

To World Karate Federation (WKF)
Headquarters
wkf@wkf.net
Att.: Disciplinary and Legal Commission

Oslo, 09.02.2022

Formal complaint of provisional disaffiliation

With reference to article 5.17 in the statutes of WKF, we hereby submit a formal complaint. Please confirm the receipt of this.

Article 5.17

An appeal can be presented before the Disciplinary and Legal Commission within 21 (twenty-one) days following the notification of the provisional affiliation or disaffiliation decision by the Executive Committee and/or the final affiliation or disaffiliation decision by the Congress.

Introduction

We refer to your letter of 19. January 2022 in which WKF's Executive Committee temporarily excludes the Norwegian Martial Arts Association from membership in WKF with immediate effect.

The Norwegian Martial Arts Association (in Norwegian; Norges Kampsportforbund, hereafter NKF) hereby appeals the above decision, within the stated appeal deadline of 21 days. In short, we are very disappointed and surprised by the decision, which we find unreasonable. The decision seems to be largely based on incorrect facts, misinterpretations and misunderstandings, and should consequently be declared invalid. In addition, the case process within WKF appears to be somewhat unpredictable.

Among other things, we are surprised that it was only in the letter of 19.01.2022, in which NKF was excluded, where WKF concretized its accusations against NKF (the "grounds for provisional disaffiliation"). Because of this, we did not get any real opportunity to counter WKF's accusations against us, or to rectify the pointed-out conditions before the exclusion was a fact. This is contrary to important principles of legal certainty.

We have taken this matter very seriously. After receiving the first inquiry from WKF November 19th 2021, it has dominated the work of the executive board. The case has been discussed in the branch committee, karate section board and executive board. It has furthermore been discussed in meetings with the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NOC), in addition to informal communication with

several figureheads in both Norwegian and international karate. On January 20th this year, immediately after receiving the letter of exclusion, NKF reached out to WKF via mail in an attempt to establish dialogue. We wanted to discuss possible solutions to the conflict and at the same time clear up misunderstandings and conditions we considered to be misinterpretations. Unfortunately, this and other repeated inquiries to WKF both in writing and by telephone have not been answered.

NKF has been a member of WKF since 1974 and we have a clear opinion that we have always fulfilled our international obligations. We do not see that we have in any way violated WKF's statutes. Attached are the bylaws for NKF translated into English. We ask WKF to specify and elaborate with details which provisions in our bylaws are contrary to WKF's statutes.

It is important that WKF understands the obligations NKF has as a multi-sports association. The NOC, which is Norway's highest sports authority, encourage the various sports in Norway to form such multi-sports federations. NKF is mandated by the NOC to organize martial arts and combat sports, especially those of oriental origin. We organize more than 20 different martial arts and combat sports, including karate, taekwondo, jujitsu, kendo and wushu. All sports clubs with such and associated activities are referred to our association. We have about 40,000 members and approx. 5,000 of these practices the WKF competition form. Our other members practice other martial arts, combat sports and forms of competition.

NKF is obliged to take care of all our members regardless of competition form and international affiliation and is required to work to ensure that all our members are given the opportunity to practice sports based on their wishes and needs, without being subjected to unreasonable or disproportionate discrimination.

More detailed justification for the complaint by commenting on each individual point in WKF's Executive Committee's decision (the “grounds for provisional disaffiliation”) as follows:

Point 1:

We believe the allegations are based on misunderstandings and misinterpretations of our federation’s practice.

We acknowledge that the way we have presented karate on our websites may be misunderstood as NKF equating other branches with WKF. However, it is not the case that NKF equates other karate disciplines with WKF. Within karate as a martial art, WKF is the only officially recognized activity NKF manages, as the only international association NKF is a member of, the only organization NKF administrates national teams in and competes in internationally and is the only karate branch which NKF develops international referees.

In karate, WKF is the only activity in NKF defined as an “elite sport”, which receives elite sport funds specially designated for WKF activity from and by NOC.

We are aware that other national federations in WKF have similar issues as ours and are therefore confident that we will find ways to take care of this.

Point 2:

We believe this again to be based on misunderstandings and misinterpretations of our federation's practice. In karate, we have no membership in either national or international organizations, other than WKF.

