WDSF Media Relations Code

Preamble

WDSF affirms its commitment to Media Relations as one of the primary duties of an international sports federation and a key factor for sustainable increase of popularity of DanceSport.

Although object of steadily increasing media attention, DanceSport is not in the focus of international sports media coverage. Besides its role of communicating facts related to its function of the highest governing body for DanceSport worldwide, WDSF therefore bears the responsibility to raise public awareness of DanceSport as an athletic, dynamic, healthy and aesthetic sport on an international level.

WDSF media coverage reflects these two aspects of the Federations’ communication: WDSF administers and publishes important data for international level Athletes and Coaches, Member Federations, Officials and the interested general public. But WDSF also provides editorial reporting on DanceSport, its exponents and international competitions. In the latter context, the WDSF Communications Commission, though part of the WDSF administration, assumes the role of the free media.

While WDSF’s executive functions and official statements are unreservedly limited by the WDSF Code of Ethics, WDSF commits itself to the freedom of expression by being less restrictive with editorial content. Editorial content produced by WDSF is primarily guided by internationally recognised principles for media work. As a result, and in order to meet the objectives stated above, the WDSF Communications Commission must have the opportunity to be more personal, controversial and subjective in its publications than the Federations’ formal communication when it produces editorial content.

With this Code, the WDSF Member Bodies agree on general media relations principles, the unique character of editorial content, the tasks of the WDSF Communications Commission and on editorial guidelines. Property rights regarding WDSF publications are controlled by the Regulations of the World DanceSport Federation (WDSF) for Electronic Media, New Media, Advertising and Sponsorship, an Enclosure to the WDSF Financial Regulations and are not part of this Code. Communications in any sort of social media that are not done in the name or on behalf of WDSF are directed by separately published WDSF Social Media Rules.

1 Application

1.1 This Code applies to any form of edited data, information or media production in the name or on behalf of WDSF, but personally limited to
- Members of the WDSF Communications Commission;
- persons or legal entities communicating by order and for account of WDSF;
- any other persons or legal entities who expressly agreed to comply with the requirements of this Code;

unless otherwise specified.

1.2 This Code applies to any form of media productions, i.e. TV, online, mobile devices or print.

1.3 The provisions of this Code shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with Swiss law.
2 The WDSF Communications Commission

2.1 The WDSF Communications Commission (hereinafter: “the Commission”) is self-assigning and shall provide accurate and timely information on all of WDSF’s activities as well as publishing creative, high-quality, original and thought-provoking editorial content which supports the development of DanceSport.

2.2 The Commission shall require and practise the highest standards of written English and the best communications practices.

2.3 The Commission shall protect and promote the reputation of WDSF and DanceSport by developing, maintaining and deserving the trust of audiences. The Commission shall be dedicated to the highest editorial and ethical standards and distance itself from activities, methods or practices which might put the standing of DanceSport in jeopardy.

2.4 The Commission is fully responsible and accountable to the WDSF and the WDSF Presidium in accordance with Article 13.8 of the WDSF Statutes.

2.5 However, no WDSF organ may interfere in the Commission’s editorial work in other ways than provided in this Code.

3 Mission

The Commission must balance the principle of freedom of expression with the equally important responsibility to be fair, to avoid unjustifiable offence, to respect privacy and to protect legitimate interests. The Commission shall consistently uphold these Editorial Values in everything it does and in considering and using content created by any other source, whether for TV, online, mobile devices or print.

4 Editorial values

4.1 The following values apply to any sort of editorial content in the sense of Article 1 above, hereinafter collectively referred to as “WDSF Communications”. These values are further specified by separately published Editorial Guidelines. As an Operating Policy, these Guidelines are no formal part of this Code.

4.2 Trust

WDSF Communications shall be independent, impartial and honest. Whoever produces Communications in the name or on behalf of WDSF shall strive to avoid knowingly and materially misleading the audiences (i.e. viewers, readers, site visitors and followers). WDSF Communications shall be accountable to the audiences. Their continuing trust is a crucial part of their relationship with WDSF.

4.3 Truth and accuracy

4.3.1 WDSF Communications shall seek to establish the truth and are committed to achieving due accuracy. Accuracy is not simply a matter of getting the facts right. WDSF Communications, as appropriate to its subject and nature, shall be well sourced, based on sound evidence, thoroughly tested and presented in clear, precise language. Mistakes shall be acknowledged openly and WDSF Communications shall encourage a culture of willingness to learn from them.
4.3.2 However, WDSF Communications, for example recorded programmes, usually require editing. As long as editing does not distort the original meaning of a statement, act or performance, editing is not contradictory to the principle of truth and accuracy.

4.4 Transparency

4.4.1 WDSF Communications shall be transparent about the nature and provenance of the offered content.

4.4.2 WDSF Communications, including any sort of content, output and services are financed by a number of methods including advertising, permitted product placements and sponsorship. None of such arrangements may lead to doubts about the impartiality, integrity or independence of WDSF Communications. Advertising and editorial content must be clearly kept apart and credits must be editorially justified.

4.5 Impartiality

4.5.1 Impartiality lies at the core of WDSF Communications’ commitment to the audiences. WDSF Communications shall reflect a breadth and diversity of opinion across all output and during an appropriate period. The editorial freedom of the Commission shall be used to produce content about any subject, at any point on the spectrum of debate, as long as there are good editorial reasons for doing so.

