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Mr. Luciano Rossi
ISSF President

Mr. Willi Grill
ISSF Secretary General

March 17th, 2023

Dear Mr. President,
Dear Mr. Secretary General,

In your letter to the ISSF Member Federations as of March 13, 2023 it is stated that a return to the Tokyo 2020 Finals will be an important step that will ensure our continued position as an Olympic Sport. But you do not disclose publicly to the members of our community how, if in your belief, this position will be ensured and you say nothing about the risks of such a step which is appropriate while proposing such kind of initiatives.

What should be considered?

13 Olympic qualifying competitions already have taken place, including the World Championships and the Continental Championships, nearly one third of all qualification quotas for Paris 2024 have been allocated and a big number of athletes have won respective ranking points. The distribution of ranking points will be continued at three ISSF World Cups that will take place in India, Peru and on Cyprus in March-April of the current year where the existing formats will be used, for sure.

Any changes will inevitably affect the training process of the athletes. Many of them, especially younger ones, did not take part in qualification to Tokyo 2020. Their preparation and participation in the international events that were held from the beginning of the Olympic qualification for Paris 2024 are based on the existing formats. Thus, a benefit for those athletes who have experience of the Tokyo 2020 Finals is created automatically. It violates the principle of fair play and equality of chances for everyone. The consequences can be unpredictable, including challenging the outcome of Olympic qualification.

There is no explanation in your letter which events are meant precisely when you are mentioning the need of change of the shooting competitions' rules "that allow scores to be converted to points in order to decide the winner of medals".

Your attempt to return to the past is not correct in this context. There is still the same, as was before, the system of result determination based on the number of hits in Shotgun and 25 Pistol/RFP individual events. In the Ranking Match of 10m and 50m Finals the result depends exclusively on the scores. Thus, only the Medal Matches in 10m and 50m Finals are left. It means that you suggest to turn to a routine, a real duel for the champion's title which is the most attractive and dramatic part of anything that exists in sport. It looks like that you are not concerned about the spectators' interest. Especially, at the Olympic Games.

You are writing that “all Qualifications would remain as they are”. There appears another contradiction not mentioned by you as well.

If Qualifications do not change, the number of finalists in all individual events, including Shotgun and 25 Pistol/RFP, should remain eight. If so, there is a contradiction with the formats of the Finals in Tokyo 2020. If there is an intention to reduce the number of finalists to six (which is hardly in the interests of the Member Federations because the qualification of any athlete to the Finals is an exceptional achievement by itself), then the essence of Qualification is changed. Possibilities of athletes to win quota places will be also reduced. The Qualification system approved by the IOC allows in winning quotas only in the Finals. Possibly, the reduction of the number of finalists will also affect the distribution of ranking points.

It is not a secret that the IOC evaluation of the Tokyo 2020 has shown that in all the main criteria related to TV broadcastings, the shooting sport data appeared to be lower than the average for the Games. Meanwhile, in your letter there is not a single word of how a return to the Tokyo 2020 formats can reflect on the attractiveness of the competitions. Can you publicly take the responsibility that, in case of using the Tokyo 2020 formats at the Paris 2024 Games, the TV rating will increase?

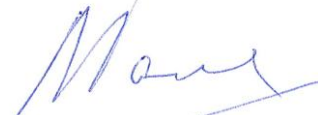
It was precisely the low popularity of the shooting sport among the non-professional audience that dictated the necessity to introduce the new formats that would be understandable for spectators. Those formats were approved by the OBS and recognized as corresponding to the requirements of the Olympic TV. Statistics that the ISSF has at its disposal, clearly testify an increase of the external audience of the shooting sport competitions in 2022 nearly two times as compared with before pandemic year 2019.

You are writing that the new formats will be used at the 2023 European Games. It does not correspond to reality.

At the 2023 European Games that are organized under the aegis of the European Olympic Committees the competitions will be held according to the existing rules. The ISSF Secretary General is well informed when and how this matter was decided. Any decision of the International Federation which might disrupt the work of the Organizers several weeks before the opening of those Games inevitably will lead to conflicts and put in danger the successful holding of the shooting sport competitions.

May I add that at all the qualifying competitions for the European Games, those that were held already and those still to come, the same rules are to be applied. It is not possible in principle to hold qualifying competitions according to one set of rules and the competitions at the European Games according to another set of rules.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alexander Ratner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alexander Ratner
President