

## **Ansprache Ruth Metzler-Arnold – Treffen APK – IOC (Lausanne) – 28.8.2025**

Dear President of the IOC, dear Kirsty

Dear president of Switzerland's Foreign Affairs Committee, dear Laurent

Dear members of Switzerland's Foreign Affairs Committee

Dear Member of the IOC Denis Oswald, cher Denis

Dear General director of the IOC and dear director of the Olympic Games, dear Christophes

Dear attendees

Thank you very much for this invitation. I am delighted to be here and am convinced that this meeting will strengthen the mutual understanding between the International Olympic Committee and Switzerland, as the host country of the IOC. I would like to thank the President of Switzerland's Foreign Affairs Committee and those responsible at the IOC who initiated this meeting and have made it possible.

In 1915, the IOC was the first international sports organisation to establish itself in Switzerland. Today, over 70 international sports federations are based in Switzerland, around 60 of them in the canton of Vaud. A study conducted by the International Academy for Sports Science and Technology in 2021 shows that these federations generate added value of around 1.7 billion Swiss francs in Switzerland.

Added value is one thing. Even more important: These sports federations, the IOC above all, promote sporting values and Olympic values in our society. They encourage people to participate in sport, to compete fairly and to strive higher and further. At Swiss Olympic, we promote these values in Switzerland and support our member federations in this efforts. In this way, Swiss sport contributes to the physical and mental health of the population. From the international to the national and regional level – that is where we reach the people.

International networking and maintaining contacts are extremely important in this regard. After Swiss sport took a somewhat more cautious approach on the international stage for a few years, we now want to strengthen our commitment again.

I don't know if you are all aware of this, but from 2007 onwards, no fewer than five Swiss nationals – Josef Blatter, Patrick Baumann, Gian-Franco Kasper, René Fasel and Denis Oswald – were members of the International Olympic Committee for several years. As IOC members, they took part in the IOC sessions and decided on the development of world sport and the allocation of the Olympic Games.

We are now some way removed from this involvement and influence in global sport – even though Switzerland continues to have two very influential IOC members in Denis Oswald, former president of the World Rowing Federation, and FIFA president Gianni Infantino. As president of Swiss Olympic, I have set myself the goal of

strengthening the international networking of Swiss sport. Switzerland should once again take up more seats and exert more influence in international sports committees and play an important role there. We have enough capable women and men. I don't mean primarily what is being said and written: that I now have to join the IOC. I mean something else: my vision is that in the coming years, representatives of Swiss sport will be able to take seats on the governing bodies of European and, above all, world sports federations – and that one or two Swiss personalities could once again take seats on the IOC via the presidencies of world federations. We have already achieved some important successes at European level this year. In the association of the European Olympic Committees, we are now represented on the Ethics Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, the E-Sports Commission and, with myself, on the Audit Committee.

We are on the right track and want to actively continue this development. The aim is to ensure that our values are increasingly incorporated into international sports federations.

Among other things, international networking will help to bring major sporting events to Switzerland, which we want to use as flagship projects to further develop Swiss and international sport.

It is undisputed that we are experts in organising World and European Championships, and this is also recognised abroad. I am happy to recall the Youth Olympic Winter Games, which took place here in Lausanne in 2020 and set new standards in sustainability and fan engagement. We want to prove that European Championships and Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games can also be a success in Switzerland. One thing is clear: this cannot be achieved without investment! And with regard to politics, I would say:

We need you to be open to recognizing the value that a major sporting event brings to Switzerland in various areas. We need you to see financial support as an investment that pays off. An investment in sport, in the people of our country, in young people, in our society. And not just as a financial expense.

With the recent European Women's Football Championship, we saw just how much impact a major sporting event can have: peaceful visitors from numerous countries who were impressed by Switzerland. Images of the Icelandic national team jumping into Lake Thun were seen around the world. The Swiss public was ecstatic about the performances of the players, and the amount of support brought tears to their eyes.

These emotions and images inspire young people, they motivate them to pick up sports and to take on responsibility. This is exactly what we are working towards by organising sporting events. The Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Switzerland would also stir up such emotions. And perhaps as early as 2030, when 7-9 sports will hold their European Championships simultaneously in Switzerland. However, we have not yet made a final decision on whether to bid.

I am convinced that today's meeting in Lausanne will promote understanding between sports and Switzerland's politics and will bring us one step closer to our big dream of hosting the Winter Games in our country.

Thank you very much for your attention and support!