Gymnastics Ethics Foundation

Annual Report 2023



GYMNASTICS ETHICS FOUNDATION

Gymnastics Ethics Foundation
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President's Message

As we move into the fifth year of operation at the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation, we reflect on a period of substantial growth and critical engagement. Last year marked the completion of our founding Council's first term – a term filled with dedication and progress towards a more ethical gymnastics environment.

In 2023, we have welcomed new members to our Council, enriching our team with diverse expertise and perspectives crucial for the challenges ahead. Elda Moreno brings critical human rights expertise, and Aagje Vanwalleghem brings us the perspective and sensitivity of a gymnastics athlete, coach and success counselor. We continue to cherish the legacy of commitment from past members, such as Ivana Hong, whose insights as an athlete have been invaluable. Ivana continues to support our mission, and we are grateful for her ongoing involvement.

Our Foundation has observed an increase in case reports, a trend that underscores the growing trust in our reporting mechanisms rather than an actual rise in ethical violations. This increase is indicative of heightened awareness and confidence in the system, allowing for more voices to be heard and more issues to be addressed. It is a testament to the community's recognition of our role as a safeguard against unethical practices.

The year 2023 has also been one of introspection and planning, culminating with the launch of the *Gymnasts 2028* Strategic Framework, providing focus and direction to enhance our impact, focusing on integrating human rights expertise and lived experiences into our activities. These elements are crucial as we aim not only to address issues reactively but to foster a proactive culture of dignity and respect within the gymnastics community. *Gymnasts 2028* outlines a bright vision that the GEF seeks to achieve underpinned by a strong, relevant, agile strategic framework. The GEF Council wholeheartedly established and adopted this framework focusing on our collective responsibilities to create a safe, thriving, and impactful sport for all gymnasts to participate in throughout their lives.

Our commitment extends beyond immediate investigations. Guided by *Gymnasts 2028*, we strive for a holistic approach to accountability, ensuring that all behaviors are addressed, whether individual or collective. It is essential that the community knows that inaction and silence can be just as detrimental as actual individual acts of abuse themselves. Conversely, positive communication and action have tangible effects when it comes to building a supportive and healthy environment for gymnastics training and competition. Through our efforts, we aim to cultivate an environment where ethical breaches are not only reported but prevented.



As we forge ahead, the learnings from the past years will guide our initiatives in line with our strategic framework. We remain steadfast in our mission to support and protect the gymnastics community, ensuring that the sport is safe and respectful for all. Together, we continue to build on our foundation of integrity and respect, driving meaningful change in gymnastics around the world.

Micheline Calmy-Rey, President



The Foundation and its Mission

After the exposure of the abuse scandal within USA Gymnastics, there arose a clear necessity for an independent entity to safeguard all individuals involved in gymnastics. Consequently, in December 2018, the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) established the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation (referred to as "Foundation" or "GEF"). Its primary objective is to shield all participants in gymnastics from harassment and abuse, reinforce the accountability and effective governance of both the FIG and National Federations (NFs), and oversee disciplinary proceedings. Consequently, the Foundation is primarily focused on three key areas: **safeguarding**, **compliance**, and **disciplinary** actions.

Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Section of the Foundation endeavors to safeguard all individuals involved in gymnastics by providing a confidential platform for anyone to report incidents of violence, harassment, and/or abuse. Reports can be submitted through the Foundation's website, by phone, or via email.

Upon receiving a report, the Foundation conducts an initial evaluation and proceeds to either initiate a formal investigation, commence disciplinary actions, or close the case, depending on the findings (see Appendix A for a summary of the process). With each case it handles, the Foundation also strives to enhance the safeguarding and good governance regulations and mechanisms of NFs.

Furthermore, to foster a healthier and safer environment within the sport, the Foundation has commenced dialogue with essential stakeholders while creating its strategic framework *Gymnasts 2028*. Through this initiative the Foundation aims to cultivate a safer sporting environment for all participants.

Compliance

The Foundation has a dual role: firstly, it ensures that the FIG adheres to its internal regulations, policies, and procedures, along with compliance with the IOC Code of Ethics, the World Anti-Doping Code, and its International Standards. Secondly, it offers counsel and support to NFs to enhance their governance practices and ensure compliance with established standards.

