

**External investigation report
in connection with the incidents pertaining to
rhythmic and artistic gymnastics**

On behalf of the Federal Department
of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport

Summary and recommendations

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A Assignment and procedures

1. Introduction

1 Allegations by former elite female rhythmic and artistic gymnasts of intimidation, humiliation and abuse at the Swiss Gymnastic Federation's national performance centre in Magglingen repeatedly made headlines in summer and autumn 2020. According to press reports, the issues of bodyweight and the 'tyranny of the scales' were also constantly in focus. A culture of silence and fear prevailed at the performance centre. The athletes said they felt constantly watched and controlled. Because they were afraid of being expelled or having their careers ended, they either did

not confide in their parents or doctors or told them to remain silent about the situation. Even at a young age, athletes suffered from anxiety and eating disorders, depression, PTSD and suicidal thoughts. They described the years they stayed at Magglingen as the worst time of their lives, and said that third parties had played down their allegations, putting them down to the culture in these sport disciplines (see ‘Magglingen Protokolle’ (Magglingen protocols) in the newspaper supplement ‘Das Magazin’ from 31.10.2020; in German only).

For further details refer to Chapter A 1. of the investigation report.
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2. Investigation mandate

2 The media coverage prompted the Swiss Gymnastics Federation to launch an enquiry, conducted by the law firm Pachmann AG, into the alleged incidents, and in addition it instructed its ethics committee to investigate ethics violations.

3 At a national level, the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) mandated the Zurich law firm Rudin Cantieni Rechtsanwälte AG with the present investigation. The law firm was instructed to investigate the factual circumstances published in ‘Das Magazin’ on 31 October 2020, to examine the existing rules and instruments for protecting young athletes, and to identify possible improvements, if necessary with the assistance of other experts. The investigation team was asked to formulate recommendations on the measures the various players in the Swiss sport system should take to ensure that similar incidents can be detected and prevented in the future. The investigation report was expected to answer the following questions:

- What were the roles and responsibilities of the bodies involved (FOSPO, Swiss Olympic, Swiss Gymnastics Federation, coaches, etc.)? What did they do to prevent the incidents?
- Are there any indications of other similar incidents in the field of artistic gymnastics/rhythmic gymnastics at the national sports centre in Magglingen and/or at regional performance centres and the cantonal training centres?
- Is this kind of abuse systemic in sport disciplines that are comparable to rhythmic gymnastics and artistic gymnastics?
- Which instruments are available to the players in the Swiss sport system today to ensure correct ethical treatment of athletes and to identify and prevent incidents as described?
- In which other sport disciplines similar to rhythmic gymnastics and artistic gymnastics is there a need for action?
- What approaches are taken in other countries similar to Switzerland?
- What rules and instruments that could prevent such incidents in the future are missing?
- What specific recommendations can be formulated for the various players in the Switzerland’s sports system?

4 In consultation with the DDPS, the investigation team included the following points in its specifications:

- Because of the allegations in the media, the investigation into women's artistic gymnastics and rhythmic gymnastics was more profound than the investigation into men's artistic gymnastics.
- The other technical-compositional sports disciplines that were considered similar to rhythmic gymnastics and artistic gymnastics are trampoline gymnastics, diving, figure skating (including ice dancing) and artistic swimming (also known as synchronized swimming).
- The investigation team went back systematically as far as 1 January 2016. Insofar as it made sense and was related to factual findings after 1 January 2016, tangible incidents from 1 January 2011 onwards were also investigated.
- Investigation activities were completed on 16 August 2021. Incidents that occurred after this date were not investigated, but if relevant to the case, mentioned for the sake of completeness.

For additional information, notably on the mandate, further specific aspects, the legal framework and answers to questions, refer to the investigation report, Chapter A 2. and Chapter E.

3. Investigation team

5 Rudin Cantieni Rechtsanwälte AG is an independent law firm that is not linked in any way to the DDPS, Swiss Gymnastics Federation, Swiss Olympic or the interviewed athletes and coaches.

