athletes. This is another way that we can raise the game for athletes of the world.

As the global anti-doping regulator, WADA is constantly evolving. We remain vigilant to the threats and also the opportunities. Many of our stakeholders are showing progress and a real determination to collaborate and reach sustainable solutions – in a harmonized and cohesive way.

There is, of course, still a lot of work ahead of us to protect the dreams of clean athletes. We continue moving forward – always aiming to be ahead of those who would cheat the system. We don’t rely on one or two tools – we are ready to protect sport from all angles, with innovation. Anti-doping is all about partnership. With the commitment and dedication of governments, sports, athletes and many other stakeholder groups, including the European Union and the NADOs of each member nation, we can achieve our mission.

We at WADA look forward to your ongoing support. Together we will work with you all to further strengthen the global anti-doping system. Bit by bit and day by day.

Thank you all for your efforts and ongoing commitment to clean sport. And please, enjoy this excellent conference.