Disciplinary

The Disciplinary Section of the Foundation consists of two bodies tasked with disciplinary actions: the Disciplinary Commission and the Appeal Tribunal (see Appendix C for details regarding members).

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated by the GEF Director before the Foundation's Disciplinary Commission for alleged violations of FIG policies and procedures, as outlined in the FIG Code of Discipline. Upon conviction, it becomes the FIG's responsibility to ensure the enforcement of any sanctions imposed by the Disciplinary Commission.

In adherence to procedural fairness, respondents have the right to appeal a decision issued by the Disciplinary Commission to the Foundation's Appeal Tribunal. Subsequently, decisions by the Appeal Tribunal can be further appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Gymnastics Ethics Foundation Values

The *Gymnasts 2028* Strategic Framework defines the Foundation's values as follows:



Gymnasts 2028

In March, the Foundation launched its new strategic framework *Gymnasts 2028*, aimed at making the sport of gymnastics safe, thriving and impactful for all. *Gymnasts 2028* takes a **human-centric approach**, placing gymnasts and the people that support and serve gymnastics at the heart of its work. It has been designed to engage all key stakeholders inside and outside the institutional gymnastics system.

The timeframe of *Gymnasts 2028* structures the Foundation's work and allows for impactful action leading up to the **Paris 2024** and **Los Angeles 2028** editions of the Olympic Games. Both Games are regarded as critical benchmark moments for the sport of gymnastics specifically, and for wider issues concerning ethics, integrity and safety in global sport more generally.

Drawing lessons from the Foundation's first four years of operations, *Gymnasts 2028* outlines urgent challenges and trends in gymnastics and describes how the Foundation seeks to address them through five strategic priorities.

Priority 1: HARM PREVENTION – Launch protective and pre-emptive initiatives

Welcome of new Council Member

In early 2023, the GEF Council welcomed Elda Moreno, a distinguished human rights lawyer specialising in children's rights and change management, as a new member. Elda's inclusion is a significant step towards enhancing harm prevention within the realm of gymnastics. Her extensive expertise in international child rights and human rights standards is expected to be instrumental in aligning the sport with the goals outlined in the *Gymnasts 2028* initiative by integrating these crucial standards into the sport's rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and practices.

Introduction of Internal Guidelines on Special Measures for Protecting Vulnerable Witnesses

During 2023, the Foundation also introduced *Internal Guidelines on Special Measures for Protecting Vulnerable Witnesses* aimed at engaging, supporting, and safeguarding survivors, whistleblowers, and investigative journalists involved in exposing unethical behavior. These guidelines build upon the existing provisions of the FIG and GEF rules. Members of the GEF Disciplinary Commission and Appeal Tribunal were consulted in their drafting. They enhance the duty of care in handling sensitive safeguarding issues, particularly for witnesses giving in-person testimony, witnesses under the age of 18, or cases where the Panel President anticipates witnesses may face significant distress during their testimony.

The Guidelines prioritise minimising the potential harm inflicted on vulnerable witnesses during proceedings, allowing for various methods of providing testimony and offering tailored recommendations based on the severity of each case. They also facilitate the implementation of special protection measures when witnesses express fear or distress and allow for anonymous participation when deemed necessary.

Strategic priorities 2022 – 2028



Strategic priorities 2025 – 2028



Gymnasts 2028, Gymnastics Ethics Foundation's Strategic Framework 2023-2028

Priority 2: DISCIPLINE AND ADJUDICATION – Strengthen capacity and capability to manage grievance mechanisms and disciplinary systems

