

President of Latvia: athletes from Russia and Belarus should not be allowed to compete at the Olympics under any flag

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[Andra Levite](#)

[Egils Levits](#)

[Latvian Paralympic movement](#)



On 6 February, President of Latvia Egils Levits and Mrs Andra Levite met with Andrew Parsons, President of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), who is currently visiting Baltic countries. Meeting took place at the Riga Castle.

The main topic of the meeting was participation of athletes from Russia and Belarus in Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. IPC has decided to ban Russian and Belarusian Paralympians from Paris 2024. President of IPC also acknowledged the active stance of Latvian Paralympic Committee (LPC). Latvia was among the first countries to announce that Olympic Games with Russian and Belarusian athletes would feel immoral.

President Levits underlined that Latvia welcomes such position of the International Paralympic Committee and appreciates LPC's direct role in it. 'Position of our government and sports organisations is united and clear: as long as Russia continues to wage war in Ukraine, athletes from Russia and Belarus should not be allowed to compete at the Olympics under any flag,' President stressed. International Olympic Committee must rethink its position, he added.

Meeting also focused on the need to build National Paralympic Centre in Latvia. This athletic facility would offer good training infrastructure for athlete growth. It would also be important for future development. According to LPC, lack of infrastructure discourages future Paralympians in Latvia. Andrew Parsons shared experience of other countries with construction and funding of sports infrastructure projects of this kind. President of Latvia indicated that one source of funding could be national lottery, an approach used by many countries.

LPC's commitment and dedication ensure that Latvia is regularly voicing its position in international paralympic community and is a well-respected member of it, President Parsons underlined.

Latvia was represented at this meeting by Daiga Dadzīte, President of LPC, Aigars Apinis, Vice-President of LPC and athlete,

Liene Apine, LPC Secretary General, and Zane Skujiņa-Rubene, MP, 14th Saeima, long-standing Head of the Paralympic delegation.



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