



**CODE OF THE
WDSF ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Version 1.3

Code of the WDSF Ethics Committee

1. Legitimacy

The Ethics Committee (“the Committee”) is an independent body within the WDSF structure, having its legal basis in Article 19^{bis} of the **WDSF Statutes**.

2. Mission

- 2.1 The Committee investigates cases of alleged violations of the **WDSF Code of Ethics**. The Committee may initiate such investigations on its own initiative or as a result of a report directed to the Committee.
- 2.2 The Committee may also provide advisory opinions on any potential issue related to the Code of Ethics to the Presidium as well as to other persons in cases described in Articles 3.6, 4.2 and 4.3.7 of the **WDSF Code of Ethics**, if asked for. Such advisory opinions may also concern behaviour not directly connected to the involvement of a person in DanceSport or his or her duties, if a uniform regulation is considered to be appropriate.
- 2.3 The Committee carries out its duties entirely independently and avoids any third-party influence on the course of an investigation.

3. Parties

- 3.1 The only parties in the Committee’s procedures are the persons or legal entities alleged to have violated the **WDSF Code of Ethics** (hereinafter: “the Parties”).
- 3.2 Minors under 18 years of age must be represented in any proceedings of the Committee by their statutory representative, guardian or an empowered attorney. Legal entities are obliged to assign a representative for any contact with the Committee upon request.

4. Reports to the Ethics Committee

- 4.1 Anyone can file a report to the Committee, including Members of the Presidium or the Disciplinary Council, as long as s/he is not already obliged to decide the regarding issue by WDSF’s governing documents, provided always that the authority of the Presidium to ask the Ethics Committee for an advisory opinion (Article 2.2) remains reserved.
- 4.2 Reports to the Committee must be in writing and must fulfil the following minimum requirements to be notified to the Presidium or the General Meeting according to Article 5:
 - the full name, address and contact details of the writer,
 - the designation of the organisation or federation the writer belongs to,
 - a clear designation of the person alleged to have violated the **WDSF Code of Ethics**,
 - a complete description of the facts of the case,
 - evidence and names of witnesses to the alleged misconduct, if possible, and
 - a designation of the articles of the **WDSF Code of Ethics** alleged to be violated.
- 4.3 If a report to the Committee meets the formal requirements and a prima facie-assessment shows that there is probable cause of an offence of the **WDSF Code of Ethics**, the Committee is obliged to initiate an investigation and to file the date of the opening of such investigations, unless otherwise regulated in paragraphs 4.4 to 4.6 below.

- 4.4 The Committee does not consider submissions that violate human dignity or lack objectivity. In these cases, the Committee sets a short time limit to the presentor to edit his or her submission. If the writer fails to file an appropriate submission, the report is treated according to paragraph 4.5 below.
- 4.5 If the Committee decides that a report does not describe any kind of offence falling within the jurisdiction of the **WDSF Code of Ethics** or a report is sent to the Committee purely for querulous reasons, the Committee may decide not to initiate an investigation. Such decisions may be subject to an appeal to the Disciplinary Council (see Articles 7.1.2 and 7.13 of the **WDSF Internal Dispute Resolution Code**).
- 4.6 Reports to the Committee may also be sent anonymously or without a designation of the Articles of the **WDSF Code of Ethics** alleged to be violated. It is in the discretion of the Ethics Committee whether or not to initiate an investigation in these cases.
- 4.7 Reports to the Committee must be submitted to the Secretary of the Committee (hereinafter: “the Secretary”) by e-Mail, except in cases in which the Chairperson of the Committee must be informed directly according to WDSF’s Governing Documents. The Secretary or the Chairperson shall acknowledge receipt of all reports fulfilling the above mentioned requirements within a period of two weeks after they are received by the WDSF server.
- 4.8 Any communication directed to the Committee must be in English. Statements or evidence in other languages are not admissible.