6 The person in charge at **Rudin Cantieni Rechtsanwälte AG** and investigation team leader was **Ofebia Wettstein, attorney at law** (who has many years' experience of conducting investigations). The investigation team consisted of **Corinna Hauri** (who has years of experience as a journalist and holds a diploma in the management of non-profit organisations), **Myrta Wiedemeier, attorney at law**, (child protection expert), **Michèle Siekmann, attorney at law** (child protection expert), **attorneys at law, Sarah Duss, Tamara Pfiffner, Maren Annighöfer and Larissa Verdieri. Dr Natalie Barker-Ruchti, Associate Professor, Örebro University, Sweden**, supported the investigation team as an independent expert (part-time). **Attorneys at law, Johann-Christoph Rudin and Linus Cantieni** assisted the investigation team as supervisors throughout the investigation.

4. Procedures

4.1 Deciding on the content and conduct of interviews

7 In a first step, the investigation team obtained the relevant documents and worked out investigation procedures.

4.1.1. Interviews with individuals

8 In order to establish the facts, it was then necessary to determine which individuals and which groups of persons had to be interviewed, and how the interviews were to be conducted, namely:

4.1.1.1. Personal interviews

9 Because of the pandemic, the 108 personal interviews (including meetings with experts) were conducted, except for one, as video calls that were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interviews were mainly held in Swiss German and French, and some in High German. The interviewees could ask to be interviewed in their native language with the assistance of an interpreter. Some Italian and French-speaking interviewees made use of this option. Some interviews were conducted in writing, a procedure also used for some supplementary questions:

- FOSPO, Swiss Olympic, Swiss Gymnastics Federation, Swiss Aquatics, Swiss Ice Skating, Sport-Kultur-Studium Biel (Sport-Culture-Studies Biel)
- Athletes from the ‘Maggingen Protocols’
- Additional rhythmic gymnasts (randomly selected)

4.1.1.2. Anonymous questionnaires

10 Rudin Cantieni Rechtsanwälte AG commissioned gfs-zürich, Marke & Social Research, to carry out an anonymous questionnaire survey in German, French and Italian with:

- Athletes from the technical compositional sports disciplines women’s artistic gymnastics, men’s artistic gymnastics, trampoline gymnastics (Swiss Gymnastics Federation), figure skating (Swiss Ice Skating), artistic swimming and diving (Swiss Aquatics);
- Coaches for the technical compositional sports disciplines rhythmic gymnastics, women’s artistic gymnastics and men’s artistic gymnastics.

4.1.1.3. Written survey

- 11 -Regional performance centres and cantonal training centres for both rhythmic and artistic gymnastics.
- Swiss Gymnastics Federation: Swiss Gymnastics Federation were invited to submit their comments as regards the accusations stated in the ‘Maggingen protocols’.

4.1.2 A look at the situation abroad

12 The mandate included identifying countries that can be compared with Switzerland and to outline their situation, especially as regards gymnastics. Belgium, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Germany, France, Italy and Austria were considered comparable.

4.1.3 Overview of international scientific research by Dr Natalie Barker-Ruchti, Associate Professor, Örebro University, Sweden

13 The overview of international research was intended to map the general scientific findings and the characteristics of technical compositional sports. Furthermore, the duty of care towards athletes was to be examined and scientific backgrounds on violence or transgressions and neglect in technical compositional sports were to be indicated.

4.1.4 Appointment of experts to evaluate the target situation

14 The research team also focused on the perspective of other scientific disciplines and put together an expert team. In addition to scientists, (current and former) persons who were directly affected who had experienced their sport disciplines in practice over many years were also to testify as experts. Accordingly, expert groups consisting of athletes and coaches from the rhythmic gymnastics, women's artistic gymnastics and men's artistic gymnastics were formed. These experts' task was to comment on the ideal situation.

4.1.5 The investigation team’s legal assessment

15 The investigation team assessed the existing situation taking into account the applicable human rights and children’s rights and other fields of law such as employment law and criminal law. In addition, the connections and effects between funding in sports promotion and ethical requirements were examined in more detail. Further consideration was given to general international sports programmes and rules.

