

Athleten Deutschland e.V.
Guts-Muths-Weg 1
50933 Köln
E-Mail: presse@athleten-deutschland.org
www.athleten-deutschland.org

Press Release: Athleten Deutschland Calls for Harmonized Lex Refugee in the International Sports Federations

Berlin, 29 th September 2020. After the [recent turnaround](#) of the International Canoe Federation (ICF) in the case of Saeid Fazloulou, Athleten Deutschland calls for harmonized regulations in the International Sports Federations (IFs) for the nomination of refugee athletes for the Refugee Olympic Team (ROT). The Olympic Refugee Team is an outstanding project of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) which as a sign of humanity gives hope to refugees worldwide and makes an important contribution to the understanding among nations.

Maximilian Klein, Representative for International Sports Policy: *“The case of Saeid Fazloulou clearly shows that the IOC and International Sports Federations have a special responsibility and duty to protect athletes who have become refugees. They must now urgently bring an end to the current hotchpotch and work towards a harmonized Lex Refugee within the federations before the Tokyo Games. It is unacceptable that refugee athletes have unequal chances of being admitted to the refugee team just because they are in the wrong federation.”*

Athleten Deutschland welcomes that the ICF, after the German public broadcaster ARD [covered the story on September 27](#), is now recommending the start of Saeid Fazloulou in the Olympic Refugee Team and plans to learn lessons from this case with the announcement of regulations for refugees. Athleten Deutschland hopes that the IOC will now allow Saeid Fazloulou to start at the Olympic Games.

Background:

Following a [report in the ARD-Sportschau on September 27, 2020](#), the case of the canoeist Saeid Fazloulou became public. After fleeing Iran, he has so far been living in Germany as a recognized political refugee without German citizenship. The ICF had initially refused his nomination for the Refugee Olympic Team on the grounds that Fazloulou already fully represented Germany on an international level and thus, according to the statutes of the ICF, had found a host country for his sporting career. According to the ICF, a start for the Refugee Olympic Team would not have been possible without Iranian approval. Furthermore, the ICF had initially doubted the refugee status of Fazloulou.

According to the ARD investigations, about five years after the introduction of the Olympic Refugee Team, almost two thirds of the 33 International Sports Federations represented at the Summer Games lacked clear rules for refugees. That it could be done differently is shown by a provision in Taekwondo, which allows athlete Dina Pouryounes, also from Iran, to join the Olympic refugee team and at the same time allows her to compete in other international competitions for her host country, the Netherlands.

About Athleten Deutschland (Athletes Germany):

Athleten Deutschland was founded in 2017 to give athletes starting for Germany a real say for the first time. The association is committed to fundamental changes in the German and international sports system. The protection, the perspective and the effective co-determination of the athletes* are always in the center of attention.

Together with our members, we fight for world-class conditions that offer them the opportunity to develop their sporting and personal potential. We stand up for fair and clean sports, free of abuse and violence, manipulation and mismanagement. To fulfill our mission, we collaborate with various actors from politics, business, science and civil society, as well as with like-minded partners in Europe and the world.

Athleten Deutschland is financially supported by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, for Building and Homeland on the basis of a resolution of the German Bundestag.