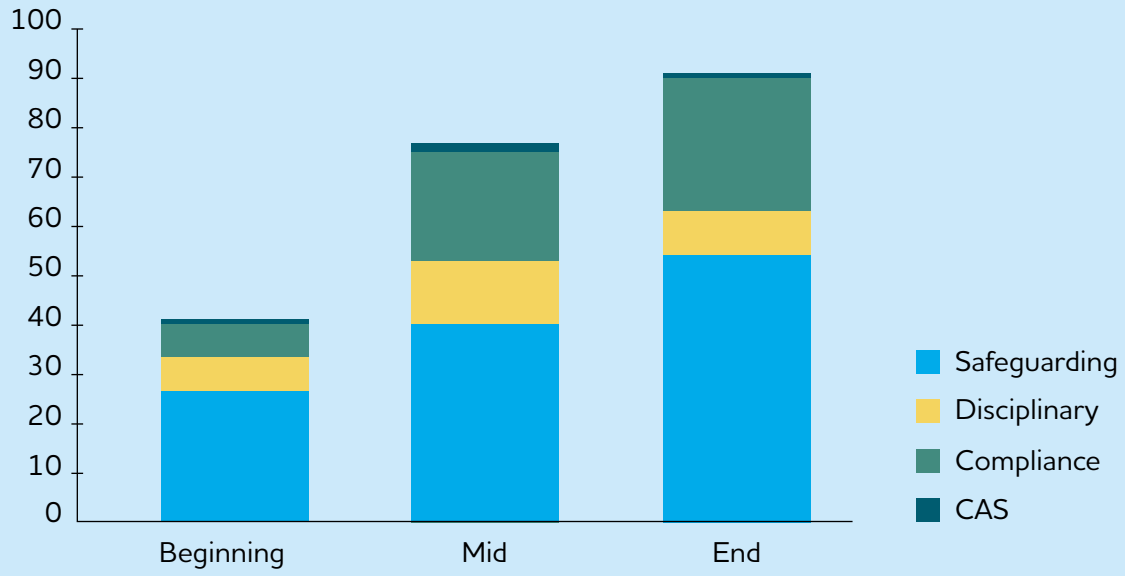
Additional case manager

In response to a continued increase in cases in 2023, the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation has effectively started to address its aim of strengthening its capacity and capability to manage grievance mechanisms, adjudication, and disciplinary systems. To enhance its case management capacity, the Foundation initiated the recruitment process for an additional case manager, with the planned start date in 2024. This proactive approach not only ensures timely responses to grievances but also underscores the Foundation's commitment to providing comprehensive support to complainants, thereby reinforcing trust in its adjudication and disciplinary processes.

Four new members on Appeal Tribunal

In view of the increasing number of cases dealt with by the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation, the Council also decided to expand the capacity of the Appeal Tribunal by welcoming four new members: Richard Bush, Jan Kleiner, Catherine Pitre and Kendrah Potts took up their roles in 2023.

Overview of open cases throughout 2023



Priority 3: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT – Enhance capability to provide governance support and capacity development services through compliance and risk management

Athlete Advisory Panel

Perhaps most notably, the approval of the Athlete Advisory Panel (AAP) in 2023 by the GEF Council represents a significant milestone in the GEF's quest for enhanced governance support and athlete input. By incorporating the voices and perspectives of athletes into its decision-making processes, the Foundation acknowledges the pivotal role that athletes play in shaping the sport's future. This inclusive approach not only empowers athletes but also enables the GEF to develop more nuanced and effective strategies for risk management. By leveraging athletes' firsthand experiences and insights, the Foundation can better anticipate and mitigate potential risks, thereby fostering a safer and more transparent environment for all stakeholders involved.

The project to establish the APP will commence by introducing the GEF and its mission to athletes across all FIG disciplines in early 2024. Information flyers will be distributed at major competitions to raise awareness. This sets the stage for a candidature process after the Paris 2024 Olympic Games to select six athletes, representing each continent equally, to form the core group of the APP in its initial phase.

Participation in Safe Sport Symposiums

Moreover, the active participation of GEF team members and its President in the "Our Safe Sport Journey" Symposium at the FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Championships 2023 in Antwerp underscored the Foundation's commitment to staying at the forefront of safeguarding practices. By engaging with stakeholders and experts in the field, the Foundation not only gained invaluable insights but also reinforced its dedication to promoting a culture of safety and integrity within the gymnastics community. This presented a valuable opportunity for the GEF team to share insights with stakeholders in the gymnastics community and to gain a deeper understanding of the various challenges National Federations have encountered globally, as well as the strategies they have adopted to address them.

The GEF also contributed its knowledge and learned about best practices in other sports by participating in the Safeguarding in International Sport Symposium webinar hosted by LawInSport.

Advisory letters and reports

The Foundation has significantly advanced its aim to enhance capability in governance support and capacity development through implementing robust compliance and risk management measures. By providing policy recommendations to NFs encountering challenges in efficient complaint processes, the Foundation intervened to address systemic issues. Recognising the critical need for efficient and transparent procedures, the Foundation has endeavored to provide tailored guidance on enhancing their complaint managing processes, ensuring that NFs may effectively address grievances and uphold ethical standards within their respective jurisdictions.

