



rafting
federation

#WorldRafting



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Introduction

Rafting was imported into Europe by the French Aventure Nouvelle in 1984 and it quickly started to spread in the continent, the first competitions have been organised in France since 1984.

In 1989 the American and Russian foundation Peace Found, in the context of several charity and educational projects, organised "Project Raft", the first international rafting event. The goal of Project Raft was to develop the relations between the two Nations as, even then, rafting was considered an aggregating and inclusive activity.

The first Project Raft "competition" took place in Siberia (Russia) on the Chuya River; in the following years it was organized in North Carolina (USA) on the Nantahala River.

The Project didn't end there but it had further developed into a series of international championships around the world. For several years, important sponsor as Camel and G&B were attracted with all the positive appropriate consequences.

Context

The World Rafting Federation (WRF) is the world governing body for all aspect of Sport Rafting, especially international competitions. Rafting, leisure and recreational Rafting, expedition Rafting, all others disciplines directly connected to Rafting and Rafting as sport for all. The WRF is the final authority for all matters concerning competition Rafting and licensing of WRF River Guides.

Project

The principal purposes of WRF are the direction, regulation, promotion, development and furtherance of the sport of competition Rafting on a world-wide basis.

The WRF fosters links, networks, and friendly relations among its members, their rafters and socials.

All activities of the WRF are independent of any political or governmental influence.

The WRF does not allow any discrimination for political, racial or religious reasons.

The WRF promotes and supports with all means gender equality in its activities.

1.

Sustainability for paddlesports

Sustainability is the key concept accompanying the project of rafting creating a new international movement. In this case, sustainability has to be intended as a two-fold concept:

- on the one hand this project aims to make the sport of rafting more sustainable;
- on the other hand, aims to reach an agreement with ICF to make it an increasingly sustainable international federation

Four main elements have to be kept in mind when talking about the sustainability of this project.

A. ICF - WRF Co-operative Agreement

The signature of the Co-operative agreement between International Canoe Federation (ICF) and the World Rafting Federation (WRF) provides the movement with a broader and official representation throughout the world, especially in terms of membership.

Members of ICF

	ICF
Europe	45
America	32
Asia	37
Africa	35
Oceania	13
Total	162



Co-operative agreement is structured on the following principles:

- **MUTUAL RECOGNITION:** the two parties recognize their ability to combine their energies and resources in ensuring that both the ICF and the WRF are able to achieve their respective aims and objectives. The International Canoe Federation (ICF) is the international governing body for canoeing and its respective disciplines. The World Rafting Federation (WRF) is the international governing body for sport rafting and its respective disciplines. The WRF is the final authority for all matters concerning competition Rafting and licensing of WRF River Guides. **WRF is committed to abide by ICF rules and principles.**

This way, it brings the WRF under the umbrella of the ICF.

- **MEMBERSHIP:** The Parties shall cooperate to increase their respective membership all over the world, aiming at being universally represented. Where a rafting federation recognized by the WRF does not already exist, ICF members will be allowed to become WRF upon approval of the WRF Executive Board and at the conditions established by the WRF. The WRF shall facilitate the process of ICF members joining the WRF.

- **SUSTAINABILITY:** The parties recognize the concept of sustainability as a key one for the future of their respective disciplines and engage in promoting it among all their members and stakeholders.

- **EVENTS:** The parties shall share their relevant world events calendars to ensure the best possible harmonization and coordination and promote the common organisation of events.

Finally, this deal would provide the rafting movement with a reliable organisational and political structure within the international sport movement, thus encouraging all national rafting movements to be part of it.

B. Grassroots and Sport for All

Rafting can represent an incredible tool for the development of the active basis of all paddle-sports, from flat-water to canoe-polo.

Rafting can represent an accessible introduction tool to all paddle-sports for the following reasons: it is safe, it is based on small and manageable teams, it is relatively cheap.

These characteristics are to be considered relevant for both the grassroots level and the sport for all level.

As a sport for all, rafting can be practiced without a special experience and that is a way to involve more people in the paddle sport activities.

The catchment area of potential rafters does not constitute a competitor for the other ICF disciplines: on the contrary, it can be a complementary activity.

