



## OPEN ACCESS

## EDITED BY

Simon Chadwick,  
Sophia Antipolis Campus, France

## REVIEWED BY

Petar Kurecic,  
University North, Croatia

## \*CORRESPONDENCE

Marina Kamenecka-Usova  
✉ marina.kamenecka-usova@rsu.lv

RECEIVED 20 January 2025

ACCEPTED 23 May 2025

PUBLISHED 09 June 2025

## CITATION

Kamenecka-Usova M and Tkalych M (2025)  
Resilience through sports: Ukraine and Latvia  
confront geopolitical challenges.  
Front. Sports Act. Living 7:1563761.  
doi: 10.3389/fspor.2025.1563761

## COPYRIGHT

© 2025 Kamenecka-Usova and Tkalych. This is  
an open-access article distributed under the  
terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution  
License \(CC BY\)](#). The use, distribution or  
reproduction in other forums is permitted,  
provided the original author(s) and the  
copyright owner(s) are credited and that the  
original publication in this journal is cited, in  
accordance with accepted academic practice.  
No use, distribution or reproduction is  
permitted which does not comply with  
these terms.

# Resilience through sports: Ukraine and Latvia confront geopolitical challenges

Marina Kamenecka-Usova<sup>1,2\*</sup> and Maxym Tkalych<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Social Sciences Faculty, Rīga Stradiņš University, Riga, Latvia, <sup>2</sup>Law Department, EKA University of Applied Sciences, Riga, Latvia, <sup>3</sup>Civil Law Department, Zaporizhzhia National University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

This perspective article examines the response of the sports sector in Ukraine and Latvia to contemporary geopolitical challenges, particularly those arising from ongoing war in Ukraine. As tensions escalate, both nations have taken significant measures within the sports sector, adopting new legal frameworks and policies to align with national security goals. By analyzing recent legislative changes, sanctions, and collaborative efforts within international sports organizations, this article explores how Latvia and Ukraine's sports sectors are addressing political challenges. These efforts reflect a growing recognition of the need to uphold ethical standards, protect athletes, and use sports as a platform for resilience in the face of geopolitical threats.

## KEYWORDS

sports sector policy, national security in sports, Ukraine and Latvia collaboration, resilience in sports, sports and politics

## Introduction

The answer to the question of what connects world tennis star Novak Djokovic and the 20th-century postage stamps is neither simple nor immediately apparent. However, it is explored in the recent intriguing works of Eggeling (1) and Lebed and Morgulev (2). Eggeling examines the interplay of politics and power within the global tennis circuit, while Morgulev and Lebed highlights how authoritarian regimes used sports, vividly portrayed through postage stamps, as a platform for showcasing their superiority and disseminating government propaganda.

The relationship between sports and politics has been extensively examined by renowned scholars such as Grix (3), Bertoli (4), Murray (5), Pamment (6), Dichter (7), Pigman (8) and others. Real-world examples like Ping Pong Diplomacy, Cricket Diplomacy, the “La Guerra del Futbol,” and tragedies such as at the 1972 Munich Olympics underscore the enduring relevance of this subject over the years.

Recent years of our lives have been no exception as the sports sector has increasingly found itself at the crossroads of geopolitics and national security concerns. This article demonstrates the intersection between sports, war, and politics in nowadays Eastern Europe, highlighting the sports sector's response, including reforms in sports legislation to align with broader political priorities. In Ukraine and Latvia, this intersection has necessitated a shift in how sports organizations, legal institutions, and policymakers navigate the impact of hostilities on sports. Both countries, sharing a common history as former Soviet republics and having been exposed to similar geopolitical risks, have demonstrated that sports are not merely a platform for athletic excellence but also a

significant avenue for national expression and integrity preservation in response to geopolitical pressures.

While Ukraine's motivations and reasons are widely understood by the international community, Latvia's actions require a closer look at its geographic location—specifically its proximity to Russia—its history as a former Soviet republic (de facto one of the Soviet Union's constituent republics from 1940 to 1941 and again from 1944 to 1990), and its population demographics, with approximately 30%–35% of permanent residents speaking Russian as their mother tongue, including 180,455 (9) non-citizens (i.e., “nepilsoņi”) as of early 2024 (10).