In summary, the GEF's proactive measures, including advisory interventions, strategic engagement, and athlete inclusion, collectively signify a comprehensive and dynamic approach to governance support and risk management. By prioritising compliance and transparency while embracing stakeholder input, the GEF hopes to lead the gymnastics community towards a more ethical future.

Partnerships and collaboration

Safeguarding expertise resides in an international community of experts and organisations dedicated to the cause of keeping sport safe for all. The diversity of challenges and lived experience contributes to the development of solutions through sharing of tried-and-true practices. This year, the GEF continued to collaborate with the following organisations in an informal capacity, so as to inform its processes and draw on relevant expertise as needed:

– Change the Game

– Grevemberg Strategies Limited

– Gymnasts4Change

– INTERPOL

– International Safeguards for Children in Sport

– IOC/Sportsoracle

– Safe Sport Sweden

– SportAccord

– Swiss Sport Integrity

– The Army of Survivors

– The Centre for Sport and Human Rights

– The Trauma Informed Practice Institute

– US Center for SafeSport



Communications

In the first quarter of 2023, the communications focus was very much on promoting the launch of *Gymnasts 2028*, the Foundation's new strategic framework setting out its current state-of-play, strategic priorities and core activity areas until 2028, how to initiate change, and future ambitions. Some core activities featured under the five different priorities have a strong communications dimension, such as "Stakeholder Engagement" under Priority 1 (GEF Harm Prevention Activity); and "Media Ethics Programme" under Priority 4 (GEF Growth Activity).

On the occasion of the launch, the Foundation organised a briefing for a number of news agencies and key media outlets and issued a dedicated press release linking to the full document. This press release was also published on the GEF website, cross-promoted on LinkedIn and distributed by e-mail to the GEF ecosystem, including but not limited to the gymnastics community, intergovernmental bodies, governments, sport organisations, human rights and civil society organisations, integrity and dispute bodies, and commercial partners. The feedback received from these stakeholders and the pickup by media outlets (including the likes of Reuters, AP, BBC and ESPN) was very positive and followed up by a number of one-on-one media interviews.

On the communications side, *Gymnasts 2028* will serve as an important reporting tool, allowing to assign the Foundation's activities to clearly defined strategic priorities, with the report at hand providing a good example.

The launch of *Gymnasts 2028* further increased the Foundation's reach and visibility, which is crucial for the success of its mission. All gymnasts should know about the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation's existence, its independent nature, its expertise, and supporting role. In 2023, the Foundation also used the know-how and voice of its new athletes' representative on the GEF Council, Ms Aagje Vanwalleghem, to reach out to gymnasts and advocate for safe sporting environments. As a former elite gymnast, an Olympian and a survivor, Aagje uses her experience to promote ethics in gymnastics through several important roles and will continue to support the Foundation's communication activities.

The ever-growing number of reports about all forms of harassment and abuse received by the Foundation indicates that awareness about its mandate has increased among the gymnastics community. Hence, the communication initiatives implemented throughout the last years are showing results. Transparent reporting about the Foundation's activities and clear messaging on its independent nature remain key to further build trust and credibility across all stakeholders.

By growing its presence on LinkedIn and sharing insights at external events, the Foundation in 2023 also continued to further expand its network with the broader gymnastics' community, other expert organisations, and survivors. Sharing expertise and learning from lived experiences contributes to finding global solutions to better protect the physical and mental well-being of athletes, which itself has turned out to be a significant challenge across all sports and corners of this world.



The Foundation's 2023 communications at a glance

– 14 news blog publications on the Foundation's website.

– Timely replies to several media inquiries from across the world relating mostly to *Gymnasts 2028* and specific cases.

– Weekly posts on the Foundation's LinkedIn account to inform, share and grow the network. In September, the 1k followers threshold was surpassed on LinkedIn.

– Presentations at four high-level external events to share expertise and advocate.

– Leveraging four international days celebrated worldwide to raise awareness about the importance of safe sport.

Specific activities to highlight

March Promotion of the launch of *Gymnasts 2028*, the Foundation's new strategic framework, to media, institutional stakeholders and the public.

April The Foundation features in ABC's podcast The Ticket by Tracey Holmes on "The Ethics of Sport - Driving Change".

May The Foundation shares insights about the GEF's mission and activities with participants of the Executive Master in Global Sport Governance (MESGO).