In fact, rafting is not only a whitewater experience. In the last years the diversification of tracks has open up new horizons: urban rivers and, more generally, flatwater rivers represent the perfect scenery for the first paddle sport experience. Thanks to this, rafting represents an accessible introduction for anyone into all ICF disciplines.

Furthermore, rafting as a team sport, is increasingly used by schools and companies: the management of the group dynamics and the team balance, whether it aims at achieving sport or social goals, is the way to co-opt into water experience an important number of people from the educational and labour sector.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines regarding sport activities and their social impact laid down in the Council of the European Union's Recommendations 15575/13 on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors (HEPA), find in rafting a complete fulfilment: rafting is a tool of inclusion and overcoming differences.



Physical activity, as recommended by the WHO, is important for all age groups, and has particular relevance for children, the working population and the elderly. Being it a prerequisite for a healthy lifestyle and a healthy workforce, it contributes to the achievement of key objectives defined in the Europe 2020 Strategy, notably with regard to growth, productivity and health .

In this respect, the Italian Rafting Federation has taken part in an important initiative aiming at encouraging the development and implementation of effective HEPA policies, developing some special educational pathways for teachers and coaches.

Different projects have been realised with schools in order to introduce kids to rafting, not only as a recreational and cultural activity, but especially in order to fight physical inactivity and the sedentary behaviours. Physical education at school has the potential to be an effective tool to increase awareness of the importance of HEPA, and schools can be easily and effectively targeted to implement activities in this regard.

Furthermore, rafting as outdoor sport, also represents a tool to raise awareness on environmental issues. The main activity with schools is practiced on river of Class II (flatwater and urban rivers) where the students can rediscover their city's history and can get awareness of the conditions of the local rivers. The Italian experience shows that the number of rafters is increasing because of the involvement of schools and the organisation of national school championships.

C. Whitewater artificial venues

The recent development of the sport of rafting on artificial venues, both in terms of competition and in terms of leisure, adds two important elements of sustainability.

First, it allows rafting to go out of its initial environment (natural rivers, remote areas, expeditions...) and to open up to a broader public, with a clear possibility of improving its participation basis and providing more visibility to the sport in urban and more populated areas.

Second, it can provide a solid financial sustainment of whitewater venues used for slalom, downriver and river safety. In fact, the construction and maintenance costs of urban artificial whitewater venues is consistently higher than the income produced by such venues if these are only used for competition/training purposes. On the contrary, when partially used for commercial purposes, whitewater artificial venues become sustainable and can directly support competitive activity.



Example

Lee Valley White Water Center's Data - Hertfordshire UK

	2014	2015	2016
Rafting clients	16,759	23,206	27,414



	2012-2014	2015	2016
Rafting teams who regularly train in Lee Valley Whitewater Center	3	8	9 (+ 3 emerging teams)





In this respect, in order for whitewater venues to be profitable and usable for commercial purposes, their conception must be studied together with experts coming from the different sectors (slalom, downriver, competitive rafting, commercial).

Waterland srl (Italian Canoe Kayak Federation's and Italian Rafting Federation's technical partner) developed a project of an artificial whitewater course (350-400 mt. long) with several innovative features. The project provides a single venue in order to accumulate the building and management elements common to both rafting/kayak venues and surf venues.

