



**This matter is being dealt with by:**

*Eugene Minogue*

**Transitional Chief Executive**

**Telephone:** +44 (0)20 3544 5834

**E-Mail:** eugene.minogue@parkour.earth

**Website:** www.parkour.earth

**Date:** Thursday, 14 December 2017

Morinari Watanabe, President  
André F. Gueisbuhler, Secretary General  
Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG)  
Avenue de la Gare 12A  
Case postale 630  
1001 Lausanne  
Switzerland

### **OPEN LETTER**

Dear President & Secretary General,

Thank you for responding to [our open letter dated 14th October 2017](#) via email, and the subsequent email correspondence [*appendix a*] to arrange and confirm the agenda and attendees for meeting with the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) on Tuesday 7 November 2017 10:00 in Lausanne. This was very much appreciated and acknowledged.

As detailed throughout all our correspondence, the primary purpose of the meeting was to formalise the clarification, understanding and recognition of the sovereignty of Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement. Also to demonstrate our goodwill and intention to bring the prevailing uncertainty of the FIG's proposals and intention, to an amicable and swift resolution.

Parkour Earth would again like to express our thanks and gratitude to President Morinari Watanabe for welcoming us to the FIG headquarters in Lausanne and affording us the opportunity to discuss our legitimate, fundamental and substantiated concerns and to articulate the concerns of the international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community.

### **The meeting**

The meeting was an opportunity for both Parkour Earth and the FIG to present and discuss a number of points, under the pre-agreed agenda items.

At the beginning of the meeting, it was mutually agreed to aim to have draft minutes of the meeting for agreement by both Parkour Earth & the FIG. It was also proposed towards the end of the meeting that, consideration should be given to whether a proposed joint statement [*appendix b*] relating to the main agenda points and headline outcomes of the meeting could be released by Parkour Earth & the FIG immediately following the meeting.

Unfortunately, it transpired to be impossible on the day of the meeting due to the length of the meeting and the significant extent of the detailed discussion. Additionally, the revised changes by the FIG to the proposed joint statement [*appendix c*] were not consistent with our view of the meeting and headline outcomes. Therefore, it was agreed that the FIG would compile minutes [*appendix d*] and send them to us within the following 48 hours [*by the 9 November*] for review by our Board at the Parkour Earth Board meeting which was held on 10 November. Unfortunately, the compiled minutes were not received until the 24 November. You are also aware we also took notes throughout the meeting [*appendix e*].

During the meeting, we focussed primarily on formalising the clarification, understanding and recognition of the sovereignty of Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement. Additionally, it was made clear that as per recognised

international norms, **we** as the International Federation for Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement representing the international community, **rather than the FIG** must be permitted to freely and solely determine and develop the sporting, social and cultural development of Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement. This is in accordance with our members freely expressed will and desire, together with that of the international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community.

We wish to record our appreciation for the opportunity to meet directly with Charles Perrière, Vice President of the FIG Parkour Commission and Florian Busi, Sports Manager - Parkour within the FIG, but consider it unfortunate that David Belle, President of the FIG Parkour Commission was unable to join the meeting. As outlined at the meeting, we acknowledge that both individuals are respected members of the international Parkour community and we would like to thank both for their open and frank contribution to the meeting and we reiterate that we recognise their role and contribution in the development and growth of Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement. We also recognise that their work with the FIG is fundamentally driven by a desire to see the sport grow internationally, however we urge them to acknowledge and carefully consider the impact of their actions in facilitating the intervention and encroachment by the FIG on the sport and international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community.

We also make clear that, Parkour Earth fully recognises and respects the role of all the founders of Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement and that it also respects the autonomy of our national federations, communities and practitioners/athletes. These principles are fully enshrined in our [Memorandum & Articles of Association](#) (constitution/statutes). Therefore, Parkour Earth would like to reaffirm that **it does not hold or bear any prejudice against any of the founders and/or practitioners/athletes involved with FIG**, but we must disagree with their decisions to date.

Our fundamental, legitimate and substantiated concerns relate to the continued encroachment upon the sovereignty of Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement by the FIG as the International Federation for the sport of Gymnastics. Unfortunately, the significant and detailed discussion at the meeting in no way addressed any of our fundamental, legitimate and substantiated concerns. The meeting gave rise to further significant concerns as a result of the vision that the FIG are unilaterally and illegitimately pursuing for our sport.

Therefore, the meeting hasn't changed our position in relation to those fundamental, legitimate and substantiated concerns, a summary of which is provided below.

*This is by no means an exhaustive list, but a summary of some of the fundamental concerns;*

- Historical context and lineage of Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement;

The historical context and lineage that is asserted by the FIG within its letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017 is wilfully, both misinformed and misrepresented.