July Announcement of Ms Elda Moreno, a human rights lawyer specialised in children's rights and change management, as new Council member.

August The Foundation celebrates and promotes Safe Sport Day, recommitting to the pledge and announcing Ms Aagje Vanwalleghem as the new athletes' representative on its Council.

October The Foundation addresses participants at the "Our Safe Sport Journey" symposium, co-organised by the FIG and the Royal Belgian Gymnastics Federation at the sidelines of the Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in Antwerp (Belgium).

November The Foundation participates in an expert panel on "Coverage of Cases of Abuse in Sport" at a seminar organised by the Council of Europe for sports media professionals from 27 countries.
Promotion of the Foundation's new internal guidelines on special measures for protecting vulnerable witnesses.
Publication of Foundation's Appeal Tribunal decision which upholds Ms. Viner's two-year sanction – a case that generated significant public interest

December Promotion of World Human Rights Day and participation in the Sporting Chance Forum where the Foundation met with Canadian Sports Minister Ms Carla Qualtrough.



Moving Forward

The mission of the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation persists as we recognise that the resolution of a disciplinary case is merely a step towards a larger goal rather than the conclusion of an issue. A case's closure does not guarantee the cessation of inappropriate behavior; rather, it highlights the need for continuous vigilance and systemic change. Our approach moves beyond treating incidents as isolated events, focusing instead on identifying and rectifying the root causes of non-accidental violence and ethical breaches within gymnastics.

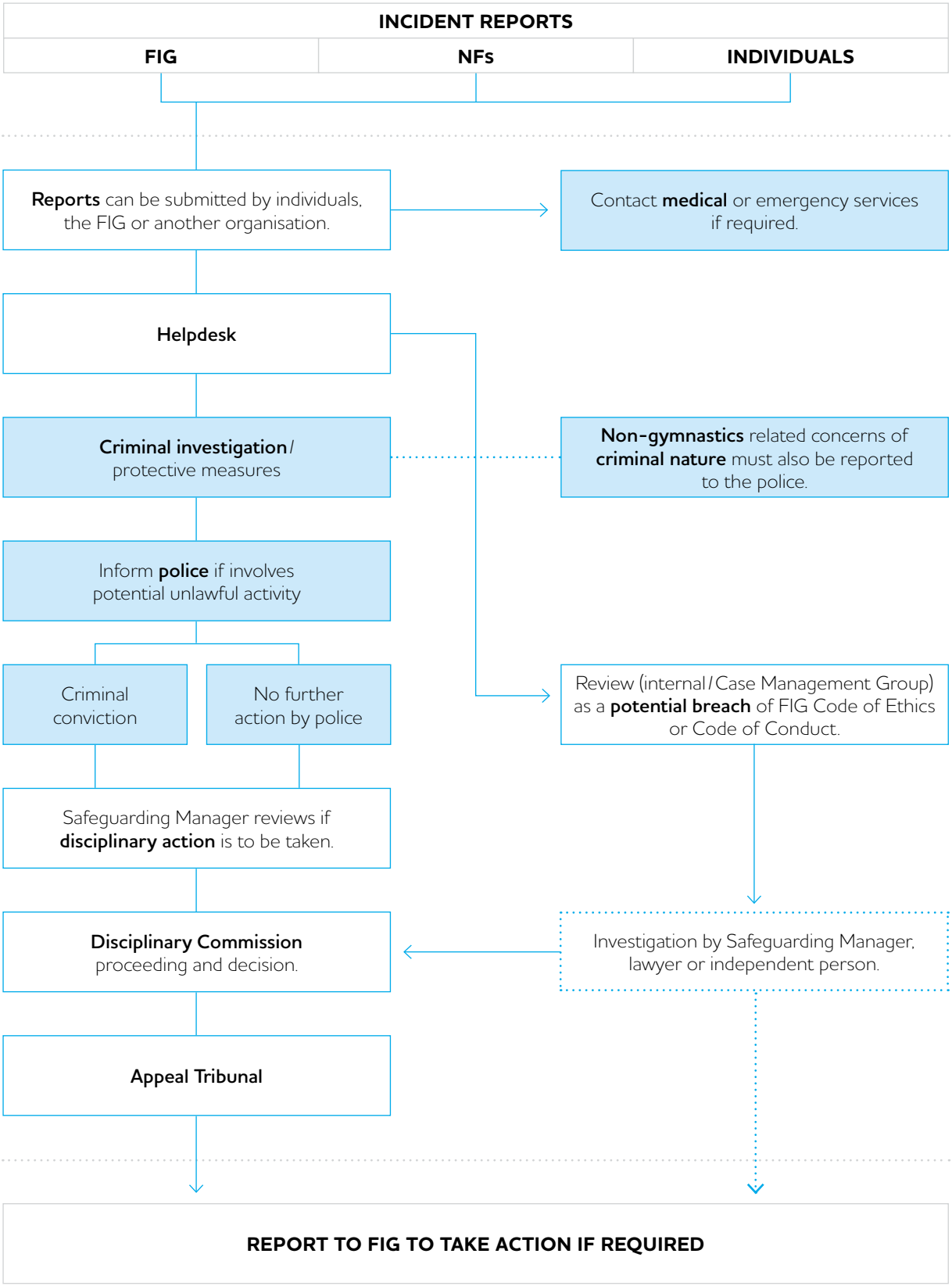
In 2024, our efforts will be deeply informed by the insights gained from past cases. These insights are integral to the development and implementation of the *Gymnasts 2028* strategic framework, which aims to embed holistic solutions into the fabric of the gymnastics community. Our objective is clear: to leverage these (often painful) lessons to foster a culture of safety and integrity that permeates every level of the sport, globally.