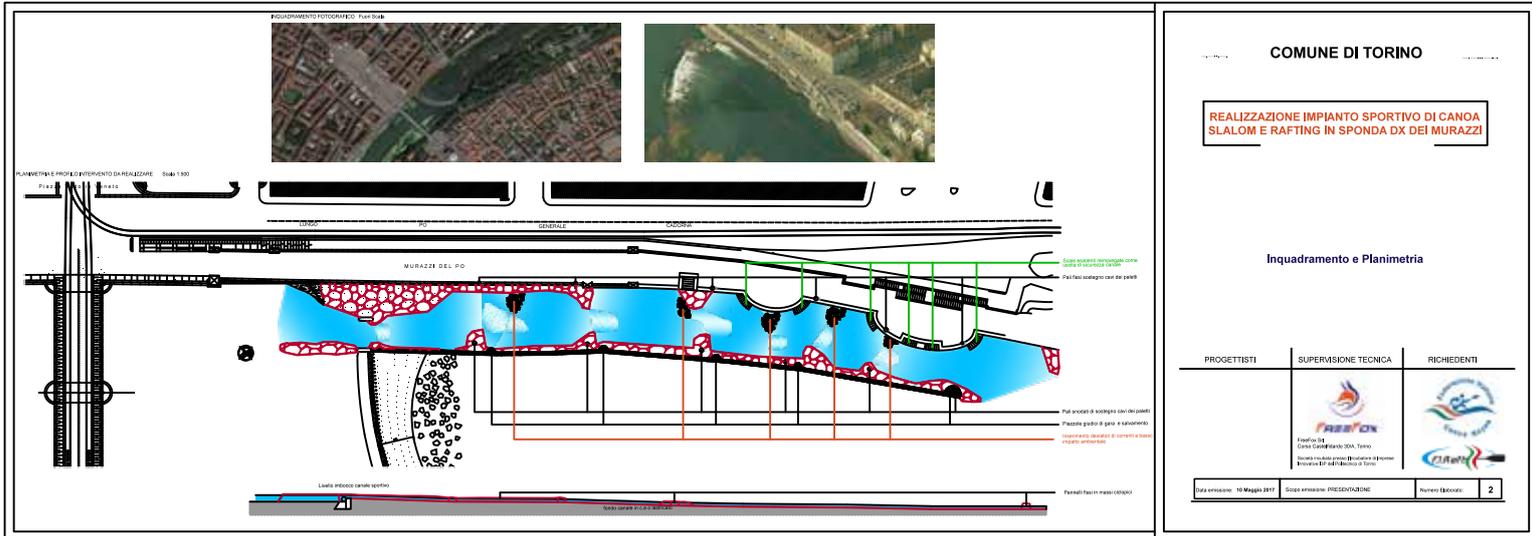
The costs of the technological part of the electrical-engineering installations, including the electricity grid connection, the hydro-sanitary grid connection, the drainage system and the safety system, are low combining the sports facilities. Thus, also the costs for service structures, changing rooms and sanitations are low due to the cost reduction in the construction and the following management.

In such venue, for example, 12/16 rafts (each carrying 6-8 people) can run simultaneously. This can easily be translated in a hourly attendance of over 100 people; considering that the average price is 35-40 € per person, it appears that such an amount covers the operating and management costs in a satisfactory way to achieve a solid profit margin.

The option presented to the Turin Municipality and Piemonte Region by Waterland srl exploits the hydraulic drop along the crossbar of Michelotti's dam (in Murazzi area, Torino), aiming at realising a low cost venue. In summary, the project exploits the flow rate of the Po River and the artificial drop of Michelotti's dam to build, with a reduced work in the riverbed, a whitewater venue, 180 mt. long, combined with 2 sections (upstream and downstream) of flatwater moved by the obstacles-laying or the artificial flow diverters.

The strengths of the mix venues are the low cost of realisation, the low operating costs exploiting the flow rate directly, the logistical and strategic position in the middle of the city. In addition, the technical features of a such venues, with whitewater and flatwater sections, enable beginners and amateurs to use it. The strategic position in the middle of a city is an incredible opportunity to collaborate with schools.

The Project in Turin



This project, realised by the Italian Rafting Federation and the Italian Kayak Canoe Federation, represents a good practice of collaboration and integration between the two different disciplines. Besides, shared whitewater courses between slalom, wildwater and rafting can progressively lead to shared international events, with clear advantages in terms of event costs (1 instead of 3) and in terms of visibility.

Finally, an enhanced financial sustainability of artificial whitewater courses can provide the ICF with a better leverage in the negotiation of the position of canoe slalom as an Olympic discipline. In fact, these venues are nowadays among the most expensive (construction and maintenance) of the Olympic program. The adaptation to rafting competitive and commercial purposes can assure the financial sustainability of the venues, allowing them to comply with the strict criteria of the International Olympic Committee Agenda 2020, ensuring the reinforcement of canoe slalom as an Olympic Discipline and opening up for expansions of the ICF disciplines within the Olympic Program.

