



Intervention of the President of the Portuguese Padel Federation at the FIP General Assembly – 20261012

Mr President, Members of the Board, dear colleagues,

Some of you know me; others may not. But throughout my years representing my country within FIP, I have always tried to fight for the sport we love, putting honesty, ethics and moral values above everything else, as I truly believe these principles are inseparable from any sport, or life itself. Having said that, I ask you to please be patient and to hear me out.

Please think of a child watching their national team. Think of the moment the national anthem begins. The players stand together. A flag rises. Somewhere, that child reaches for its heart and whispers: one day, that could be me.

What are we promising that child? That dedication matters. That belonging matters. That the honor of representing a country must be earned, and must never simply be bought.

A flag is not a price tag. A national team must never become a shopping list.

Our countries have different histories, different resources and different ways of granting citizenship. We respect their sovereignty. But a government's power to issue a passport cannot become the power to purchase an advantage in our World Championships.

A passport proves nationality. It does not, by itself, prove every sporting condition required to represent a nation.

I have served as President of the Portuguese Padel Federation. A Spanish athlete who wanted to become Portuguese lived in Portugal and waited seven years for citizenship. Seven years of building a life, of becoming part of our community, of waiting for the right to carry our flag.

For me, that athlete belongs. His birthplace does not diminish his commitment. His journey gives that commitment meaning.

How can we look such athletes in the eye if we allow a shortcut to replace the years they gave? How can we ask our young players to sacrifice, while suggesting that any country with enough money can hire services from accomplished foreign professionals, and give them a nationality to acquire the result their own national athletes have spent a lifetime pursuing?

If national representation becomes a financial transaction, something precious dies. We may still have matches. We may still have medals. But we lose the truth of what those medals mean.



The Olympic Charter places fair play, solidarity and ethical principles at the heart of sport. It also recognizes the responsibility of sporting organizations to establish their rules. FIFA's approach likewise shows that nationality and sporting eligibility are distinct questions, and that genuine connections and changes of representation can be regulated.

We must protect those principles through clear rules: valid nationality, a genuine connection through nationality from birth and holding a passport, or seven years of holding a passport if not a born citizen, or seven years of actual residence and holding a passport together with a document attesting the waiving of the residence of the previous country of residence, together with firm restrictions on changing national teams. The same rules for every country. The same evidence. The same fairness.

For entries in future competitions, let's apply even more restrictive rules rigorously. Where a player's eligibility is disputed, examine the evidence individually. If the applicable conditions are not met, that player must not play.

When our sport is still under the attack from negative forces, we must stand together behind our President in his efforts to protect padel's integrity and keep dishonesty out of our sport. After all the growth padel has achieved, we must send a firm, united message: ours is a credible sport, where results are earned through fair competition, and wealth cannot purchase victory.

Our Assembly has the authority to protect its World Championships. Today, it must also have the courage.

When an athlete carries a flag, they carry the hopes of people who may never hold a racket. Let us honor those people. Let us honor the athletes who build their connection through years of life and commitment.

Let us act on these principles. Let victory be earned on the court. Let our flags stand for belonging, our anthems for pride, and our medals for something money cannot buy.

Thank you.