4.5.2 Impartiality is often more than a simple matter of balance between opposing viewpoints. Equally, it does neither require absolute neutrality on every issue or detachment from moral and ethical principles, nor does impartiality necessarily require that the range of perspectives or opinions has to be covered in equal proportions.

4.5.3 For greater clarity, producing content concerning a specific group of persons (for example: the finalists of a competition, the top ten of the World Ranking List, etc.) is no contradiction to the principle of impartiality and therefore no contravention of Article 2.5.2 of the WDSF Code of Ethics as long as such groups are chosen detached from specific persons and are not composed arbitrarily.

4.5.4 As a result of impartiality, WDSF Communications may address controversial subjects in DanceSport. As long as the principles in this Code are respected and publications do not have the purpose of doing politics, such reports are no contravention of the authors’ duties of loyalty towards WDSF.

4.5.5 WDSF Communications may include personal views, opinions or expressions of personal belief of individuals, groups or organisations.

4.5.6 Unless content is specifically made available for a limited time period only, material published online will become part of a permanently accessible archive and will usually not be removed. However, the Commission may remove content because of legal reasons, technical requirements or in cases of breaches of WDSF governing documents or editorial standards that cannot be rectified except by removal of the material.

4.5.7 Authors of content in personal view programmes and websites (e.g. blogs) must follow the WDSF Social Media Rules. The Commission shall also take the principles in these Rules as a reference when intervening in such personal view content according to Article 4.5.6 above. In any case, the Commission may post own comments and contributions as a reaction to such personal view content.
4.6 Editorial integrity and independence

WDSF Communications shall be independent of outside interests and arrangements, commercial pressures or any personal interests that could undermine editorial integrity.

4.7 Fairness

4.7.1 WDSF Communications shall be based on fairness and straight dealing. Affected persons, contributors and audiences shall be treated with respect.

4.7.2 Individuals shall usually be appropriately informed about the planned nature and context of their contributions and give their consent when they are asked to take part in WDSF Communications. Usually, a given consent cannot be withdrawn and persons may not prevent contributions being used. On the other hand, it cannot be guaranteed that contributions are going to be broadcasted or published.

4.7.3 The Commission shall usually not allow a preview of content.

4.8 Protection of Privacy

WDSF Communications shall respect privacy and shall not infringe it. Private information, correspondence and conversation shall not be brought into the public domain.

5 Enforcement

5.1 Any media content as well as communications of the Commission and other persons and legal entities mentioned in Article 1.1 may be subject to a report to the WDSF Ethics Committee, according to Article 4 of the Code of the WDSF Ethics Committee.

5.2 Violations of this Code shall be treated as breaches of the WDSF Code of Ethics. Therefore, sanctions may be imposed according to the WDSF Code of Ethics. However, the Presidium shall not take initial actions based on Articles 14(1) letters a) and c) to e) of the WDSF Statutes before the WDSF Ethics Committee decided the regarding case. Provisional measures according to Articles 5.4 and 5.5 below remain reserved.

5.3 As the WDSF Ethics Committee is in charge of assessing alleged violations of this Code, decisions of the Commission according to this Code, including decisions to take or not to take provisional measures, cannot be subject to a Complaint according to Chapter 5 of the WDSF Internal Dispute Resolution Code, but may be subject to a report to the WDSF Ethics Committee.

5.4 If complainants indicate that media content produced by WDSF requires immediate action and these complainants are personally affected by such WDSF Communications, they may ask the WDSF Communications Commission for provisional measures. The Commission shall deal with such requests within 48 hours after they have been submitted. If the Commission considers that provisions of this Code, the WDSF Code of Ethics or other governing documents of WDSF could have been violated by media content produced by or on behalf of WDSF or by media content on the WDSF website or in WDSF media programmes, the Commission may suspend or withdraw the publication of such content as a provisional measure. In cases of alleged violations of this Code or the WDSF Code of Ethics, the Commission informs the WDSF Ethics Committee ex officio.
5.5 Provisional measures of the Commission must be approved by the Presidium subject to a term of three months after the provisional measures have been taken. Decisions of the Presidium to lift or confirm such provisional measures are no subject to an Appeal to the WDSF Disciplinary Council.

5.6 When content, including content contributed by third parties, has to be removed according to Article 4.5.6 above, the Commission interferes *ex officio*. Such decisions of the Commission are final.

5.7 If complaints require decisions of the Commission, such decisions and also the decision not to act shall be adequately reasoned.

5.8 If complaints have a universal dimension, the Commission may use WDSF’s online presence to provide reporting on received complaints and actions taken.

### 6 Implementation and Effective Date

6.1 This document is a *Rule* according to Article 21 paragraph 1 of the *WDSF Statutes*.

6.2 This Code enters into force on 13 June 2016 and applies to all activities covered by this Code exercised on or after the commencement date. A retroactive effect of this Code prior to its effective date is excluded.

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This Code was adopted by the WDSF Annual General Meeting on 12 June 2016 in Rome, Italy (Version 1.0), and amended on the occasion of the WDSF Annual General Meeting on 12 June 2017 in Singapore (Version 1.1).