



This matter is being dealt with by:

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To: Presidents/Chairs & Secretary Generals/CEOs of member National Gymnastics Federations of the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique

OPEN LETTER

Dear Presidents/Chairs & Secretary Generals/CEOs,

Re: The illegitimate and unilateral encroachment, misappropriation and attempt to usurp Parkour

Introduction

I am writing from [Parkour Earth](#), which is the legitimate International Federation for Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement. As a result of a clear and demonstrable consensus within the international Parkour/Freerunning/Art du Déplacement community, a number of National Parkour Federations reached an accord on the 4th July 2017 to establish Parkour Earth as the International Federation for Parkour/Freerunning/Art du Déplacement. The six founding National Federations of Parkour Earth are [Parkour UK](#), [Fédération de Parkour](#), [New Zealand Parkour Association - Tauhōkai Aotearoa](#), [Australian Parkour Association](#), [Parkour South Africa](#) & [Polska Federacja Parkour i Freerun](#).

As you are aware, *from our previous open letter*, which we sent to the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) [dated 14th December 2017](#), including [the various appendices](#) (to which all Member National Gymnastics Federations of FIG were cc'd in into) which detailed the substantiated illegitimate and unilateral encroachment, misappropriation and attempt to usurp Parkour.

FIG 82nd Congress in Baku 2-3 Dec 2018

As discussed at [our meeting with the FIG in Nov 2017](#), the FIG would 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 – which it has now belated be done, following our meeting the FIG.

Our position, as well as that of our member National Parkour Federations (*as demonstrated through various letters from the [United Kingdom](#), [New Zealand](#), [Australia](#), [Poland](#) etc.*) and by legitimate extension the wider international Parkour/Freerunning/Art du Déplacement community (*as demonstrated through various letters from [Denmark](#), [Switzerland](#), [United States of America](#) etc.*), in relation to those fundamental, legitimate and substantiated concerns, **has not changed.**

It is being proposed by the FIG at their 82nd Congress to replace [their current statutes \(2017 edition\)](#), which have legitimately been in effect since Jan 2017, with [the proposed statutes \(2018 edition\)](#) that have purportedly “*in effect on the 1st Jan 2018*”, **without** the approval by the FIG congress.

The proposed statutes (2018 edition) which are being proposed for adoption at the FIG congress, requires **a two-thirds majority for ratification**. It is deeply concerning, as well as a fundamental and wilful dereliction of constitutionality and democratic process that, the proposed action to consider and formally vote on the encroachment, misappropriation of, and the attempt to usurp Parkour as a ‘*discipline of Gymnastics*’ under the auspices for the FIG, will **not** be put to recognised National Parkour Federations, such as our [member federations](#) and/or the wider International Parkour community, but, instead this vote will put to **you**, as FIG’s National Gymnastics Federations! This derogation from democracy, let alone common courtesy and despite the very significant, legitimate and substantiated

concerns of Parkour Earth and by legitimate extension the wider international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community, as set out in various previous correspondence to the FIG, as set out below;

- 24th August 2017 – [Parkour Earth open Letter issued to Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique \(FIG\)](#)
- 14th October 2017 - [Parkour Earth responds to Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique \(FIG\)](#)
- 14th December 2017 - [Parkour Earth issues an Open Letter in response to the meeting with the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique \(FIG\) on 7th November 2017](#)

Therefore, Parkour Earth respectfully, reasonably and legitimately requests for and on behalf of our member National Parkour Federations and the wider international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community that **your National Gymnastics Federation votes NO or ABSTAINS on the resolution to ratify the proposed statutes (2018 edition) at the FIG Congress in Baku on the 2-3 Dec 2018.**

Not to do so would be a direct conflict of interest and would raise significant additional ethical, governance and integrity questions - in addition to (*with prejudice*) possible questions in relation to European competition law.

The reasons we request your National Gymnastics Federation to vote **NO** or to **Abstain** from the vote are; (*this is by no means an exhaustive list*)

- 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 20th April 2017](#) is wilfully, both misinformed and misrepresented.