However, it's essential to recognize that ongoing geopolitical situation not only threatens the integrity of Ukraine, its territorial borders, and its population but also poses a significant risk, as with any major shock to the nation, of hindering the progress of sports and delaying athletic achievements for many years. Understanding these challenges can offer the international sports community valuable insights into ways to support Ukrainian sports, helping to minimize the risks and mitigate the consequences. In light of this, we outline the perspective of the challenges, responses, and potential avenues for assistance.

## Latvia's responses to geopolitical pressures

In March 2022, just one month after Russia invaded Ukraine, a survey of permanent residents of Latvia aged 18–74 revealed a prevailing sentiment that holds Russia accountable for the conflict. A majority (57%) of respondents identified Vladimir Putin as responsible for the war in Ukraine, with an additional 11% attributing blame to the Russian state. Further analysis of survey responses across socio-demographic groups showed that Latvians, particularly those under 24, were more likely (over 70%) to hold Putin personally responsible.

In contrast, 17% of Latvian respondents, and a notable 42% of Russian-speaking respondents, identified the U.S. and NATO as responsible for the conflict. Ukraine itself was cited as the instigator by 4% of respondents, while 6% believed that all involved parties shared responsibility for the war. The survey also revealed divisions within the population concerning support for Russia's actions, with 8% of participants (including 19% of Russian-speaking respondents) expressing support for President Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Nonetheless, a substantial majority of Latvian respondents (78%) opposed Russia's actions (11).

A closer look at regional responses highlights the unique perspectives within Latgale, where attitudes differed significantly from other Latvian statistical regions. In Latgale, only 39% of respondents considered Russia responsible, compared to over half in other regions. Moreover, a substantial number in Latgale attributed responsibility to the West, while both Latgale and Riga had a considerable proportion of respondents who were undecided on the matter (12, 13).

The survey results also underscored a sense of political alienation among Latvian residents who primarily speak Russian within their families—a phenomenon that has developed over decades and has been widely studied in Latvian academia.

Dr. Ilga Apine has suggested that for much of this Russian-speaking population, Latvian culture and history remain distant, with identity often rooted in Soviet and Russian values. This notion is supported by 2022 survey data, which show that nostalgia for the past persists among Russian-speaking families, with strong affiliations to both modern Russia (20%) and, to an even greater extent, the former USSR (29%). This indicates that their connection to Russia is often grounded in historical identity rather than current political allegiance. Despite this, a significant 88% of Russian-speaking residents expressed a sense of belonging to Latvia (14).

The diversity of perspectives and lingering attachments to Russian identity among segments of the population likely contributed to the Latvian legislature's recent amendments to the sports law. Latvia's response to geopolitical challenges, particularly in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, includes decisive legislative action in the sports sector. On 28 April 2022—just two months after the invasion—the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia adopted amendments (No. 2022/83A.1) to the Sports Law, which came into force on 30 April 2022 and were reinforced in 2024. These amendments restrict Latvian athletes and teams from participating in events organized by Russia and Belarus and prohibit collaboration with sports agents and officials from these countries who may have ties to foreign intelligence services.

Further amendments to Article 10.1 of the Sports Law specify that members of the executive body of a sports federation must be Latvian citizens. Individuals who are staff members, employees, or informers of foreign state security, intelligence, or counterintelligence services, or the State Security Committee of the Latvian SSR (KGB), are prohibited from holding such positions. Candidates for executive roles must certify in writing that they are not subject to these restrictions and, within three months of election, provide a certificate from a competent public authority confirming their eligibility. Certificates from the Centre for the Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism are not required for individuals born after August 21, 1991.

These amendments aim to prevent individuals potentially disloyal to the Latvian state and its Constitution from leading sports federations. They align with the ECHR ruling (*Anchev v. Bulgaria*, January 11, 2018) (15), which affirmed states' broad discretion to implement measures protecting national security and addressing the legacies of non-democratic regimes. Accordingly, the law excludes individuals with ties to the USSR or Latvian SSR security services (16).

This strategic response reflects Latvia's determination to protect its athletes and sports sector from potential political influence while standing in solidarity with Ukraine. Such measures also underscore the Latvian government's commitment to safeguarding national integrity in the sports industry by limiting interactions with entities from countries perceived as aggressive or politically destabilizing. Given the complex social dynamics and varied public opinion revealed by the survey, the amendments can be seen as a strategic effort to align Latvia's sports policies with its stance on national security and geopolitical integrity.