We would like to again redraw your full and detailed attention to the open letter from Parkour UK dated [26 May 2017](#), which included an [appended letter from Dr. Julie Angel](#) - both of these letters provided the necessary clarification on the historical context and lineage of Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement, our sport - as well as robustly setting aside the claims by the FIG and your member National Gymnastics Federations "*roots to Parkour*". As the FIG have been consistently informed there is and was no connection and/or lineage between the sport of Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement and the sport of Gymnastics.

Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement has been recognised as a completely sovereign sport in its own right. Our sport is **not** a discipline of any existing sport. Parkour Earth, for and on behalf of the international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community, will not and cannot allow our sport to be misappropriated by another sport against our members and international community's will.

- Established principle of solidarity;

Such encroachment by the FIG, goes beyond established and recognised ethical, legal and moral limits, as well as being inconsistent with the established principle of solidarity and including but not limited to;

1. Appendix 3 - International Olympic Committee, Olympic Charter - Aug 2016, 5. Fundamental Principles of Olympism;

*a. Recognising that sport occurs within the framework of society, sports organisations [within the Olympic Movement] shall have the rights and obligations of autonomy, which include freely establishing and controlling the rules of sport, determining the structure and governance of their organisations, enjoying the right of elections free from any outside influence and the responsibility for ensuring that principles of good governance be applied.*

- Ultra Vires; The governance, authority and scope of FIG's statutes;

It is clear that the FIG are currently acting ultra vires - beyond the governance, authority and scope of the FIG's statutes. International Federations can only operate within and may only do what it is authorised to do within its governance, authority and scope of its statutes.

It is widely understood, published and accepted, that definition of the sport of 'Gymnastics' is that set out in the interpretation section of the [statutes of the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique \(Edition 2017\)](#) which *inter alia* provides the following discrete definitions for the disciplines controlled and promoted by FIG:

a. Interpretation - Definition of 'Gymnastics', 'Discipline' & the listed definitions of the disciplines of 'Gymnastics' (of which Parkour is **not** a discipline of Gymnastics);

'Gymnastics'	<i>The sports and/or activities of Artistic Gymnastics, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Trampoline Gymnastics, Acrobatic Gymnastics, Aerobic Gymnastics and Gymnastics for all</i>
'Gymnast'	<i>Any person participating in any of the activities defined in "Gymnastics".</i>
'Discipline'	<i>Any of the sports and/or activities defined in "Gymnastics"</i>
'Artistic Gymnastics' (ART)	<i>Competitive Gymnastics performed on different pieces of apparatus (MAG /WAG)</i>
'Rhythmic Gymnastics' (RG)	<i>Competitive Gymnastics performed on different hand apparatus</i>
'Trampoline Gymnastics' (TRA)	<i>Exercises performed on the trampoline and double mini trampoline or a tumbling track</i>
'Acrobatic Gymnastics' (ACRO)	<i>"Dynamic", "Balance" and "Combined" exercises performed without apparatus by pairs, women's groups or men's groups</i>
'Aerobic Gymnastics' (AER)	<i>Aerobic dance routines including gymnastics and aerobic movements</i>
'Gymnastics for All' (GfA)	<i>Gymnastics without or with competitions (World Gymnaestrada without competition) of a recreational nature covering a with range of gymnastic activities</i>

b. Article 2.1 Objects

c. Article 2.2

d. Article 14.4

e. Article 18.1

f. Article 29.1

g. Article 29.2 – "A Federation shall not intervene or interfere in the affairs of another Federation"

h. Article 32

i. Article 36.3

j. Appendix 3 – Code of Ethics

The FIG has publicly acknowledged that it does not have the relevant sporting authority nor powers, as set out within [its own statutes](#), as confirmed by the FIG press release '[FIG decision-making bodies greenlight inclusion of a new discipline](#)' 10 May 2017, which stated; "The inclusion of a new FIG discipline will also require modifications to the FIG's technical regulations, which should be submitted to the next Council meeting in 2018, together with changes to the FIG statutes, which should be put to a vote at the FIG Congress in Baku later the same year".

