

The Olympia Declaration

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Despite efforts spanning two decades to control doping in sport, the problem persists with no real signs of abating. International opinion leaders in antidoping and Olympic sport were invited to discuss the future ideal of an elite sport system free from doping. The International Olympia Symposium “Becoming an Olympic Athlete without Doping,” was held at the International Olympic Academy, in the shadows of the ancient games and served as a catalyst to promote a renewed commitment to Olympism as an ethical and educational vision of global elite sport (see www.olympia2019.gr for details). This declaration is the result of the symposium addressed to the international sports community and society, at large, seeking support in our concerted efforts to reduce and eliminate doping (Figs. 1–6).

We believe that:

- Doping and cheating threaten the essence of sport and the embodiment of the Olympic ethos and spirit. Doping practices and the associated persistent suspicion cast doubt on athletic achievements. The public at large clearly desires clean and fair sport, and athletes want to compete in a doping-free sport environment, providing strong support for antidoping efforts.
- The evolution of doping free or clean sport requires “out of the box” thinking. Athletes who compete without doping deserve our support. The focus on catching and sanctioning the perpetrators and telling athletes what

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Figure 1: Integrity in sport session: Yannis Pitsiladis (UK), Yuriy Ganus (Russia), Peter Nicholson (Australia), David Howman (New Zealand), Martial Saugy (Switzerland), Patrick Singleton (Bermuda), and Olivier Rabin (Canada).

they cannot do must be expanded to include new and innovative approaches. Athletes use doping for a plethora of reasons that vary depending on their cultural, economic, and social realities. Pragmatic antidoping needs to address the complex reasons for doping and provide solutions for athletes to avoid prohibited avenues of performance enhancement. To actively support athletes who choose to compete without doping, priority should be given to using state-of-the-art methods to educate athletes and coaches, to accurately detect doping in the least intrusive way, to impose sanctions on systemic doping, and to prevent inadvertent doping. The future of antidoping philosophy must be practical and realistic.

- Input from a wide range of stakeholders including the athletes, their families, coaches, sport organizations, medical and scientific experts, sponsors, and industry partners will be required to develop sound solutions. Holistic antidoping programs are emerging with a focus on critical understanding of doping, educational interventions, and effective deterrents to protect the clean athlete and promote a credible vision of elite athletic performance.

¹ Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of the body, will, and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example, and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles. [www.olympic.org/documents/olympic-charter]

²The manifestation of the ethics and values which promote community confidence in sports, including: fair and honest performances and outcomes, unaffected by illegitimate enhancements or external interests; and positive conduct by athletes, administrators, officials, supporters, and other stakeholders, on and off the sporting arena, which enhances the reputation and standing of the sporting contest and of sport overall. [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/national-integrity-of-sport-unit]

We are accountable to the global sports community and committed to promote the principles of Olympism¹ and sport integrity.² We declare our shared determination to protect and promote a vision of clean sport through a holistic antidoping model.

We propose a global alliance to promote Olympic values by protecting clean sport through holistic antidoping that integrates scientists, lawyers, international federations, athlete commissions, coaches, and other related organizations into policy development and execution.

We seek new global collaborations in the following priority areas:

- Education: 1) better understand the motivations of young athletes in making doping decisions and what “being clean” means to athletes; 2) improve the perception of antidoping and policy communication with current and developing young athletes.
- Implementation: 1) develop new strategies to prevent systemic doping and promote a clean sport culture at all levels; 2) empower athletes to stand up for clean sport; 3) focus on actively supporting and incentivizing clean athletes.
- Legal: ensure greater transparency and global fairness in testing, trials, and sanctions.



Figure 2: Writing of the declaration: Fabio Pigozzi (Italy), Miltos Ladikas (Germany), Yannis Pitsiladis (UK).



Figure 3: Participants at the ancient stadium of Olympia.



Figure 4: Olympism and Ethics in Sport session: Yannis Giossos (Greece), Andrea Petróczi (UK), Michael J. McNamee (UK) Sigmund Loland (Norway), Huanming Yang (China).



Figure 5: Laying of wreaths (Olivier Rabin, Canada) at the stele of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, where the heart of the founder of the modern Olympics rests.

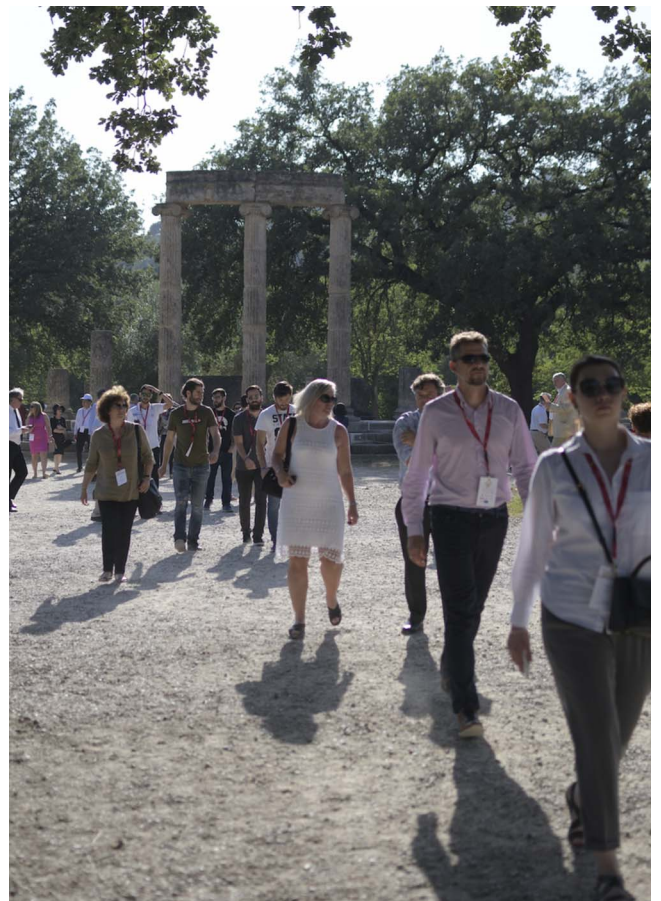


Figure 6: The international experts prepared for the symposium with an enlightening walking through Ancient Olympia where every 2 years the Olympic flame is lit.

- Finance: increase public funding for antidoping and encourage new sponsors and partners.
- Research and development: 1) improve and develop intelligent testing through accelerated adoption of new approaches, including innovative sample collection and storage capacity, based on standardized technology assessment procedures; 2) create more synergies between high-level scholars and research institutions at a global level into holistic antidoping.

Olympia Declaration Writing Group: Yannis P. Pitsiladis (chair), David Howman, Miltos Ladikas, Sigmund Loland, Michael J. McNamee, Andrea Petróczi, Fabio Pigozzi, and Patrick Singleton.

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