We are committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders in the gymnastics ecosystem, both institutional and individual. Together, we will strive to create and maintain an environment where ethical practices are not only encouraged but are a fundamental expectation. It is through this united effort that we can achieve lasting change and ensure a safer, more respectful future for all participants in the sport.



Appendix A

Overview of the Foundation's Processes



Appendix B

Meet the 2023 Foundation's Team

Management

ALEXANDER MCLIN, Director
Attorney at Law
Member, Court of Arbitration for Sport
Member, ASOIF Governance Task Force
Former Executive Director, ASA — Swiss Arbitration Association
Former CEO & Secretary General, FEI

MARTINA COXOVA, Manager Safeguarding & Operations
Experienced lawyer and project coordinator with a particular interest in ethics and governance

Council

MICHELINE CALMY-REY, President
Former President, Federal Councillor, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation

JEAN-PIERRE MORAND, Member
Treasurer
Attorney at LawPartner, Kellerhals Carrard

SLAVA CORN, Member
Honorary Vice President, FIG

ELDA MORENO, Member
Human rights lawyer, specialised in children's rights and change management

AAGJE VANWALLEGHEM, Member
Athletes' representative, Olympian, and safe sport advocate

HRH FEISAL AL HUSSEIN, Member
President, Jordanian Olympic Committee
Member, IOC Executive Board

Auditor

FIDUCIAIRE SAUGY SA, Saugy SA is a member of EXPERTsuisse and has federal accreditation as an auditor.
www.fiduciaire-saugy.ch

Appendix C

Members of the Foundation's Disciplinary Commission and Appeal Tribunal (in 2023)

Disciplinary Commission

The functions of the Disciplinary Commission are mainly to:

- Request statements from the parties or independent experts.
- Conduct hearings.
- Investigate and make decisions in disciplinary cases under its authority.
- Impose disciplinary sanctions.

Members

Victor Berezov
Laurence Burger
Michael Cook
Thomas Hayn
Mirjam Koller Trunz
Maximilien Lehnen
Dominique Maillot
Daniele Moro
Melanie Schärer
Matthias Scherer
Dorothée Schramm
Fayçal Zemni

Appeal Tribunal

The functions of the Appeal Tribunal are to:

- Hear and decide the appeals lodged by any federation, gymnast, judge, or other person directly affected by a decision of the Disciplinary Commission, the FIG Congress, or the GEF Council.
- Hear and decide appeals against sanctions imposed during competitions (as provided for under the FIG Statutes).

Members

Parvaiz Ahmad
Jane Bickerstaff
Richard Bush
Rafael Resende De Andrade
Valérie Horyna
Jan Kleiner
Edgardo Munoz Lopez
Catherine Pitre
Kendrah Potts

Appendix D

The Foundation's 2023 Audited Financial Accounts

FIDUCIAIRE
SAUGY

Lausanne, May 8th, 2024
LC/vd - 3

Report of the statutory auditor
to the foundation council of
FONDATION D'ETHIQUE DE
LA GYMNASTIQUE

LAUSANNE

Report of the statutory auditor on the limited statutory examination

As statutory auditor, we have examined the financial statements (balance sheet, income statement and notes) for the financial year ended December 31st, 2023.