5. Reports by the Ethics Committee

- 5.1 The Committee informs the Presidium of the results of all investigations according to Article 2.1 above at the latest after they are closed. If the Committee considers that also a WDSF Rule, Regulation or Operating Policy could have been violated, the Committee must inform the Presidium before entering into an investigation, with a view to Article 11.13 of the **WDSF Code of Ethics**.
- 5.2 Each investigation is closed by a report of the Committee, summarizing the facts of the case, the results of the investigation and including a suggestion for a sanction. Except for such reports, the Committee refrains from exercising any influence on the Parties or other persons involved in an investigation.
- 5.3 After having initiated an investigation in a certain case, the Committee is obliged to present a report on the case not later than one year after gaining knowledge of the facts or of the report according to Article 2.1.
- 5.4 Annually, the Committee notifies the Presidium summarily in writing of all reports directed to the Committee, including those that did not lead to an investigation.
- 5.5 Annually, the Committee reports to the General Meeting. This annual report includes a summary of the work of the Committee in the report year as well as a detailed description of all reports and investigations concerning Presidium Members and other persons directly elected by the General Meeting.
- 5.6 Advisory opinions of the Committee (Article 2.2) are only reported by the Committee if the inquirer agrees, provided always that such a disagreement of the inquirer does not preclude the Committee from initiating an investigation (Article 2.1) based on the facts of the inquiry. If the Committee is asked for an advisory opinion in cases of possible conflicts of interest, the Committee may suggest that the inquirer resign from his or her office if the reason for a conflict of interest cannot be eliminated.

- 5.7 Recommendations of the Committee neither bind the Presidium nor the General Meeting or any third person. Therefore, reports or any other statements of the Committee are not subject to a complaint to the Disciplinary Council or any other judicial institution.

6. Sanctions and provisional measures

- 6.1 Having regard to Article 14(1)(d) of the *Statutes*, the Presidium decides on sanctions and provisional measures based on the result of the investigations conducted by the Committee in all cases except in those in which an elected Presidium Member or another person who is elected by the General Meeting is accused of having violated the *WDSF Code of Ethics*. The Presidium may impose sanctions on employed persons, subject however to the imperative provisions of the law applicable to the employment agreement.
- 6.2 Based on the impact of the misconduct and the degree of the individual fault and responsibility, the Presidium is entitled to impose measures & sanctions according to Articles 3.12, 3.13 and 3.14 of the *WDSF Internal Dispute Resolution Code* in cases of contraventions of the *WDSF Code of Ethics*.
- 6.3 In cases in which the Presidium cannot impose a sanction or take measures according to Article 6.1 above, the Presidium may suggest to the General Meeting not to reelect a person or to expel him or her from office.
- 6.4 The General Meeting may not impose any sanctions in cases of alleged violations of the *WDSF Code of Ethics*. The right of the Annual General Meeting to revoke elected representatives from office according to Article 65 paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Swiss Civil Code remains reserved.

7. Relation to WDSF Rules, Regulations and Operating Policies

If a specific conduct constitutes a violation of the *WDSF Code of Ethics* as well as a breach of a WDSF Rule, Regulation or Operating Policy, the case shall be handled according to the principles set out in Article 11.13 of the *WDSF Code of Ethics*.

8. Power of the Ethics Committee to ask for information

- 8.1 The Committee may ask for information as set out in Article 10.4 of the *WDSF Code of Ethics*. Any person who is asked for information by the Committee or who is given information by the Committee is obliged to acknowledge receipt of the inquiry or communication.
- 8.2 The Chairperson and the Secretary of the Committee may set a time limit for responding to the Committee. Any unannounced and unexplained further delay is considered as a denial to give information, provided always that a lack of a response by the Parties is not to be held against them.
- 8.3 The Presidium may refuse to give information if negotiations with third parties are concerned. The decision to refuse information may be subject to an appeal to the Disciplinary Council. In such cases, the Chairperson of the Committee addresses the Disciplinary Council (see Articles 7.5.1, 7.6.1 and 7.9.2 of the *WDSF Internal Dispute Resolution Code* in particular).
- 8.4 The Disciplinary Council may refuse to give information if a pending procedure at the Disciplinary Council is concerned.

9. Time limits

- 9.1 There is no time limit for investigations by the Committee, but sanctions may only be imposed within the limits of the applicable Rules, Regulations and law.
- 9.2 Time limits set out in WDSF's governing documents may not be extended. Time limits set by the Committee may be extended once upon request by its Chairperson or its Secretary.