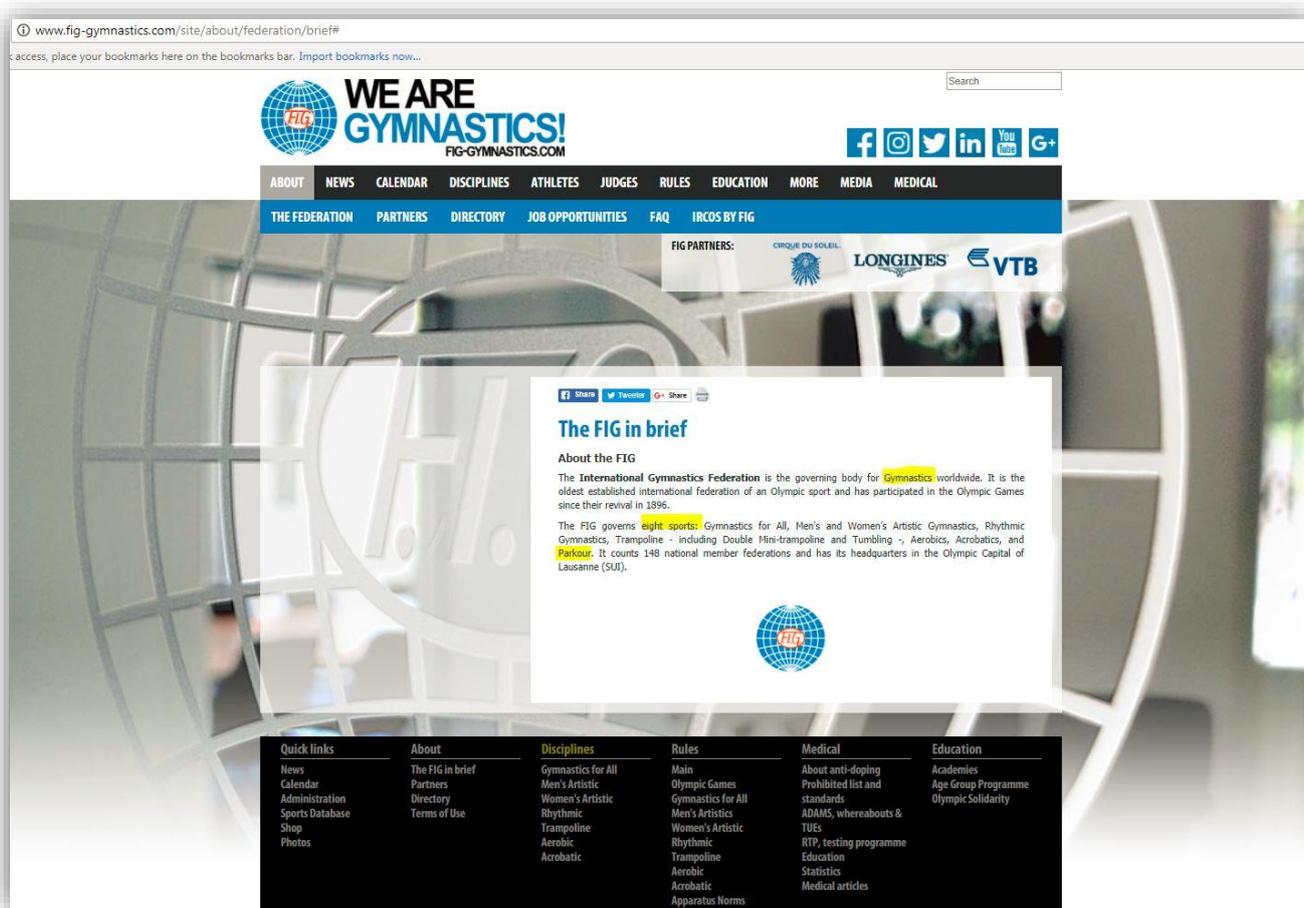
As discussed at the meeting, the FIG will have to draft amendments to its current statutes, which should then be proposed for adoption by council and congress, requiring a two-thirds majority for ratification. It is deeply concerning, as well as a fundamental and wilful dereliction of constitutionality and the democratic process that, the proposed action to consider and formally vote on the encroachment and misappropriation of Parkour as a discipline of Gymnastics

under the auspices for the FIG, will **not** be put to the international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community. This derogation from democracy, let alone courtesy and despite the very significant, legitimate and substantiated concerns of the international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community is both wilfully unreasonable and unfair.

In summary, it is objectively very clear that the FIG is acting ultra vires beyond the governance, authority and scope of the FIG statutes and the acts you have undertaken to date relating to Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement are unconstitutional and void. Specifically, the FIG does not have the consent of its own members, and more importantly the international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community to take this action.

- [Website](#)

It is presumptuous, but more importantly a misrepresentative fabrication that the FIG are actively listing Parkour as part of the governance of the FIG. This is factually incorrect.



Parkour Earth is the International Federation for the sport Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement and its international community. We are the custodian of the philosophy, integrity and sovereignty of our sport/art/discipline. We, alone as the International Federation of the sport protect the rights, freedoms and promote the interests of Traceurs/Traceuses, Freerunners, practitioners, our members & the international community.

