

Questions & Answers:

Adaptation of ISU Communication 2469 Individual Neutral Athletes (AINs)

How did ISU decide to allow skaters from RUS and BLR to return?

The International Skating Union (ISU) Council has consistently monitored the situation of skaters affiliated with its Members in Russia and Belarus since the protective measures introduced in [ISU Communication 2469](#) (2022), which were grounded in the safety of participants and the integrity of ISU Events and International Competitions. Taking into account the feedback of the IOC in December 2025 and May 2026, and mindful that eligibility should not be determined by nationality alone, the Council has decided to ease those measures on a controlled and monitored basis, with the skaters concerned participating as Neutral Athletes pending the signature of a separate form (Read [ISU Communication 2804](#)). Skaters should not be held responsible for the actions of their governments. Safety remains the guiding consideration for any further easing. The ISU will continue to monitor conditions at ISU events and will relax restrictions further only when satisfied that no safety or integrity issues arise, and reserves the right to reintroduce or increase restrictive measures should such issues emerge. In reaching its decision the Council also reviewed developments across the Olympic Movement, including the evolving positions and consequences of the actions of other International Federations, some of which have eased or lifted their restrictions.

Why did the ISU decide to change its rules now?

In December 2025, the IOC recommended that International Federations consider allowing younger (junior) athletes from Russia and Belarus to return to international competition, and in May 2026 it updated its recommendations in respect of athletes from Belarus. As a member of the Olympic Movement, the ISU has considered these recommendations. The decision to readmit skaters affiliated with its Members in Russia and Belarus as neutral athletes, and the scope of that readmission, is the ISU Council's own determination under the ISU Constitution and Regulations. The adaptation to [ISU Communication 2469](#) reflects this decision.

Has this decision come because ISU has a newly-elected Vice President from Russia?

No. Alexander Kibalko has been a member of the ISU Council since 2022 and, in order to avoid any perception of a conflict of interest, has not been permitted to sit within the ISU Council during discussions and decision-making on this topic.

Will Russian and Belarusian skaters be allowed to compete under their own country's colors, with uniform, flag and anthem?

Athletes from Russia and Belarus will be able to compete as neutral athletes without items of state recognition, namely national flags, national kit and national anthems. The ISU reserves the right to screen support staff of the athletes in order to establish neutrality. Article 10.2.1 of the ISU's Competition and Event Regulations requires that entries for ISU Events and International Competitions be submitted by the respective ISU Member.

Does the guidance apply to Challenger series and International competitions, not directly under the auspices of the ISU?

Yes. This guidance is equally applicable.

Will all skaters from Russia and Belarus automatically be eligible to compete as neutral athletes under the new measures?

Skaters affiliated with the ISU Members in Russia and Belarus are, in principle, eligible to participate as neutral athletes. Eligibility is presumed and is not determined by nationality. Eligibility will be withheld only where a skater is shown to fall within the disqualifying criteria, namely that they are currently in active service with the armed forces or a national security agency of Russia or Belarus, or that, since February 2022, they have taken active part in military operations in the war against Ukraine or have actively and publicly supported that war. Each case is assessed individually and on the evidence by the ISU Council (which may delegate the assessment to an independent eligibility panel), and is kept under review. This approach is consistent with the eligibility criteria applied by the IOC to neutral athletes.

Is the eligibility criteria the same as under ISU Communication 2680?

No. This less restrictive approach is undertaken after a full review of the inclusion of AIN athletes during the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026, where there were no security issues.

What about skaters who were not cleared in the earlier neutral athlete screening for the Olympic qualification events?

Eligibility is assessed individually and on the evidence. A skater's earlier assessment is taken into account, including the special neutral-athlete screening conducted for the 2025/26 Olympic qualification events which reviewed conduct since February 2022. A skater who was not cleared because they fell within the disqualifying criteria will not become eligible simply by signing the separate form. Past active and public support for the war is not set aside by a later confirmation. Where, however, a disqualifying circumstance has genuinely ceased and no other disqualifying conduct applies, the skater's eligibility may be reassessed going forward.