4.2 Particular features of the investigation

16 The time frame for the investigation was limited. Nevertheless, the investigation is very extensive as regards the files consulted, and includes all the technical compositional Olympic sports and most players, which is a novelty at the international level

17 The scientific perspective was extensively included and influenced the entire study. The instruments used (questionnaires, vignettes) are based on scientifically recognised instruments and were tested in advance. Subsequently, other scientific experts from various fields contributed with their knowledge.

18 As far as possible, the investigation was carried out taking into account knowledge about traumas and their avoidance, e.g. through support groups (expert groups with practical experience), interviews in which vignettes were used, and interviews conducted by child protection experts.

19 This is the first time that studies carried out abroad (as far as recognisable) have been reviewed in Switzerland.

20 The investigation revealed important systemic shortcomings, for example in the context of the comprehensive legal analysis.

21 The result of the investigation is an extensive report of about 650 pages – despite the fact that result of the investigation was already presented in a compact manner in the report. The present summary can only include the most important points. After a brief overview of the sports system, the summary goes through the scientific and legal considerations, to the experts' perspectives and to a look at the situation abroad. The focus then shifts to the protagonists: athletes, coaches, regional and cantonal training centres. Finally, the "Maggingen Protocols" and the responsibilities are scrutinised.

<p>As a matter of principle, references are provided for the statements, the many quotations and the sources quoted in the investigation report. This also applies to the numerous graphics and survey evaluations.</p>
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B. Investigation results

1. A look at the sports system

1.1 System, funding and classification

22 Sport is a prestigious industry worth billions all over the world. Sports federations and governments are increasingly and intensively investing in competitive sport, justifying their investments notably with the effects on the population. International sporting success is considered to convey desired social values and behaviour such as fair play, national identity, social cohesion and regular physical activity.

23 In sports systems and sports funding, a distinction is made between centralised and (largely) decentralised systems that mainly involve voluntary activities. Funding in decentralised systems is not usually linked to performance expectations. In contrast, centralised systems fund *specific* sport disciplines and expect pre-defined performances in return, such as competition results. Successful sports and/or those with high medal potential receive more funding. This mechanism often makes it impossible for poorly financed sports to develop and also makes them subject to penalties when they miss the predefined targets.

24 Switzerland has a mixed approach as regards the system and the way it is funded. The cooperation of FOSPO and Swiss Olympic (centralised elements) with the national sports federations and other contacts (decentralised elements) lead to a complex interplay of roles, responsibilities, high performance expectations and administrative requirements. Funding sports with private membership fees and sponsorship, and the financial support the government provides is multi-layered. National funds primarily flow from FOSPO to Swiss Olympic, which then allocates basic and performance-related contributions to the national sports federations. Whereas basic contributions mainly require the documentation of basic activities and guidelines (plans, ethical measures, annual reports), performance-related contributions are essentially determined on the basis of results achieved in competitions, medium-term success potential, implementation of the competitive sport promotion policy and the national importance of the sports concerned. The amount of the performance-related contribution is determined on the basis of classification categories. Every four years, the categories for a sport are re-evaluated by means of a classification process. This classification has a significant impact on the financial resources of the federations. The recurrent classification process also creates financial uncertainties and puts federations, officials, coaches and athletes under permanent pressure to meet the measurable performance factors.

1.2 Analysis of the Swiss elite sport systems SPLISS and SPLISS-CH 2019

25 The study ‘Elite sport in Switzerland – Snapshot SPLISS-CH 2019’ explains the Swiss elite sport system and casts a critical eye over it in relation to the Olympic medal target. According to a comparative study carried out with 15 countries, based on the SPLISS (Sports Policy Factors Leading to International

Sporting Success) model, Switzerland scored highest in the areas of ‘talent development’ and almost the highest in ‘coaching’ and ‘sport for all’, but lowest in ‘financial support’, ‘competitions’ and ‘research and innovation’. ‘Elite Sport Switzerland 2019’ values Swiss athlete support at slightly below the international average.