Prior to receiving the letter of exclusion on January 19th this year, we were not aware that these style agreements could be in conflict with any of the statutes of WKF. If WKF, after gaining insight into what these style agreements actually regulate, still believes that there is a conflict between these and WKF's statutes, we ask for feedback. In such case, we will initiate a remediation process.

Point 3:

Knockout is a legal practice in Norway and is practiced by several of the combat sports in NKF. In Norway, there are strict rules that govern how sports organizations can practice knockout. As you can read in the letter from the Ministry of Culture, we have several members who must have an approved set of rules in order to practice their sport legally.

As a federation, we have taken care of this approval process for our members, both as a service, but also to ensure that none of our members practice their activity in violation of Norwegian law. We believe this safeguards all our sports, including WKF, in a good way.

If WKF believes that we as an association cannot organize sports where knockout is practiced, we ask for this to be clarified. Should this be the case, we ask for time to perform an analysis of possible consequences for the organization as a whole.

Point 4:

The allegation refers to a revision of May 27, 2018. We regret that the revision of the bylaws has not been submitted to WKF for approval.

As previously mentioned, we cannot see that our bylaws in any way violate WKF's statutes.

Point 5:

That we have done nothing in this case is simply not correct. We refer to our e-mail of November 10th 2021 where we have apologized for the incident to WKF. Internally, the chairman of our referee committee has been sanctioned and he has also apologized to the insulted delegate.

Point 6:

It is important for us to clarify to WKF that throughout the period we have been members of your organization (a period that extends over several decades), we believe ourselves to have taken care of karate and WKF in a good way in Norway.

In fact, until the inquiry of November 19th 2021, we were not aware that WKF had anything to complain about regarding our organizational structure as a federation or in relation to how our handling of WKF and karate in Norway.

This despite the NKF being a very transparent organization. We emphasize in particular that WKF - in accordance with WKF's statutes § 13.19 - has had a permanent place on our executive board and this member has participated in the board's meetings on an equal footing with the democratically elected board members. WKF has thus always had first-hand knowledge and full insight into our organization.

We nevertheless acknowledge that we have not attended enough congresses and such, and we apologize for this. Nevertheless, we must point out that we find it special that this is pointed out now, as we attended the congress in Dubai last autumn.

Other participations recent years:

Congress

2019 – WKF – Kjell Jacobsen

2020 – EKF – Anne Hovda

2021 – WKF – Nils Peter Just

2021 – Nordic – Nils Peter Just and Geir Hjerpaasen

Furthermore, we have participated in international competitions and have both Norwegian world champions and European champions. Norway has participated in all European Championships and World Cups since we became members of WKF.

In recent years, in addition to participating in the European Championships and the World Cup and despite Covid challenges, we have had participants in the following international competitions:

2020

10-12-1 Serie A Santiago

28/2-1/3 Premier League Salzburg

13-15/3 Premier League Rabat

17-19/4 Premier League Madrid

24-26/4 Premier League Paris

7-9/2 Junior EM Budapest

1-3/5 Youth League Limasol

19-21/6 Serie A Istanbul

2021

30/4-2/5 Premier League Lisboa

4-6/6 Youth League Limasol

2-4/7 Youth League Porec

3-5/9 Premier League Kairo

1-3/10 Premier League Moskva
29-31/10 Premier League Rabat
9-12/12 Youth League Venice

Furthermore, we conduct both local, regional and national conventions in accordance with WKF regulations. Although much of this has been canceled as a result of Covid-19 in the last two years, we believe the attached overview confirms that we have a high level of activity and that we represent WKF in Norway in a good way.

Conclusion:

With reference to the above statement, we request that the decision of the Executive Committee in WKF of 19.01.2022 be annulled or reversed, so that NKF's membership in WKF can be continued.

We also request that a dialogue can be established between our federations to clarify any misunderstandings and ensure a good process for the common good.

Best regards,



Tore Bigseth
President

Attachments:

- NKF's bylaws (recently updated based on changes from the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NOC), cf. <https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/tema/juss/diverse/informasjon-om-lovendringer-1.-januar-2022/>)
- NKF's standard agreement with different style organizations
- Activity list 2020 and 2021