10. Members of the Ethics Committee

- 10.1 The Chairperson and the Members of the Committee as well as its Secretary are elected according to Article 19^{bis} of the *WDSF Statutes*. All seven shall have a significant involvement in sports and at least four of the six Members, including the Chairperson and the Substitute Member, may not be related otherwise with DanceSport.
- 10.2 The Chairperson, the Members of the Committee and its Secretary must have an impeccable reputation, a clear understanding of the English language and must be able to speak and write fluently in English.
- 10.3 In the event of death, resignation, incapacity or any other permanent inability of a Member or the Chairperson to perform his or her functions, the Presidium shall declare that s/he has ceased to hold office in the Ethics Committee and set the effective date. On the following date, the Substitute Member shall automatically assume and fully succeed to the office of an ordinary Member. If the Chairperson has to be replaced, the Presidium shall appoint one of the former ordinary Members to so serve his or her office until the day of the next General Meeting. The Annual General Meeting then must confirm the substituted person(s) in his or her or their office(s) or elect a new Member, Substitute Member and Chairperson (or either of them) for the remainder of the four year term.
- 10.4 If the Secretary of the Committee resigns or is permanently unable to perform his or her duties, the Presidium may appoint a replacement of the Secretary to so serve his or her office until the day of the next General Meeting. The Annual General Meeting then must confirm the replacing person as Secretary or elect a new Secretary for the remainder of the four year term.

11. Work of the Ethics Committee

- 11.1 The Chairperson and the Secretary inform the other Members, including the Substitute Member, of all notifications and reports directed or forwarded to the Committee. As long as the Committee has not yet started an investigation in a case, the Chairperson of the Committee directs the procedure in a case.
- 11.2 The Committee normally collects the required information by means of written inquiries or written questioning.
- 11.3 The Chairperson may appoint one of the ordinary Committee Members as a rapporteur. The Chairperson may delegate any sort of inquiries, including hearings, to the rapporteur.
- 11.4 The Members of the Committee normally communicate via e-mail, telephone or video conference and convey decisions in writing, purely based on the gathered information. Any communication of the Committee shall be in English. The Substitute Member shall take part in all of the Committee's discussions. The Secretary may participate in the communications and deliberations of the Committee.
- 11.5 Decisions in the Committee are taken by majority vote. The Chairperson and the Members are obliged to vote, except if paragraph 11.6 applies. Proxy votes are not permitted. The Secretary as well as the Substitute Member have no vote regarding formal decisions of the Committee.
- 11.6 If the Chairperson, one of the Members of the Committee, the Secretary or one of their family members (including cohabitants) is personally involved in a case that should be investigated by the Committee or he or she is otherwise biased, he or she may not take part in the further investigations of the Committee anymore and must inform the Chairperson and the Members of the Committee immediately of this fact. In these cases, the Substitute Member shall assume and fully succeed to the office and the voting right of an ordinary Member for that particular case. If the Chairperson was the person who had to recuse him/herself from the investigation, the longest-serving ordinary Member shall assume all responsibilities and tasks and may exercise the full authority of the Chairperson for that particular case. If more than one ordinary Member was elected in the same year, the Secretary shall appoint the Chairperson for that particular case by drawing lots.

- 11.7 The files of each investigation and all reports directed to the Committee have to be kept for at least ten years. They may be filed in electronic form. The Secretary is responsible for the correct archiving of the files of the Committee and a complete handover to his or her successor.
- 11.8 The Secretary of the Committee prepares all documents and statements issued by the Committee, including decisions. The Secretary also receives communication from outside the Committee (see Article 4.7 above) and supports the Committee in its work, e.g. by preparing its deliberations. The Chairperson of the Committee or the Member appointed as rapporteur (see Article 11.3 above) may delegate inquiries (except hearings) and notifications to the Secretary. In these cases, the Secretary may sign communications in the name of the person who devolved the inquiry unto the Secretary, making reference to this delegation. If the Secretary participated in the preparation of communications or other documents, including decisions, the Secretary may sign such documents together with the responsible person(s), but indicating his or her function.

