

Update On Kosovo Boxing Federation And The AIBA World Boxing Championships

Description

AIBA is saddened by the political situation that has prevented the Kosovo Boxing Federation from participating in the AIBA Boxing World Championships.

AIBA believes that sport should transcend politics and help break down barriers. Our World Championships is an event where all countries are invited to come together and celebrate unity, diversity and friendship.

AIBA requires all host National Federations to allow regulation-free travel for other competing National Federations. The principles of non-discrimination on political grounds are therefore well covered in AIBA's governing documents, compliance with which is a key provision of the host city agreement.

AIBA has previously referred to the importance of equality of opportunity concerning the participation of the Kosovo Boxing Federation at AIBA events. During the allocation of the World Championships to Serbia, the situation we are now facing regarding Kosovo's participation was foreseen. Therefore, it was clearly defined in the host city agreement, signed with the local organizing committee, that entry must be permitted.

"The HNF MUST guarantee that all AIBA officials, participating team delegations as well as all participants receive an entry visa from the national authorities, without any discrimination and regardless of the status of diplomatic relationships of their country with Serbia."

The final decision to allocate the World Championships to Serbia was made by the AIBA Executive Committee, following assurances that the host city agreement would be upheld.

'AIBA's leadership has done its utmost to facilitate and motivate the local organizing committee and Serbian Government to find a solution for the situation. We also spoke with the Kosovo Boxing Federation to try and find a compromise that would enable their participation and whilst they were very cooperative, a solution could not be found with the local organizing committee and Serbian Government. Sports should never be involved in politics or affected by politics', Secretary General István Kovács said.

'Moreover AIBA had extended the deadline for competition entry checks prior to the draw for the tournament, in order to facilitate a further attempt to cross the border', Mr. Kovács added.

"Every boxer deserves free participation, we will always fight for the athletes and we will continue to promote and push for a solution on this issue. We are totally against politicians trying to solve their debate and confrontation in the sports arena. That needs to be settled in a diplomatic way, for the unity, friendship and peace in the world."

AIBA knows that other international sports federations are due to host world championships for their sports in Serbia in the coming weeks and months. AIBA will share its experiences with other sporting organisations in order that the appropriate lessons may be learned.

<https://www.aiba.org/blog/update-on-kosovo-boxing-federation-and-the-aiba-world-boxing-championships/>