The proactive and unified stance of the Baltic States is clearly demonstrated in the Joint Statement by the Baltic Foreign Ministers on Russian and Belarusian Participation in the 2024 Olympics (17). This declaration of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania highlights key concerns and arguments about the potential inclusion of Russian and Belarusian athletes in the 2024 Paris Olympics under “neutral” status.

Key arguments were:

*Condemnation of Russia and Belarus.* The statement emphasizes that Russia, with Belarus as an accomplice, is waging an illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, aiming to erase a sovereign nation and Olympic participant. The ministers argue that the escalation of atrocities by Russia makes it unjustifiable to ease sanctions on Russian and Belarusian athletes.

*Opposition to “neutral” athlete participation.* Allowing athletes from Russia and Belarus to compete under neutrality is problematic because many of them receive direct state support from their regimes. Russia has historically exploited the presence of “neutral” athletes in international events for propaganda purposes, including promoting its military and recruitment efforts.

*Impact on Ukrainian sports.* The war has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Ukrainian athletes and the deliberate destruction of sports infrastructure in Ukraine. Ukrainian athletes face immense challenges due to the war, making the idea of competing alongside Russian and Belarusian athletes unjust and morally unacceptable.

*Violation of Olympic principles.* The document asserts that Russia’s actions violate core Olympic principles, including peace and humanity, as well as the United Nations Charter. It calls on the IOC to uphold its own restrictive measures and not compromise the integrity of the Olympic Games.

*Call for action.* The ministers urge the IOC to maintain the current sanctions and bar Russian and Belarusian athletes from participating in any capacity. They emphasize the IOC’s responsibility to protect the values of sportsmanship and solidarity, supporting Ukraine and the global sports community against aggression.

In conclusion, the statement underscores the Baltic states’ commitment to supporting Ukraine and stresses that allowing Russian and Belarusian athletes into the 2024 Olympics would undermine the Olympic movement and embolden the use of aggression as a political tool. This document serves as a pivotal argument in international discourse regarding the intersection of sports, politics, and global conflict.

## The impact of Russia’s aggression on sports in Ukraine and Ukraine’s strategic response

Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine since 2014, escalating to a full-scale invasion in 2022, has reshaped global politics and significantly disrupted the sports sector. Ukraine recognizes sports as a crucial platform for political influence and has leveraged this to isolate Russia and Belarus internationally.

These efforts align with broader sanctions, demonstrating the increasing importance of sports diplomacy in conflict resolution and advocacy. As a dynamic tool for building bridges, strengthening international ties, and promoting national interests, sports diplomacy plays a pivotal role on the global stage—a notion examined in detail by Postlethwaite, Jenkin, and Sherry in their integrative review (18).

Key features of Ukraine’s sports policy during the war are:

### Boycott and isolation

Ukraine has actively pursued the exclusion of Russian and Belarusian athletes and teams from the global sports community. This strategy is reflected in the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) sanctions from 2022 (19), which include:

- A ban on hosting international sports events in Russia and Belarus.
- Prohibition of Russian and Belarusian flags, anthems, and symbols at international competitions.
- Revocation of Olympic honors awarded to Russian political figures.

### Political messaging through sports

Sports have become a platform for denouncing Russian aggression. Institutions like the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Ukraine, and national sports federations actively advocate for the exclusion of Russia and Belarus from international sports. In particular, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, the NOC, and the Wrestling Federation appealed to the IOC with a demand to suspend Russian and Belarusian athletes from participating in the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris (20).

### Ban on joint competitions with Russian athletes

Ukraine enforces a strict ban on competing alongside Russian and Belarusian athletes to prevent any legitimization of the aggressor states. The Resolution of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine «On some issues of participation of official delegations of national teams of Ukraine in international competitions in Olympic, non-Olympic sports and sports for people with disabilities» № 2031 adopted on April 12, 2023 (21) prohibits Ukrainian national teams from participating in competitions involving athletes from Russia or Belarus.

