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## 2022 PROGRESS REPORT

### OLYMPIC GAMES QUALIFICATION SYSTEM WORKING GROUP

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The Working Group met on two dates, with the first meeting taking place on April 19, 2022, at midnight CET and the second one on May 10, 2022, at 23.00 CET. These times were established in order to take into account the different time zones.

The following members attended these meetings:

Mr. Emmanuel KATSIADAKIS (MH), FIE Interim President, Chair of the Working group  
Mr. Sam CHERIS (MH), President of the FIE Legal Commission  
Mr. Salah FERJANI, Member of the FIE Refereeing Commission  
Mr. Jong Hyung CHO, Vice President of the Korean Fencing Federation  
Mr. Vukašin STOŠIĆ, Secretary General of the Serbian Fencing Federation  
Mr. Francisco Rafael MARÍN ALVAREZ, President of the Fencing Federation of Venezuela  
Mr. Vincent ELIAS, President of the Australian Fencing Federation  
Mrs. Nathalie RODRIGUEZ, FIE CEO

Absent:

Mr. Aldo MONTANO, President of the FIE Athletes Commission

During the meetings Mr. Katsiadakis welcomed the members and referred to the importance of the work this group has to carry out for the future qualification system. After the first meeting, the members were asked to send their written proposals.

The FIE has formed this working group to analyze the current Olympic qualification system (already agreed for Paris 2024 which is more or less the same as the Tokyo 2020 qualification system), and to examine any potential improvement for LA 2028

The main reason for this group's meetings is that some federations at the last FIE Congress expressed the opinion that there are not enough places for individual qualification.

The procedure of discussions with the IOC on the elaboration and approval of qualification systems were detailed to the members of the group.

The members were also informed about the meetings held with LA OCOG and the initial list of sports for the Olympic Games 2028 that is already set up. This list will be evaluated by the IOC and LA OCOG based on the principles mentioned in the LA 2028 Sports programme evaluation that was sent to the members of the working group and is attached.

All IFs had to complete an extensive questionnaire in June 2022. This questionnaire will be reviewed by the IOC and LA2028, which will then determine the final list of sports for LA2028.

The current qualifying system is the outcome of many years of hard work, it has improved in the process and is being implemented with success.

The structure of the actual qualification system allows 212 places in total. 6 places allocated to the host country and 2 places to universality. From the remaining 204, 144 places are taken by the team events (48 teams), leaving 60 places to complete the individual qualification.

The main difference between Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 qualification systems is that for Paris there will be 6 additional host country quota places, instead of 8 that existed for Tokyo, leaving two (2) universality places (one per gender) available to eligible NOCs and allocated by the IOC. The NOCs will submit their requests until January 2024, they will then be evaluated by the IOC. Following that the IOC will propose to the IFs the universality places.

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The group discussed of possible ideas to increase places for individual qualification.

The following elements were discussed and the reasons why they were not valid as options were detailed:

The IOC Olympic Charter requires a minimum of 8 teams per team event. Therefore, the number of teams cannot be decreased.

The number of athletes at the Games is established by the Olympic Charter at 10.500 (including new sports). Fencing was one of the three sports which did not suffer from quota reduction in 2021. Therefore, the IOC will not increase the quota for fencing.

The transfer of accreditations implies that an accreditation is withdrawn/cancelled just after the athlete has finished his or her competition, and his or her accreditation

is provided to another athlete. The transfer of accreditations was discussed in the past with the IOC. This was not accepted for the main following reasons: a) As per the Olympic Charter, accreditations are withdrawn for specific reasons (such as sanctions). Otherwise, they are valid for the period of the Games. b) each NOC has a fixed quota of accreditations for the whole period of the Games. c) Fencers don't arrive on the date of their competitions but a few days earlier to train. And because of this flow there would always be more than 212 athletes. d) The organisers would have a lot of trouble managing all the people coming in and out.

The option of removing the alternate in teams and to use the quota of alternates to increase the overall quota for fencing was also discussed. However, the alternate is considered by the IOC as a non-competing athlete who cannot be integrated in the quota.

The possibility of implementing a qualification system similar to the classification system of the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, where the team classification by continent took place in the Pre-Olympic tournament, was also discussed. This however, would minimise the qualification procedure to one single event instead of several qualification events and would contradict the IOC rules that there should be several chances to qualify.