When will skaters from RUS and BLR be allowed to participate in ISU Events and International Competitions?

The adaptation of [ISU Communication 2469](#) relating to skaters representing the ISU Members from Russia and Belarus will take effect for the 2026-2027 season. Relevant allocations for participation in events will be communicated in due course.

Can officials from RUS and BLR start officiating again at ISU Events and International Competitions?

Not at this stage. In the first instance, the focus will be on the athletes and priority given to the safety-based measures around their readmission. Judges, Referees and other Officials affiliated with the ISU Members in Russia and Belarus may not officiate at ISU international competitions. Officials will not be reintroduced at this stage and there is no timeline for their readmission. The ISU will continue to monitor the situation and continue to work towards addressing a pathway towards a return of officials from Russia and Belarus. During the 2026/27 season the ISU will monitor the measures taken to date and assess whether the readmission of officials may become appropriate in a future season.

Does this change the ISU's position on the war in Ukraine?

No, the ISU continues to condemn all armed conflict around the world. The ISU continues to provide financial support to Ukrainian skaters through various initiatives, including the ISU Development Program, contributions to the Ukrainian Skating Federation, and a support program for displaced skaters. There is an ongoing analysis period for the updating of funding for this support program, through the ISU Council.

What anti-doping provisions will apply to skaters affiliated with the ISU Members in Russia and Belarus?

Skaters from Russia and Belarus have been and will continue to be subject to the same robust anti-doping testing applied to athletes from other member federations in order to ensure a clean and fair sporting environment for all.

Will the quotas for these neutral athletes be applied equally to the status at the time athletes from Russia and Belarus were first ruled ineligible for competition?

Where quotas apply, the number of neutral athletes is determined by the same objective, results and ranking-based qualification mechanics that apply to all skaters. Because skaters affiliated with the ISU Members in Russia and Belarus have not accumulated recent results or world ranking points during their absence of more than three years, their initial quota allocation is calculated on that objective basis, in the same way as for any skater returning after a comparable period, rather than by reference to nationality.

Why may skaters affiliated with the ISU Members in Russia and Belarus not skate in ISU competitions under their own national symbols, while nothing similar applies to skaters affiliated with the ISU Members in USA, Israel or others involved in global conflict?

The IOC recommendations have not included sanction of athletes affiliated with Member Federations other than Russia and Belarus. Furthermore, the ISU has not experienced safety-based issues with athletes and support personnel from any other countries. ISU continues to monitor ongoing events and calls for a return to peace.

Is there a timeline for International / ISU Events to be held in Russia or Belarus?

No. There is no such timeline in place at the present time. Why are athletes from other nations not asked to provide the same neutrality confirmation, even if their countries are involved in conflict? The measure is specific to the establishing of neutrality under the terms of readmission. ISU manages general neutrality confirmation around its events via its robust Code of Ethics and the recently revised Competition and Event Regulations. It is important to re-establish the primacy of sport on the ice, separating that from global geopolitical events.

Will teams from BLR, RUS (or as AIN delegation) be able to compete in team competitions?

Teams of Russian and Belarussian athletes forming an AIN delegation will be permitted to compete in team events subject to the general qualification criteria.

After the IOC's recommendations regarding Belarus, why are BLR athletes not allowed to compete under their own symbols of national recognition?

The ISU takes good note of the IOC Executive Board's view on restrictions applied to athletes from Belarus. The ISU will assess the conditions around the phased return to sport on the ice before deciding to further amend its protocols around its events.

What are the next steps and timelines to enable athletes from RUS and BLR to compete under their own national symbols?

The ISU will closely monitor the reintroduction of skaters and their supporting personnel at ISU Events and International Competitions. Consistent with the safety-based premise of [ISU Communication 2469](#), where the ISU is satisfied that no safety or integrity issues arise it will ease the restrictions further. Should such issues arise, it reserves the right to reintroduce or increase restrictive measures. Officials are not within the scope of this step and there is no timeline for their readmission. The ISU will keep these measures under review, also considering the global sporting context.