### Counteracting Russian propaganda

Ukraine collaborates with international federations and advocacy organizations to expose Russia’s use of sports as a propaganda tool, ensuring that the global community is aware of its politicization of sports. «Russia and Belarus should not be able to use the success of their teams and athletes for propaganda purposes to legitimize their illegal invasion of Ukraine»—this was stated in a video address during the international forum «The Power of Sports Diplomacy» by the Minister of Sport, Tourism, Civil Society and Youth of the United Kingdom, Stephanie Peacock (22).



FIGURE 1

The responses of the sports sectors in Ukraine and Latvia to geopolitical challenges.

### International sports diplomacy

Ukraine is at the forefront of efforts to sustain and expand sanctions against Russian and Belarusian sports bodies. These efforts reinforce Olympic principles of peace and justice, ensuring solidarity with nations opposing aggression. Among other things, during the work of the UN General Assembly in November 2024, the Ukrainian delegation stated that «We call on the international community to take a tough stance and continue to isolate Russia and Belarus from world sport as long as Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine continues» (23).

Figure 1 provides a visual overview of how the sports sectors in Ukraine and Latvia have responded to geopolitical challenges.

### Broader impact of war on the sports sector in Ukraine

The ongoing war in Ukraine has profoundly affected the sports sector, particularly as many athletes, coaches, and sports representatives have mobilized to support the Armed Forces or engage in volunteer efforts. Notable figures, such as legendary football coach Yuriy Vernyudub (24), have left their coaching positions to defend their country, while athletes have organized charity events to raise funds for the military. This mobilization reflects a broader commitment within the sports community to contribute to national efforts during this crisis. Ukrainian football has faced immense challenges due to the war. Many clubs have experienced displacement; for instance, FC Mariupol (25) and FC Desna Chernihiv (26) lost their infrastructure as a result of hostilities. Additionally, clubs like Shakhtar Donetsk saw a significant loss of foreign players (27) but continued to compete in the Champions League, using these matches as platforms to raise awareness about the ongoing conflict. Since the beginning of the war, most Ukrainian sports clubs which were not closed have had no other choice but to shift

their focus toward developing homegrown talent, demonstrating resilience in the face of adversity.

It is essential to emphasize that international support has become a crucial lifeline for Ukrainian sports. Organizations such as La Liga have stepped in to provide assistance, focusing on youth football development and offering financial support to help sustain operations amidst the turmoil (28).

Conversely, Ukrainian athletes who remained in Russia faced public condemnation; those who chose not to return were excluded from national teams and lost public backing, highlighting the complex repercussions of the conflict on individual careers.

As competitions resumed, the Ukrainian Premier League implemented strict safety measures, including matches played without spectators. These events have transformed into platforms for volunteer initiatives and support for those affected by the war. A particularly poignant example of this impact is the Donbas Arena, once a symbol of modern Ukrainian football (29). Located in Donetsk and regarded as Europe's first stadium built to UEFA Elite standards, it has been under occupation since 2014. The arena now stands as a stark reminder of the cultural and infrastructural losses inflicted by the conflict; previously hosting FC Shakhtar Donetsk matches and international events, its current state reflects the broader devastation experienced throughout eastern Ukraine. Overall, the war's impact on Ukraine's sports sector illustrates not only the immediate challenges faced by athletes and clubs but also underscores a resilient spirit within the community as they adapt to an unprecedented situation while striving to maintain their cultural identity amidst adversity.

### Future directions and diplomatic pathways

#### Strengthening international advocacy

Ukraine must enhance its partnerships with international sports federations to foster solidarity against aggressor states and secure support for its athletes. A noteworthy example is the

collaboration between the Latvian Football Federation (LFF) and the Ukrainian Association of Football (UAF), which facilitates joint technical activities, educational initiatives, and opportunities for young Ukrainian players. This partnership also organizes summer camps in Latvia to support the recovery of Ukrainian children affected by the war.

### Rehabilitation and development

Key priorities include providing robust support systems for athletes impacted by the war and creating pathways to integrate veterans into sports, fostering their physical and emotional rehabilitation.

### Institutionalizing sports diplomacy

Ukraine has the potential to drive reforms within international sports organizations, advocating for ethical governance and policies that reject aggression.

### Long-term exclusion strategies

Maintaining the exclusion of Russian and Belarusian athletes demands sustained advocacy and governance reforms that promote accountability and uphold international sports ethics.