Therefore, we would like to politely request that this factual misrepresentation is duly removed from the website of the FIG.

- [IOC Commissioned Report;](#)

As detailed in previous correspondence, please look at the report commissioned by the IOC, from June 2016 by Dr Belinda Wheaton [who became an Independent Director of Parkour Earth in July 2017] and Dr Holly Thorpe from the University of Waikato in New Zealand, titled: [Youth Perceptions of the Olympic Games: Attitudes Towards Action Sports at the YOG and Olympic Games](#), it has to 3 key recommendations.

- *[As] the IOC [continues to consider new activities for inclusion (e.g., parkour, BMX freestyle) in the Olympic Games and YOG, it] needs to recognize that the governance structures of these sports differ from most traditional sports, and those with the most insights and knowledge may not be housed within the expected sporting infrastructure.*
- **We encourage the IOC to continue to work with action-sport specific federations (in contrast to fitting within existing IFs that may not understand and respect the unique cultural value systems and be aware of the important issues within these sports). [While this will involve considerable effort (and mentoring and support) to help them learn the rules and regulations required of Olympic sports], we feel this approach has the best chance of getting ‘buy in’ from the core of the cultures, and thus longer-term sustainability of these activities within the Olympic Games.**
- *[We recommend that there will be important research following the announcement in Rio 2016 to Tokyo 2020. As signalled in this report, as this news is received the International Federations will take on new roles and responsibilities working with national federations, athletes and coaches] We anticipate that these processes will be complex and political, and much can be learned from this process for future action sport inclusion into and success at the Olympic Games.*
- Education;

As part of the presentation by the FIG and its vision for Parkour provided at our meeting, it was presented what the FIG already has in place for the various disciplines of the sport of Gymnastics. It was outlined that the key to that is Olympic Solidarity, the FIG Academy, Age Group Programme and e-learning, which support the National Gymnastics Federations and confederations commissions.

In terms of your proposed Education strategy for Parkour – this will come from the FIG Parkour commission. It was stated that the FIG want ‘the Parkour experts’ teaching the FIG Parkour educational programme, as the FIG did not want its National Gymnastics Federations developing their own educational system for Parkour.

The proposed FIG Parkour education programme will be launched as soon as possible, possibly early 2018 and that the FIG will immediately begin with Parkour coaches level 1, 2 and higher.

Parkour Earth values, recognises and protects diversity and non-standardised practice, coaching, teaching and education as a strength and innate character of the international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community. Many of our member National Federations, as well as Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement communities internationally have existing, established and/or recognised education programmes (such as certification, qualifications, CPD etc)/industry that has been developed for and by those communities with relevant Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement technical expertise. Therefore, the proposed FIG Parkour education programme would be in direct conflict these education programmes/industry.

- Summary

As detailed above, the fundamental, legitimate and substantiated concerns highlighted above are by no means an exhaustive list, but a headline summary of some of the fundamental, legitimate and substantiated concerns from Parkour Earth and the international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community.

### **Mediation and/or Arbitration**

Unfortunately, as detailed in this letter and as demonstrated in the minutes of the meeting/meeting notes, as well as previous correspondence the recent meeting with the FIG has not changed our position in relation to the fundamental, legitimate and substantiated concerns.

Therefore, we now feel that the most prudent course of action is for Parkour Earth & the FIG to enter into an agreed and binding mediation and/or arbitration agreement referring the dispute to the jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland in order for the dispute relating to the fundamental, legitimate and substantiated concerns to be resolved definitively in accordance with the code of sports-related arbitration.

We continue to welcome dialogue with the FIG and continue to demonstrate our goodwill and intention to bring this matter to an amicable and swift resolution, but must record our continued objection to the unauthorised approach to misappropriate and encroach upon the sovereignty of the sport that Parkour Earth represents.

Yours sincerely



Eugene Minogue  
**Chief Executive**

**Appendices:** a) Email correspondence arranging and confirming the meeting with the FIG for 7 November 2017  
b) PKE proposed wording for joint statement  
c) FIG revised proposed wording for joint statement  
d) FIG minutes of the meeting 7 November 2017  
e) PKE meeting notes 7 November 2017

**cc:** Tribunal Arbitral du Sport (TAS) / Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS)  
International Olympic Committee (IOC)  
Global Association of International Sport Federations (GAISF) – formerly SportAccord  
Festival International des Sports Extrêmes (FISE)  
European Commission, Directorate-General - Competition  
European Commission, Directorate-General - Education, Youth, Sport and Culture  
The FIG Member National Gymnastics Federations