26 Analyses like SPLISS-CH 2019 show the Swiss elite sport system to be efficient in many areas. It builds on internationally recognised elite sport dimensions and has financial resources (despite what the international comparative study says), modern concepts, support programmes, services and coach education available. Swiss athletes are successful and their coaches are highly competent. Nevertheless, the SPLISS-CH 2019 study points to a number of shortcomings, and identifies the following key leverage points for achieving the sustainable development of elite sport in Switzerland:

- Improving strategic management (in particular improving the quality of associations’ decision-makers; separation of strategic and operational management; specification of sporting and economic objectives; implementation of strategic measures and increasing management efficiency);
- Optimising athletes’ careers further (in particular improving the coordination between athletes, parents and the various stakeholders in elite sport);
- Increasing career opportunities for trainers (in particular firmly establishing systematic career planning);
- Long-term improvement of the support of multi-sport structures (in particular as regards cooperation in the areas of performance centres, competitions, and research and development);
- Networking with leading organisations (in particular with leading Swiss companies and universities and international sports organisations);
- Reinforcing the role of performance sport as a Swiss cultural asset (in particular achieving greater transparency and credibility in elite sport).

For further statements and details on the Swiss sport system, and additional graphics and source citations, refer to investigation report, Chapter B 1.

2. Scientific consideration of technical compositional sports

2.1 Scientific knowledge in general

27 This chapter summarises the scientific findings on the sports in question. This generally accessible information is to be used to define the content and extent of the care that the athletes, most of whom are minors, are owed from the persons responsible.

28 It should be noted at the outset that the status of scientific research into technical compositional sports in Switzerland is poor. Internationally, however, intensive research has resulted in considerable knowledge, which makes it possible to create a detailed picture of these sports. There is a general consensus that technical compositional sports place high demands on sports organisations, coaches, athletes and their parents. The established health-related and psychological effects give rise to particular criticism. The concerns have been communicated in various appeals for better protection for athletes.

2.1.1 Difficulty and perfection

29 Technical compositional sports require extraordinarily difficult routines at today's highest level. Books of rules and regulations determine the execution of movements and meticulously specify *how* a movement must be executed. The high standards of difficulty and perfection have a number of consequences: (idealised) physical aptitude and talent, specialisation in a sport early on, requirement to perform at a young age, and health and mental strain.

2.1.2 Physical aptitude and talent

30

In technical compositional sport, physical fitness is basically considered equivalent to low body weight and/or low body fat. Excessive weight is seen as reducing performance and increasing the risk of injury. In artistic swimming, women's figure skating, women's artistic gymnastics and rhythmic gymnastics especially, studies show that the idealised slender body shape has an influence on coaches, judges and officials. In particular, the less mature body shape, i.e. no hips and breasts, is deeply rooted. The development during puberty that leads to body growth, a feminine figure and weight gain is thus perceived as an impediment to performance and even considered as an obstacle that can end careers. Although the books of rules and regulations for technical compositional sports do not specify an idealised body shape, selection takes place according to body size and shape. Studies also show that from the beginning of physical changes due to puberty if not before, athletes' weight and body fat are measured, their diet is monitored and restrictions are imposed and/or they are put on a diet. These measures that are taken to maintain the idealised childlike body (for as long as possible), can put female athletes under great pressure. Studies on this kind of stress show that female athletes voluntarily - and often secretly - use weight-loss strategies such as dieting, taking laxatives and/or diuretics, fasting, saunas and self-induced vomiting.

2.1.3 Specialising in a sport early on

31 In general, technical compositional sports are considered typical ‘children’s sports’. A child's body and childhood are considered to offer ideal conditions for learning the complex movements required in these disciplines. It is therefore common that the performance development phase is considered to be roughly from the age of five to fifteen years, this means that on a global scale, the athletes competing in these disciplines are mostly children. In the women's disciplines of technical compositional sports the physical changes due to growth and pubertal development are regarded, as mentioned above, as an impediment to performance and even an obstacle that can end careers.