Ukraine's proactive sports diplomacy underscores its resolve to isolate aggressor states while uniting the global community in solidarity. By employing a combination of legislative measures, public diplomacy, and international collaboration, Ukraine has positioned itself as a leader in using sports as a platform for geopolitical advocacy. Looking ahead, future initiatives could include developing secure frameworks for international collaborations, protecting athletes in politically sensitive environments, and establishing bilateral agreements that reinforce ethical sports participation. For both Latvia and Ukraine, such measures highlight the role of sports as a resilient force against geopolitical challenges.

Both nations have shown that sports can act as a powerful diplomatic tool and a reflection of national identity. Through decisive legal measures and international collaboration, they have effectively protected their sports sectors from external interference while presenting a united front on the global stage. A remarkable display of this unity through sports was seen when Latvia's top tennis player, Aļona Ostapenko, and her Ukrainian partner, Lyudmyla Kichenok, triumphed in the women's doubles final at the US Open Championship on September 6, 2024. The pair claimed their first-ever Grand Slam title together, showcasing the strength of their partnership.

As international sports increasingly intersect with geopolitical tensions, policymakers and sports organizations must adapt by prioritizing athlete protections, ethical governance, and robust partnerships. By doing so, Latvia and Ukraine can ensure their sports sectors remain symbols of integrity, unity, and resistance in a politically charged world.

## Data availability statement

Publicly available datasets were analyzed in this study. This data can be found here: Oficiālās statistikas portāls (2024) Nationality of the population: Latvian citizens, Latvian non-citizens (Latvia). <https://stat.gov.lv/lv/statistikas-temas/iedzivotaji/iedzivotaju-skaitis/kartes/k280-iedzivotaju-valstiska-piederiba>.

## Author contributions

MK-U: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. MT: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

## Funding

The author(s) declare that financial support was received for the research and/or publication of this article. The authors acknowledge that financial support for the publication of this article was provided by the Faculty of Social Sciences at Rīga Stradiņš University.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

## Generative AI statement

The author(s) declare that Generative AI was used in the creation of this manuscript. This manuscript has benefited from the use of artificial intelligence tools to enhance its linguistic quality. Specifically, AI-based software was utilized to check for spelling, grammar, and linguistic consistency in the article's language. These tools were employed solely to ensure clarity and readability, and all substantive content, analysis, and conclusions were independently conceived and developed by the authors. The use of AI was limited to editorial support and did not influence the intellectual integrity of the work.

## Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

## References

1. Eggeling KA. Politics and power in the global tennis circuit. *Int Aff.* (2024) 100(6):2481–500. doi: 10.1093/ia/iaae229
2. Lebed F, Morgulev E. Stamps don't lie: sports, military, and national identity postage stamps as a mirror of aggressive soviet and Russian propaganda. *Phys Cult Sport Stud Res.* (2024) 105(1):52–64. doi: 10.2478/pcssr-2024-0024
3. Grix J, Brannagan PM. Sports mega-events as foreign policy: sport diplomacy, “soft power,” and “sportswashing”. *Am Behav Sci.* (2024). doi: 10.1177/00027642241262042
4. Bertoli AD. Nationalism and conflict: lessons from international sports. *Int Stud Q.* (2017) 61(4):835–49. doi: 10.1093/isq/sqx029
5. Murray S. Sports diplomacy: history, theory, and practice. In: Marlin-Bennett R, editor. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. Oxford University Press (2020). Available at: <https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-542> (Accessed November 20, 2024).
6. Pamment J. Special issue on sports diplomacy [special issue]. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy.* (2019) 15(3):145–6. doi: 10.1057/s41254-019-00136-4
7. Dichter HL. The diplomatic turn: the new relationship between sport and politics. *Int J Hist Sport.* (2021) 38(2–3):247–63. doi: 10.1080/09523367.2021.1894135
8. Pigman AG, Rofo JS. Sport and diplomacy: an introduction [special issue]. *Sport Soc.* (2014) 17(9):1095–7. doi: 10.1080/17430437.2013.856612
9. LETA. In less than 30 years, the number of non-citizens in Latvia has decreased by 75% (Latvia). (2024) Available at: <https://www.leta.lv/home/important/F439658B-4B71-4D24-854E-CC14BAE9EFA1/> (Accessed: May 29, 2024).
10. Oficiālās Statistikas Portāls. Nationality of the population: Latvian citizens, Latvian non-citizens (Latvia). (2024) Available at: <https://stat.gov.lv/lv/statistikas-temas/iedzivotaji/iedzivotaju-skaitis/kartes/k280-iedzivotaju-valstiska-piederiba> (Accessed: May 29, 2024).
11. Cabinet of Ministers Republic of Latvia. *Attitudes Towards the War in Ukraine (Latvia)*. Tīrģus Un Sociālo Pētījumu Centrs ‘Latvijas Fakti’ (2024). Available at: [https://ppdb.mk.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/VKanc\\_Petijums\\_par\\_karu\\_ukraina\\_iedz\\_attieksme.pptx](https://ppdb.mk.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/VKanc_Petijums_par_karu_ukraina_iedz_attieksme.pptx) (Accessed December 03, 2024).
12. NEPLP. *Distribution of the Proportion (%) of Respondents According to Their View of the Guilty Party in the war in Ukraine in 2022 (Latvia)*. Rīga: Latvijas Fakti (2021).
13. NEPLP, Latvijas Fakti. Unpublished data prepared for the report, *Study on media literacy and media content consumption habits of the Latvian population*, conducted in July–August 2022. Electronic correspondence “Study on Media Consumption Habits” with the Deputy Chairperson of the National Electronic Mass Media Council, Aurēlija Ieva Druvieta. (2023). Available at: [https://www.saeima.lv/petijumi/Latgales\\_iedzivotaju\\_uzskati\\_Ukraina.pdf](https://www.saeima.lv/petijumi/Latgales_iedzivotaju_uzskati_Ukraina.pdf) (Accessed December 03, 2024).
14. Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. Latvian residents’ views on the war in Ukraine and media consumption habits. (2023) Available at: [https://www.saeima.lv/petijumi/Latgales\\_iedzivotaju\\_uzskati\\_Ukraina.pdf](https://www.saeima.lv/petijumi/Latgales_iedzivotaju_uzskati_Ukraina.pdf) (Accessed December 03, 2024).
15. Anchev vs. Bulgaria. Application no. 38334/20. European Court of Human Rights. (2023) Available at: <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng-press#%7B%22itemid%22%3A%22003-5968910-7632885%22%7D> (Accessed May 29, 2024).
16. Kamenecka-Usova M, Židens J, Luika S, Donāne L, Agapova O, Stecenko I, et al. Latvian sports regulation in transition: navigating historical evolution and contemporary development trends. *Eur J Sustain Dev.* (2024) 13(4):437. doi: 10.14207/ejsd.2024.v13n4p437
17. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Latvia. Joint statement by Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Foreign Ministers to the International Olympic Committee regarding the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes in the upcoming Olympic Games beginning on July 26 next year in Paris. (2023) Available at: [https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/article/joint-statement-estonian-latvian-and-lithuanian-foreign-ministers-international-olympic-committee-regarding-participation-russian-and-belarusian-athletes-upcoming-olympic-games-beginning-july-26-next-year-paris?utm\\_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F](https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/article/joint-statement-estonian-latvian-and-lithuanian-foreign-ministers-international-olympic-committee-regarding-participation-russian-and-belarusian-athletes-upcoming-olympic-games-beginning-july-26-next-year-paris?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F) (Accessed December 02, 2024).