These financial statements are the responsibility of the foundation council. Our responsibility is to perform a limited statutory examination on these financial statements. We confirm that we meet the licensing and independence requirements as stipulated by Swiss law.

We conducted our examination in accordance with the Swiss Standard on the Limited Statutory Examination. This standard requires that we plan and perform a limited statutory examination to identify material misstatements in the financial statements. A limited statutory examination consists primarily of inquiries of foundation personnel and analytical procedures as well as detailed tests of foundation documents as considered necessary in the circumstances. However, the testing of operational processes and the internal control system, as well as inquiries and further testing procedures to detect fraud or other legal violations, are not within the scope of this examination.

Based on our limited statutory examination, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial statements do not comply with Swiss law and the foundation's articles of incorporation.

The statutory auditor
FIDUCIAIRE SAUGY SA

Auditor in charge
L. Chappuis, Licensed Audit Expert

Enclosures : Financial statements 2023

Appendix D – The Foundation's 2023 Audited Financial Accounts

Balance sheet

ASSETS (CHF)	Notes	31.12.2023	31.12.2022
Current assets			
Cash & cash equivalents	4.0	82'416.67	63'310.69
Current investments	5.0	53'040.00	49'075.00
Accounts receivable	6.0	819.00	20'909.50
Prepayments	7.0	8'959.75	9'663.75
Total current assets		145'235.42	142'958.94
TOTAL ASSETS		**145'235.42**	**142'958.94**

LIABILITIES	Notes	31.12.2023	31.12.2022
Current liabilities			
Operating creditors	8.0	10'353.65	23'585.75
Other short-term interest-bearing debts	9.0	144.33	123.12
Accrued expenses	10.0	42'983.95	55'211.83
Total current liabilities		53'481.93	78'920.70
TOTAL LIABILITIES		**53'481.93**	**78'920.70**
Equity			
Foundation capital		2'000'000.00	2'000'000.00
Retained Profit/(Loss)		(1'935'961.76)	(1'032'456.22)
Annual result		(27'715.25)	(903'505.54)
Total equity		91'753.49	64'038.24
TOTAL EQUITY		**91'753.49**	**64'038.24**
TOTAL LIABILITIES		**145'235.42**	**142'958.94**

The notes to the financial report are available on the Foundation's website.

Appendix D – The Foundation's 2023 Audited Financial Accounts

Income statement

IN CHF	Notes	31.12.2023	31.12.2022
Reimbursement procedural fees		15'500.00	28'226.00
Fines		-	10'000.00
Allowance for doubtful accounts		5'830.33	(8'330.33)
Total revenues		**21'330.33**	**29'895.67**
Investigation costs		(38'512.13)	(114'087.74)
Legal fees		(99'070.05)	(96'903.54)
Disciplinary section		(24'415.38)	(23'609.58)
Foundation council fees		(42'300.00)	(37'110.51)
Management expenses		(5'025.94)	(7'069.61)
Staff charges		(443'831.65)	(417'167.42)
Office rental and maintenance		(7'001.00)	(6'921.90)
Insurance costs		(1'186.15)	(1'165.50)
Office and administration costs		(5'043.76)	(6'198.00)
Phone & internet		(2'698.80)	(3'336.45)
Accountancy and auditing fees		(11'683.80)	(13'409.15)
Communication costs		(6'961.99)	(4'961.98)
Third-party services		(49'211.88)	(57'945.05)
Total operating expenses		(736'942.53)	(789'886.43)
Operating result		**(715'612.20)**	**(759'886.43)**
Financial income	11.0	5'135.00	36'637.28
Financial expenses	12.0	(9'452.10)	(180'152.06)
Financial results		4'317.10	143'514.78
Extraordinary income	13.0	750'000.00	36'637.28
Extraordinary expenses	14.0	(2'355.45)	(180'152.06)
Extraordinary results		747'644.55	143'514.78
ANNUAL RESULT		**27'715.25**	**(903'505.54)**

The notes to the financial report are available on the Foundation's website.



Photos courtesy of the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique.

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