2.1.4 Achieving top sporting performance at a young age

32 Because they achieve their top performance at a young age, athletes in technical compositional sports retire young. However, the age varies from discipline to discipline. In general, the average age of athletes competing in technical competitive sports has been rising for several years. This is neither due to later entry into sports, nor to slower or more extended performance development during childhood. What has changed in recent years, and especially in the women's disciplines, is the length of career. Female athletes can now remain successful at the top level into their mid-20s and even their 30s. The related change in understanding shows that sports federations offer female and male athletes an environment that enables career extension through financial support, dual career systems, and medical and psychological care. Studies further show that coaches learn to reject the child ideal by working with adolescent artistic gymnasts. However, the idealised childhood body, the specialisation in a sport early on, the high number of practice hours during childhood and the young performance age remain important and endanger athletes’ health. They are also considered risk factors when it comes to the use of violence towards athletes or the failure to protect them.

2.1.5 Health risks

33 The characteristics of technical compositional sports bring numerous health risks for athletes, such as injuries, psychological disorders and identity problems.

34 Excessive stress injuries, i.e. micro-traumatic damage to bones, muscles and tendons due to repetitive sub-maximum strain without sufficient recovery time are a common consequence of physical strain. Other risk factors include specialisation from early on, a high number of training hours, growth, repetitive training, forced increases in performance, inadequate or non-existent equipment, aids and relief mechanisms, previous and/or acute stress injuries, chronic energy deficiency and menstrual irregularities.

35 Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport RED-S, is attributed to energy intake deficiency relative to energy expenditure. Today, RED-S is considered a fundamental problem in top-level competitive sport. For young athletes, this deficiency represents an especially significant risk because of their developing bodies’ needs. Due

to the imbalance that is also known as Female Athlete Triad, female athletes are predisposed to delayed menarche, menstrual irregularities and amenorrhoea. As a result bone health can be affected, and acute and stress bone injuries and osteoporosis may occur. RED-S risk factors (rigorous training schedules, failure to meet developmental needs, idealisation of the slender body shape) are very common in technical compositional sports and especially in women's disciplines, and therefore require particular attention.

36 Researchers also examined the psychological stress-related risks in technical compositional sports. Symptoms and disorders include insomnia, depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety and related disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder and other trauma-related disorders, body dissatisfaction and eating disorders, self harm, bipolar and psychotic disorders, substance use and abuse, and addiction problems. While athletes are more likely to experience such symptoms and disorders than non-athletic persons, deselected athletes in technical compositional sports are particularly at risk of developing mental health symptoms and disorders. Dissatisfaction with their bodies and eating disorders are particularly prevalent. Eating disorder symptoms and clinical eating disorders are significantly more common in technical compositional disciplines than in other sports. A variety of risk factors can trigger bad eating habits and eating disorders (e.g. biology, genetics, and psychology). Other particularly significant risk factors include specialisation in a sport early on, physical changes during puberty, peer pressure, negative comments from coaches, (forced) dieting, injuries and traumatic experiences such as physical, psychological and sexual violence. Studies show that in technical compositional sports, there is added perceived pressure to meet the idealised body image.

37 Personality development disorder has been identified as an additional risk in technical compositional sports. Research studies suggest that athletes in sports with early specialisation and intensive training in childhood and adolescence can develop a one-sided identity (mono-identity). This can lead to athletes developing an extreme willingness to understand and shape their lives according to the values of performance sport during their sporting career. Being thin, eating little food, training and competing in pain and when injured, and suppressing non-sporting needs are all part of the performance sport value system (its 'logic') and can further endanger the health and mental welfare of athletes. This system can also negatively affect education and training, and social relationships.