18. Postlethwaite V, Jenkin C, Sherry E. Sport diplomacy: an integrative review. *Sport Manag Rev.* (2023) 26(3):361–82. doi: 10.1080/14413523.2022.2071054
19. International Olympic Committee. Declaration of the 11 Olympic Summit. (2022) Available at: <https://olympics.com/ioc/news/declaration-of-the-11th-olympic-summit>
20. Kitsoft. Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine. *Ukraine Demands to Ban Russian and Belarusian Athletes from the Paris Olympic*. Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (2021). Available at: <https://mms.gov.ua/news/ukraina-vymahaie-vidstoronyty-rosiiskyykh-ta-biloruskykh-sportsmeniv-vid-olimpiiskyykh-ihor-u-paryzhi> (Accessed December 04, 2024).
21. Kitsoft. Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine - On some issues of participation of official delegations of national teams of Ukraine in international competitions in Olympic, non-Olympic sports and sports for people with disabilities. (2023) Available at: <https://mms.gov.ua/npas/pro-deiaki-pytannia-uchasti-ofitsiinykh-delehatsii-natsionalnykh-zbirnykh-komand-ukrainy-u-mizhnarodnykh-zmahanniakh-z-olimpiiskyykh-neolimpiiskyykh-vydiv-sportu-ta-vydiv-sportu-osib-z-invalidn> (Accessed December 04, 2024).
22. Kitsoft. Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine - British Minister of Sports Stephanie Peacock: On the eve of the Winter Olympics, the world must be vigilant about any softening of the positions of international sports federations towards Russia. (2022) Available at: <https://mms.gov.ua/news/brytanskyi-ministr-sportu-stefani-pikok-naperedodni-zymovykh-olimpiiskyykh-ihor-svit-maie-buty-pylnym-shchodobud-iakoho-pomiakshennia-pozytsii-mizhnarodnykh-sportyvnykh-federatsii-shchodorosii> (Accessed December 04, 2024).
23. Ipress.ua. *The Ukrainian Delegation to the UN Stressed the Need to Isolate Russia and Belarus from International Sports*. iPress.ua (2022). Available at: [https://ipress.ua/news/delegatsiya\\_ukrainy\\_v\\_oon\\_nagolosyla\\_na\\_neobhidnosti\\_izolyatsii\\_rosii\\_ta\\_bilorusi\\_vid\\_mizhnarodnogo\\_sportu\\_364617.html](https://ipress.ua/news/delegatsiya_ukrainy_v_oon_nagolosyla_na_neobhidnosti_izolyatsii_rosii_ta_bilorusi_vid_mizhnarodnogo_sportu_364617.html) (Accessed December 04, 2024).
24. Editorial T. *Football Coach Vernidub Returned from Moldova to Ukraine and Went to Defend the Country from the Occupiers*. TSN.Ua (2022). Available at: <https://tsn.ua/prosport/futbolnyi-trener-vernidub-povernuvsyia-z-moldovi-do-ukrayini-ta-pishov-zahishati-krayinu-vid-okupantiv-1992067.html> (Accessed December 04, 2024).
25. Football 24. Mariupol lost all its infrastructure – the occupiers destroyed the stadium, base, sports complex, office and training fields. (2022) Available at: [https://football24.ua/mariupol\\_vtrativ\\_vsyu\\_infrastrukturu\\_okupantizruynuvali\\_stadion\\_sportkompleks\\_bazu\\_ofis\\_ta\\_trenuvalni\\_polya\\_n717778/](https://football24.ua/mariupol_vtrativ_vsyu_infrastrukturu_okupantizruynuvali_stadion_sportkompleks_bazu_ofis_ta_trenuvalni_polya_n717778/) (Accessed December 05, 2024).
26. Suspilne Media. *Shakhtar has lost its last Brazilian legionnaire: transfer terms*. (2022) Available at: <https://suspilne.media/sport/268183-sahhtar-pokinuv-ostannij-brazilskij-legioner-umovi-transferu/> (Accessed December 05, 2024).
27. Suspilne Media. Sports’ reaction to the war in Ukraine. Football news in Ukraine. Sports during the War. Chernihiv ‘Desna’ will not play in the next UPL season due to the war in Ukraine. (2022) Available at: <https://suspilne.media/sport/243965-chernigivska-desna-ne-gratime-u-nastupnomu-sezoni-upl-cerez-vijnu-v-ukraini/> (Accessed December 05, 2024).
28. Football.ua. La Liga will provide UPL with financial assistance for the next season. (2022) Available at: <https://football.ua/ukraine/479381-la-liga-nadast-upl-finansovu-dopomogu-na-nastupnij-sezon.html> (Accessed December 05, 2024).
29. Novak O. *Will Donbas Arena be no More? Will one of the Best Stadiums in Europe be Destroyed?* FootballHub (2023). Available at: <https://footballhub.ua/donbas-areny-bilshe-ne-bude-rosiiany-khochut-znyshchyty-odyn-iz-naikrashchykh-stadioniv-yevropy> (Accessed December 05, 2024).