D. The role of river guides

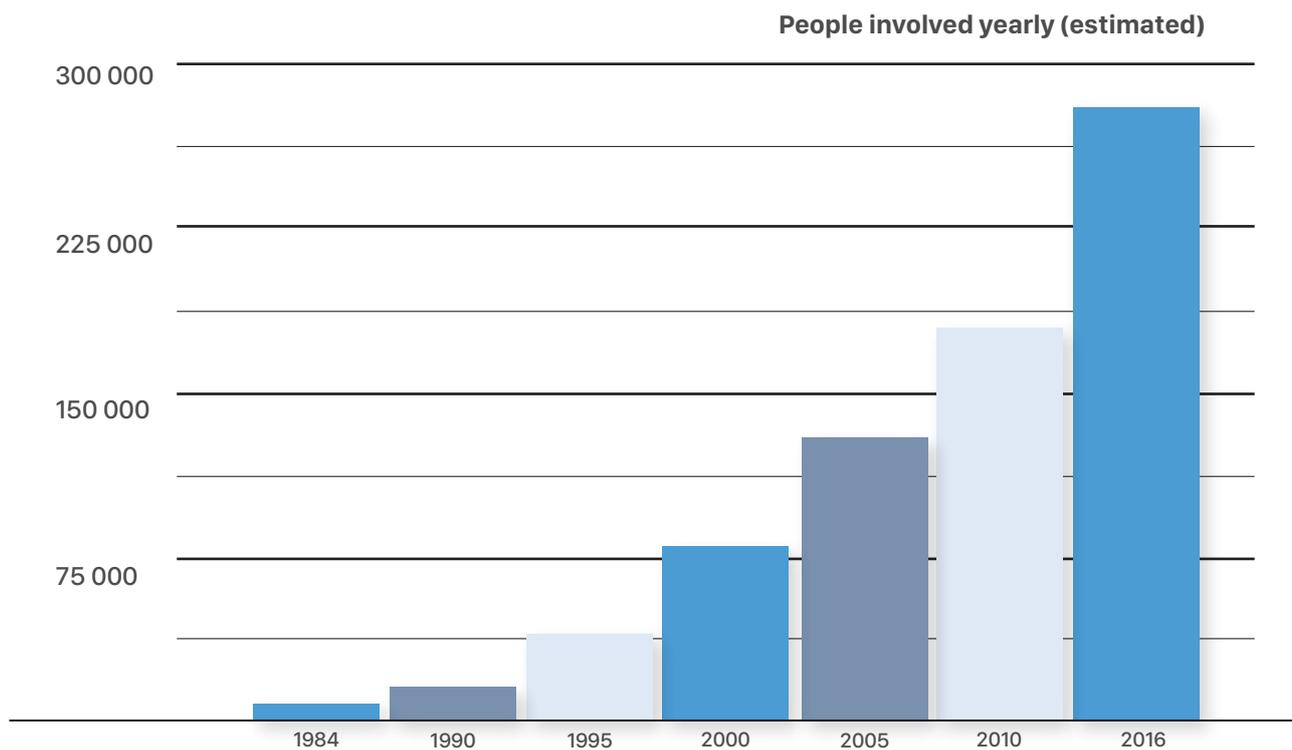
River guides, in their activity interact a great number of people; they play a key role both in the promotion of paddle sport and in the protection of the environment that surrounds them. Rafting activity as a leisure sport has become popular in the 1980s: in addition to being only a sport, the idea that rafting also is a serious business and a way to support the sport activity by the affiliates to the national federations gained a foothold.

In Italy, last year 250.00-300.000 people practiced rafting occasionally (commercial activity).



Commercial activity in Italy

Years	People involved yearly (estimated)
1984 - 1990	5 000 - 15 000
1990 - 1995	15 000 - 40 000
1995 - 2000	40 000 - 80 000
2000 - 2005	80 000 - 130 000
2005 - 2010	130 000 - 180 000
2016	250 000 - 300 000

