



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach  
President

## **IFSI Opening Remarks**

### **Olympic House, 28 October 2019**

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It is a great pleasure and privilege to welcome you all to this third International Forum for Sports Integrity specifically dedicated to the prevention of the manipulation of competitions. We remember more than 15 years ago, when the sports movement started to consider this as dangerous for the integrity of sport as doping. Looking around the participants here today, it is truly encouraging to see what a wide range of stakeholders support us in this battle for clean sports. Whether you represent intergovernmental organisations, the Olympic Movement, or the sports betting operators – all of us here today reflect the unique nature of IFSI. It is a community that shares a common goal: to protect competitions from manipulation, in particular that linked to sports betting and related corruption.

The fight against the manipulation of competitions is particularly complex. It involves not only the sports movement, the athletes and their entourage, the sports officials, judges and referees, but also the actors of sports betting. This fight against manipulation of competition cannot be won without the engagement and actions of governmental authorities.

Therefore, we all can only succeed in our shared goal if we all bring our respective authority and areas of expertise together. Each of us here today has a very specific domain of responsibility. IFSI reflects this joint approach through cooperation and partnership.

It is this spirit of partnership that has defined the many initiatives that we have taken together since the launch of IFSI in 2015.

The most obvious example of this is the Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions. The IOC worked in partnership with the Council of Europe and its member states to help create this landmark international convention. It is in fact the only internationally applicable Convention specifically dealing with competition manipulation.

This Convention came into effect this past September, but it has already been implemented in a large number of countries, illustrating the spirit of the IFSI partnership in action. In this



respect, we are grateful for the support of the Council of Europe, who is represented here by Ms. Elda Moreno. We are looking forward to hearing from you on your experience of and expectations for this Convention. Already now, let me assure you that the Olympic Movement will continue to support the implementation of this Convention, in particular through the upcoming Convention Follow-up Committee.

The sports movement has already started implementing the Convention. A key initiative in this regard was the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions which was approved in 2015 by the IOC Executive Board and subsequently included in the Olympic Charter. The Code aims to provide sports organisations with harmonised regulations to protect all competitions from the risk of manipulation. The inclusion of the Code in the Olympic Charter essentially calls on all Olympic Movement stakeholders – including all National Olympic Committees, International Federations as well as IOC recognised organisations – to take all appropriate measures within their power to implement this Code. It is a very positive signal that all IFs on the Olympic programme have already implemented the Code and are compliant.

At the last IFSI meeting in 2017, we launched the Olympic Movement Unit on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions. Since its launch, the Unit has already initiated many joint actions, in partnership with many of our partners, who are all here today. Therefore, I would very much like to thank all the members of the advisory board for their important contribution.

Take for example the “Believe in Sport” campaign, which supports all IFs and NOCs in educating and raising awareness among athletes, referees, coaches and their entourage on the risks of competition manipulation. Another example is the initiative focused on intelligence exchange with the sports betting sector. In this respect, cooperation with public and private sports betting operators is key. This is why our thanks and gratitude go to these partners, as well as betting regulators and monitoring entities, many of whom are present here today.

We are seeing the spirit of the IFSI partnership in action in other areas as well.

In 2018, the IOC renewed its partnership with INTERPOL. Building on the successful partnership since 2016, INTERPOL and the IOC will deliver tailored workshops around the



world to support NOCs, IFs, law-enforcement agencies, government entities, betting regulators and operators in addressing competition manipulation and related corruption.

Also in 2018, the IOC and UNODC entered into an agreement to fight corruption linked to manipulation of competitions. The development of standard-setting guides and tools are a key focus of this collaboration. We are proud to announce that our latest concrete outcome of this partnership is the IOC-UNODC Guide on Reporting Mechanisms in Sport which is being launched today.

We are looking forward to hearing from both INTERPOL and UNODC later today about the progress of our respective initiatives from their point of view.

There will be another example of our deepening cooperation with law enforcement agencies, when the IOC will sign an MoU with EUROPOL today. This is one more important milestone in the fight against manipulation of competition.

In addition, we are also pleased to announce the launch of a new initiative today, the Sports Investigators Network. This network is composed of 200 trained sports investigators from IFs and National Sports Federations, NOCs or sports' disciplinary bodies responsible for investigating wrongdoing in sport. The aim of this new initiative is to share information, intelligence and best practices to tackle competition manipulation and related corruption in sport. It is another example of the spirit of IFSI partnership in action.

There are many more achievements and initiatives that will be discussed during the course of today. This IFSI meeting gives us the opportunity to look ahead and define the key priorities in strengthening our efforts to prevent competition manipulation.

Your presence here today shows the shared sense of responsibility that brings all of us together – the shared responsibility to do everything we can to protect clean sports and to strengthen the integrity of sport. We know that we can only make progress in partnership. In this spirit of IFSI partnership and commitment, I welcome you all to this third IFSI meeting and I wish you fruitful and lively discussions.