We would like to again redraw your full and detailed attention to the open letter from our members, 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 some of its 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 our member National Parkour Federations and the wider the international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community, will not and cannot allow our sport to be encroached, misappropriated and/or usurped unilaterally 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;

International Olympic Committee, [Olympic Charter](#) (pg 11) 5. Fundamental Principles of Olympism;

Recognising that sport occurs within the framework of society, sports organisations within the Olympic Movement shall apply political neutrality. They 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 patently clear that the FIG have been and continue to act ultra-vires, beyond the governance, authority and scope of the FIG's statutes. Any International Federation can only operate within and may only do what it is authorised to do within its governance, authority and scope of its statutes and also what is permitted in national/international and/or European law.

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 \(2017 edition\)](#) which *inter alia* provides the following discrete definitions for the disciplines controlled and promoted by FIG:

*Interpretation - Definition of 'Gymnastics', 'Discipline' & the listed definitions of the disciplines of 'Gymnastics' (of which Parkour is **not and is not to be**; 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>

FIG's previous, current and continued **ultra-vires** action in attempting to unilaterally and illegitimately usurp Parkour are also contrary to FIG's [statutes \(2017 edition\)](#):

- a. Article 2.1 Objects
- b. Article 2.2
- c. Article 14.4
- d. Article 18.1
- e. Article 29.1
- f. Article 29.2 – "A Federation shall not intervene or interfere in the affairs of another Federation"
- g. Article 32
- h. Article 36.3
- i. Appendix 3 – Code of Ethics

The FIG have 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".

Furthermore, it is detailed in the '[World of Gymnastics' magazine nr.85 October 2018](#) (an official publication of FIG) on page 79 – title 'Decision Time', paragraph 3:

"The other big decision that the Congress must take concerns Parkour. It was in spring 2017 that this urban sport¹ was brought under the aegis² of the FIG, which organised the first World Cup events that took place earlier this year in

¹ This patently acknowledges Parkour is a separate sport in its own right
² Confirmation of acting ultra-vires

Hiroshima, Japan and Montpellier, France. For Parkour to be officially recognised ³ as an FIG discipline, the General Assembly must ratify the necessary changes to the Federation's Statutes⁴, as it previously did with Trampoline and Acrobatic Gymnastics⁵, the last disciplines welcomed into the FIG fold 20 years ago.”

It is patently 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 has not had the consent of its own members, but **more importantly** the international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community to have and continue take this action.

- 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.**

- The International Gymnastics Community;

Additionally, we and our member National Parkour Federations welcome the opportunity for respectful collaboration with (**not for**) National Gymnastics Federations in ways that support the holistic and autonomous growth and development of both of our sports Globally. However, the actions of the FIG only serve to **undermine** these genuine efforts. We see the proposed inclusion of Parkour under the auspices of the FIG as **particularly harmful** to the future of the wider Gymnastics community itself, particularly in relation to its present and future Olympic Games. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) have confirmed that [“the athletes for any new sports added to the programme for Paris will be included within the overall quota of 10,500”](#). This **means** that any attempt by the FIG to include Parkour, as a ‘displace of Gymnastics’ at Paris 2024 and/or subsequent games **will come** at the **cost of established gymnasts and existing gymnastics disciplines** and therefore would in turn **reduce** the number of eligible athletes.

It should be noted, that whilst there is genuine discourse in the Parkour/Freerunning community relating to the illegitimate and unilateral encroachment, misappropriation and attempt to usurp Parkour by the FIG , **this is also** the case in [the Gymnastics community](#).

- Human Rights;

All organisations, particularly including those in the world of sport - such as the FIG, are responsible for respecting human rights. Through preventing potential negative human rights impacts linked to major events, and providing

³ Again, confirmation of acting ultra-vires

⁴ Further confirmation of acting ultra-vires

⁵ This is a wilful misrepresentation, as these sports – via their retrospective established International Federations wilfully and therefore, legitimately merged into the FIG as ‘disciplines’ of Gymnastics. This is not the case with Parkour.

adequate remedies for abuses that do occur, all organisations involved in delivering a mega-sporting event can better harness sport's potential for good.