A discussion took place regarding the number of qualification events in FIE's programme. Maybe there should be less than the ones existing now. However, if the ranking system changes it should be for the whole duration of the period until 2028 and not only until the next edition of the Olympic Games.

A possible change of the team qualification procedure was also put forward. Currently,

- the first four teams in the ranking qualify whatever their continent
- and one team per FIE zone. However, these teams must be ranked between the first 16 countries.

The group determined that if this rule was to be expanded to the first 32 countries for example, then it would be easier to achieve the goal of further universality and it would be almost certain that all FIE zones would qualify.

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An idea for discussion was to change the format of the teams, having a two-member team format plus the alternate. Basically, if teams were of 2 athletes instead of 3, the quota for the teams would be of 2 athletes x 8 teams = 16 athletes per weapon x 6 weapons: 96 athletes instead of 144. As a consequence, this would allow the participation of 18 athletes per individual event, instead of 10 currently.

The members agreed that the above proposal offers more individual places. However, the group also determined that this option would have a major impact on

the federations (potential loss of fencers), fencing structure, strategy of the teams, format of the teams (four or five relays instead of 9), more risks of team elimination in case of injury.

The members of the group, after an interactive discussion, concluded that this proposal could be submitted to the FIE ComEx bearing in mind that it constitutes an absolute reform of the team format and competitions. Mr. Cho, raised his objection mentioning that, in the long run, there would be the danger of facing a decrease of the number of top fencers participating at the Olympic Games.

Since the rest of proposals discussed were found to be ineligible and in order to fulfil its responsibility to submit a proposal, the members of the working group decided that the proposal of having two-members teams plus the alternate, was the one to be forwarded to the FIE Executive Committee for consideration.

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The proposal of the Olympic Games Qualification System working group was discussed by the FIE Executive Committee at its meetings of May and July-

The Executive Committee indicated that the idea proposed by the working group (two fencers per team instead of three) transforms the team concept into a “double” concept, like in tennis. This would imply a total revolution of the team format and team competitions. The possible future consequences could be counterproductive. Indeed, such a change could lead the IOC to consider mixed (weapons and gender) team events, which could result in, for example, a reduction in quotas, medals, events and days. The Executive Committee thanked the working group for its search for solutions.

The Executive Committee therefore concluded that the current qualification system was currently the only viable one, taking into account the existing rules and limitations.

The Chair of the Working group will inform the members and request further meetings in order to work on other proposals.

Emmanuel Katsiadakis  
FIE interim President and Chair of the working group

## Annex I – Evaluation criteria for discipline review

<b>Cost and complexity</b>	
What are we trying to determine ?	How complex is it to deliver the sport/discipline and how much does the sport/discipline cost within the Olympic Games and the LA28 context?
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure at the Olympic Games and within the LA28 context</li> <li>• Operations at the Olympic Games</li> <li>• Indirect costs</li> </ul>

<b>Best athletes and athlete safety</b>	
What are we trying to determine ?	Are the Olympics the ultimate destination for the sport's athletes? What are the key considerations on athlete safety?
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best athletes</li> <li>• Health and safety</li> </ul>

<b>Popularity and host country interest</b>	
What are we trying to determine ?	How popular is the sport/discipline within the Olympic Games, at World Championships, and in the US specifically?
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadcasting</li> <li>• Digital</li> <li>• Spectators</li> <li>• Business model</li> <li>• Relevance for host country</li> </ul>

<b>Uniqueness, universality, gender equality, and relevance for youth</b>	
What are we trying to determine ?	How globally prevalent and accessible is the sport/discipline, how well does it support diversity, equality, and inclusion, and how does it resonate with youth?
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universality and participation</li> <li>• Youth appeal</li> <li>• Gender equality</li> <li>• Access to sport</li> </ul>

<b>Integrity and fairness</b>	
What are we trying to determine ?	How well do the sport's rules and regulations protect against doping and competition manipulation?
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrity of competition and manipulation of competition</li> <li>• Anti-doping</li> </ul>

<b>Environmental sustainability</b>	
What are we trying to determine ?	How sustainable is the sport/discipline?
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon footprint and energy</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Venue sustainability and legacy</li> </ul>