12. Procedural rights of the Parties

- 12.1 If a report to the Committee accuses a person of having contravened the **WDSF Code of Ethics**, the Committee shall inform the Parties of the report only after collecting any evidence which in its view might be in any danger of being lost so that such loss may not interfere with the conduct of the investigation.
- 12.2 Before the Committee closes its investigation, the Parties have the right to be heard, to present their own evidence and to have access to all files of the case, including the report that initiated the investigation, provided always that the authorisations of the Presidium and the Committee not to disclose information, specified in paragraphs 12.3 and 12.4 below, remain reserved.
- 12.3 The Presidium may decide that information given to the Committee may not be disclosed to the Parties if confidential matters need to be safeguarded. Such denial of access to the files may be subject to an appeal to the Disciplinary Council (see Article 7.11.4 of the **WDSF Internal Dispute Resolution Code** in particular).
- 12.4 At the request of a person submitting any statement to the Committee, the Committee may decide not to disclose the name of that person to the Parties. If the Presidium later decides to sanction a person based on the investigations of the Committee or the General Meeting takes any action according to Articles 6.3 and 6.4 above, the statements or testimonies of such anonymous persons may not be used as the only evidence against a person.
- 12.5 The Chairperson of the Committee grants the Parties at least 30 days to file a statement after they had the chance to look at all files of the case.
- 12.6 The Parties have the right to file additional questions to the Committee in order to present them to any person who filed a statement or testimony to the Committee.
- 12.7 The Parties have the right to obtain a copy of the Committee's report and reasons.

13. Confidentiality

- 13.1 Anything disclosed to the Committee shall remain confidential and the Committee shall not make statement related to any matter that is pending before the Committee, unless otherwise stated in the provisions of the Parties' rights (Article 12) and the content of the Committee's information and reports (Article 5), provided always that the Disciplinary Council may be informed in circumstances that allow an appeal to the Disciplinary Council, but limited to the facts that the Disciplinary Council needs to decide the appeal.
- 13.2 Committee deliberations and votes shall be confidential.

- 13.3 The summary of the work of the Committee directed to the General Meeting does not contain the names of persons alleged to have violated the **WDSF Code of Ethics** except if they are Presidium Members or other persons directly elected by the General Meeting. If the Presidium imposes sanctions, the right to publish the names of concerned persons remains reserved.

14. Review

If an investigation has been closed, the Committee may reopen an investigation if new facts or evidence appear that may change the conclusion of an investigation. Parties may only present new facts and evidence to the Committee after investigations are closed, if they can prove that they had no reasonable chance to discover those facts or evidence until the end of the time limit set by the Committee (Article 12.5).

15. Development of relevant Codes

The Committee may recommend amendments to the **WDSF Code of Ethics** or this Code to the Presidium. If the Presidium decides not to present the proposed amendments in form of a motion at the following General Meeting, the Committee shall publish its recommendations in its annual report.

16. Cost

- 16.1 Members of the Committee as well as its Chairperson and its Secretary serve as volunteers. They are entitled to be reimbursed for travel, accommodation and other reasoned expenses.
- 16.2 The Ethics Committee renders its investigation results and any other communication free of charge.

17. Exemption from liability

The Chairperson, the Members of the Committee and its Secretary may not be held personally liable for any act relating to their work in the Committee as long as they do not directly violate the law.

18. Governing law

Following the **WDSF Statutes**, all procedures of the Ethics Committee are governed by Swiss Law.

19. Final clauses

- 19.1 The **Code of the WDSF Ethics Committee** is an integral part of the **WDSF Statutes**, according to Article 21 of the **Statutes**, and the WDSF Continental Associations and Associate Members are required to abide by the **WDSF Code of Ethics** and the **Code of the WDSF Ethics Committee**, as a term of their respective Membership Agreements.
- 19.2 The **Code of the WDSF Ethics Committee** has been accepted by the WDSF General Meeting on the occasion of its Annual General Meeting on 14 June 2015 in Granada, Spain. It enters into force on the day after this General Meeting. It applies to all violations of the **WDSF Code of Ethics** committed on or after that day.

This Code was adopted by the WDSF Annual General Meeting on 14 June 2015 in Granada, Spain (Version 1.0), and amended on the occasion of the WDSF Annual General Meetings on 12 June 2016 in Rome, Italy (Version 1.1), as well as on 12 June 2017 in Singapore (Version 1.2), and as well as on 09 June 2019 in Budapest, Hungary (Version 1.3).