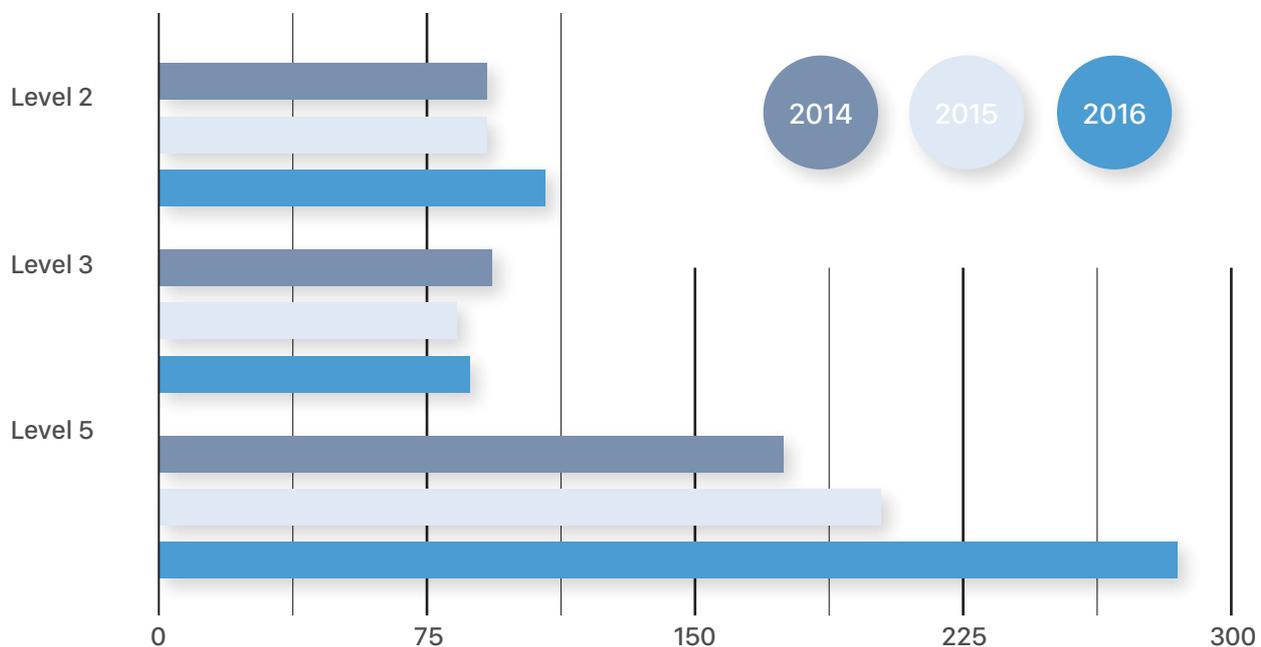


The significant increase of numbers in the 2000s is closely related to the development of the Italian Rafting Federation, which has only been possible thanks to the involvement of the Italian Canoe & Kayak Federation (FICK). In fact, FICK has made it possible for FIRAFT to be recognised by the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI).



Regarding the figures of Italian Rafting Federation technicians, the supply does not meet the demand of the market despite significant increases in the training program.

F.I.Raft certified guides	512
Guide Level 2	123
Guide Level 3	89
Guide Level 5	283
Instructor (Maestro)	17



***relevant increase in the number of Level 2 and 5.**

Bearing in mind that the Council of the European Union's Recommendations on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors show that the sport sector is an employment-intensive growing industry and can contribute to addressing youth unemployment, rafting can represent a tool for facilitating young people's access to the labour market and implement the dual career goal for the ICF athletes. Rafting also offers other employment opportunities such as manager of rafting companies or naturalist guides.

Another important goal, which can be implemented through the development of an international training guide program, is the international mobility for the technicians/athletes; in fact, this element is encouraged by the rafting's seasonality due the weather events according to the period of the year. For this reason, rafting guides can work and promote paddle sport in different continent in the same year.

A consistent training guide program is an essential element for the development of rafting worldwide and the only way to reduce the risk that is connected to that promotional activity.

The newly born World Rafting Federation can develop and manage a system of international certifications/licenses by analogy to the IRF principles that can be implemented thanks to the collaboration with all the national federations.



WRF River Guide Training Program Proposal

BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL TRAINING GUIDE PROGRAM

- . skilled river guides
- . **dual career** for all WRF (and ICF) athletes
- . a way to **support economically** WRF
- . **safety** enhanced at the WRF and ICF events
- . a way to introduce more people to paddle sports
- . promotion of the paddle sports in **schools**
- . rafting guides as environmental guardians of the rivers

The WRF has developed and manages a rafting guide training program in collaboration with its National Federations; it's a system where the WRF Training Program does not replace the National Training Program but acts at National Federation's request by training national instructors in order to make them autonomous, thus achieving common training standards.