The lifecycle for a mega-sporting events (MSE), such as the Olympic Games, also serves as a microcosm for the whole range of business and human rights issues. With the large amount of public investment associated with these events, and their impacts on local communities, mega-sporting events should be delivered to exemplary standards in all respects - **especially** with regard for human rights.

The capacity of mega-sporting (such as the Olympic Games and/or FIG various 'world' events) events to promote human rights is enhanced by the fact that sport is inherently tied to **sporting values and fair play, and sport's history of providing a stage for progressive interventions** in issues such as community relations, discrimination, gender equality and personal and social development.

The guide from the [Centre for Sport and Human Rights](#) presents [the lifecycle of a mega-sporting event](#), with specific elements of good practice at each stage that those involved in hosting a MSE event should integrate into their planning, delivery and legacy in order to ensure a rights-compliant event.

We would like to draw you **particular attention** to the fact that the FIG have **not** given due care and consideration to the human rights of (*our and your*) athletes throughout the course of their event lifecycles, and including (*our, Parkour*) athletes' rights within the required human rights due diligence process. (Our) Athletes and their representative bodies (*Parkour Earth & our member National Parkour Federations*) should be included as part of ongoing stakeholder engagement efforts. Host actors (*the IOC and/or the FIG & by virtue their member National Gymnastics Federations*) should embrace social dialogue and the right to collective action as it relates to competing athletes. Host actors (*the IOC – in this case*) should also encourage sports governing bodies (*National Gymnastics Federations*) and international federations (*the FIG*) to respect the human rights of (*our*) athletes in their decision-making processes. Where athletes **are victims of human rights abuses** they should have access to **effective remedy and should not be penalised for seeking redress**.

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

Parkour Earth, **as the custodian** of the philosophy, integrity and sovereignty of our sport/art/discipline. We, alone as the **legitimate** International Federation of our sport protect the rights, freedoms and promote the interests of our Traceurs/Traceuses, Freerunners, practitioners, our member National Parkour Federations & by legitimate extension the wider international Parkour/Freerunning/Art Du Déplacement community.

- Summary

Parkour Earth, has throughout our dialogue with the FIG have continually recommended, offered and actively requested mediation and/or arbitration. We suggested in Dec 2017 that we 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. Unfortunately, as detailed in this and previous open letters and as demonstrated in the minutes of the meeting/meeting notes from our meeting with the FIG in Nov 2017, this has not been accepted, facilitated or reciprocated by the FIG, much to our genuine disappointment.

Therefore, we now feel that the most prudent course of action is for Parkour Earth to write directly to the FIG's member National Parkour Federations, ahead of FIG's 82nd Congress, to highlight our fundamental, legitimate and relevant concerns and to respectfully, reasonably and legitimately request **your National Gymnastics Federation votes NO or ABSTAINS on the resolution to ratify the proposed statutes (2018 edition) at the FIG Congress in Baku on the 2-3 Dec 2018.**

However, **if a two-thirds majority** of FIG's member National Gymnastics Federations **vote to ratify** the replacement of the FIG's current statues (2017 edition), with the proposed statues (2018 edition) then Parkour Earth **will have no choice but to launch a European competition complaint** with the European Commission.

We continue to welcome open and mutually respectful dialogue with the FIG and by extension it's member National Gymnastics Federations and we will continue to demonstrate our goodwill and intention to bring this matter to an amicable and reasonable resolution, **but must** record our continued objection to the illegitimate and unilateral encroachment, misappropriation and attempt to usurp Parkour and upon the sovereignty of the sport that Parkour Earth legitimately represents.

Yours sincerely



Eugene Minogue
Chief Executive

cc: Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique
International Olympic Committee (IOC)
Tribunal Arbitral du Sport (TAS) / Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS)
Global Association of International Sport Federations (GAISF)
European Commission, Directorate-General - Competition
European Commission, Directorate-General - Education, Youth, Sport and Culture