However, where the goal mentioned above is achieved, the signature of agreements between the WRF and National Federations implements the system of collaboration and management. This agreement shall be based on the following principles:

- * the WRF works to ensure that WRF qualifications issued by the National Federations are accepted worldwide so that the raft guides holding this qualification enjoy the full honors and privileges granted by the WRF program
- * National Federations will maintain their NTP (National Training Program) so that it meets or exceeds the minimum requirements for an WRF Training Program as stipulated in the WRF program protocol.
- * National Federations will offer all National Rafting Guides and Instructors the opportunity to obtain a WRF Rafting Guide qualification comparable to the level that they already hold
- * National Federations agree that a valid and current WRF Rafting Guide qualification shall qualify the holder for a 'fast track' option for obtaining a National Guide license corresponding to their WRF qualification when the remaining national Guide requirements have been met.

2. Competitions format

Competitions format

WRF sport programme practices Rafting through two different types of competitions: R4 and R6; currently, competitive rafting is divided into three different disciplines (RX, downriver and slalom).



Number of categories



The format for men and women is the same: additionally, the WRF adds a mixed category in RX events (2 women, 2 men). These development is in accordance with the Olympic Agenda 2020 (the strategic roadmap for the future of the Olympic Movement; the 40 recommendations are pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that, when you put together, form a picture that shows the IOC safeguarding the uniqueness of the Olympic Games and strengthening sport in society).



Competition format

Disciplines

Downriver

Competition format

The race start in groups of 4 to 8 rafts, depending on the venue conditions. The results of the Downriver race are determined by the final racing times irrespectively of starting position or group.

Slalom

2 runs: the faster run is used to determine the score of the team

RX

Qualification

Qualification Single run: starting order must be selected randomly

Classification

Head to head in a "knock out" elimination format with upstream/downstream gates: starting order based on the results of the qualification.

The RX format is easy to understand at first sight. The purpose of the RX race is to complete, in the shortest possible time, between two crews starting simultaneously and with a system of knockout elimination.

The RX consists of two stages: a Qualification Stage (sprint) and a Classification Stage (H2H knockout). the Qualification Stage consists on a single run in which each crew must complete a stretch of whitewater in the shortest possible time. In the Qualification Stage boats start singularly.

Based on the results of the Qualification Stage and on the numbers of participants, a limited number of teams access to the knockout stage.

The Classification - Knockout Stage - consists of single runs during which two teams compete simultaneously; contact between the two teams is allowed, except in the first 15 meters.

During the knockout stage two kinds of gate should be negotiated:

- Upstream Gates are distributed in pairs along the course. Only one gate in each pair must be negotiated: each crew is free to decide which gate to negotiate in each pair.
- Downstream Gates are distributed along the course and all downstream gates must be negotiated by each crew.

Contact with the gate cylinders is allowed; a penalty pair of Upstream Gates is installed in the last possible upstream section of the RX course.

Teams penalized for excessive contact must negotiate one upstream penalty gate before concluding the race .

Para-Rafting

Rafting activity is accessible to disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility (the physically disabled, the visually impaired and the blind). As a team sport, it represents a possibility of inclusion and involvement. The same kind of sport format, developed for the able bodied, is suitable for disabled persons, on the understanding that, for safety reasons, there are one or more able bodied river guides/athletes on board.

In Italy in 2016 more than 1.000 disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility practiced rafting, involved in several project with some schools and associations, whereas every year an Italian Pararafting Championship is organised by Federazione Italiana Rafting.

3. Internatinoal calendar 2018

Competitions calendar

EUROPEAN CUP

	Date	Location
CROATIA	16.18 March	Korana River, Slunj

WORLD CUP

	Date	Location
TURKEY	8.12 May	Ardesen, Rize
SERBIA	22.24 June	Zubin Potok River, Ibar
RUSSIA	23.26 August	Siberia

WORLD RAFTING CHAMPIONSHIPS JUNIOR-U23

	Continental	Location
ITALY	21.24 July	Ivrea

4. Executive board

WRF Executive Board



Mr. Danilo Barmaz, President

Mr. Boris Purjakov, Vice President

Mr. Fikret Yardımcı, Vice President

Miss. Blerina Ago, Treasurer

Mr. Oleg Grigoriev, Responsible for the Sport Department

Mr. Massimo Desiati, Representative elected by the Athletes' Commission

Mr. Hadi Ghazi Asgar, Representative elected by the Technicians' Commission

Mr. Matteo Benciolini, Secretary General



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