2.2 Forms of violence and neglect in sport

2.2.1 Emotional or psychological violence

38 Shouting, insults, threats, derogatory remarks, bullying and making shameful, humiliating and intimidating comments (especially body shaming) are scientifically defined as psychological violence or boundary violations. Furthermore, psychological violence includes non-verbal communication, such as demonstrating frustration, turning away from an athlete or leaving when a performance is evaluated as insufficient. Finally, non-verbal psychological violence includes hitting and throwing objects without intent to harm, deliberate denial of feedback and ostracism of athletes.

2.2.2 Physical violence and boundary violations

39 Hitting, kicking, shaking, pushing and other violent behaviour are defined as physical violence or boundary violations (see investigation report, Chapter B 10.1.3.1.) Furthermore, they include forced stretching and forced physical exertion, individual and collective punishment through physical exertion and the physical isolation of athletes. Denial of basic needs such as eating, drinking water or using the toilet, and restricting sleep and rest are also considered physical violence. Finally, the physical form of violence includes overtraining or limited recovery opportunities, and forcing athletes to participate in training and/or competitions despite them suffering from pain and injury. Selection processes that require weight loss or participating in training and/or competitions despite suffering from pain and injury are other forms of physical violence.

2.2.3 Sexual violence

40 Sexual violence or boundary violations include sexual harassment (verbal and texting) and sexual abuse (e.g. inappropriate touching and rape). Exhibitionism and voyeurism are also considered sexual violence.

2.2.4 Neglect

41 For a detailed description of neglect, refer to the investigation report, Chapter B 10.1.3. In summary, physical neglect is the failure to provide athletes with the care they need. It involves inadequate supervision of athletes. Such neglect may consist of overtraining, insufficient assistance or not enough or inadequate protective equipment in training. It also includes failure to prevent unhealthy behaviour (e.g. unhealthy eating habits; abuse of medication) and refusal of medical care.

42 Psychological neglect includes the acceptance of antisocial and criminal behaviour (e.g. violence, expecting that violence is endured, underage drinking, drugs, recommending or not intervening in doping methods or other medical means, not intervening and/or not reporting any violence against athletes; refusing psychological care). Psychological neglect is also understood to be the failure to respect human rights and children's rights.

2.3 Duty of care towards athletes

43 Based on more proven scientific evidence, governments and sports organisations have been increasingly concerned with the risks and harm done to athletes over the past decade. Comprehensive protection (health, welfare, education, identity) has become more important and is now considered a moral and legal obligation, the duty of care, of sports organisations towards their members. As a minimum, duty of care comprises protective measures against preventable harm, and strategies to comply with and guarantee athletes' rights. Both components are derived from the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights UDHR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC

44 As a result, sports organisations have developed guidelines for complying with their duty of care. One set is the IOC Code of Ethic, which, in addition to fundamental principles, contains rules on behavioural and competitive integrity, good governance and mandatory reporting. Then there is the Athletes' Rights and Responsibility Declaration, which states that athletes of all ages and performance levels have the right to a respectful and fair sporting environment, and to protection from violence. Furthermore, the declaration promotes the right of athletes to fair and equal gender representation and the protection for mental and physical integrity in a safe training and competition environment, and protection from abuse and harassment. In order to minimise preventable harm, these rights require organisational and systemic measures against negligent behaviour (e.g. overload symptoms; integrity breach).

45 On behalf of the IOC, an international group of experts has developed recommendations for preventing and managing non-accident related violence against athletes. These recommendations address sports organisations, athletes, sports physicians and members of other health professions and sports science researchers.

46 Currently, Switzerland has hardly any protective provisions specific to competitive sport. The Sport Promotion Act only states in general terms that fairness and safety must be observed and the fight against doping and manipulation of competitions must be stepped up. The Ethics Charter, which contains the guiding principles for Swiss sport, is merely formulated in general terms and needs to be replaced with an ethics code. The current Ethics Charter and the codes of conduct are explained in more detail in the chapter on the legal perspective on the sport system. In addition, the sports federations have developed their own codes of conduct. In the near future, a national reporting office will be established to replace the provisional Swiss Integrity Reporting Office.

2.4 Reasons for failures in implementingof the duty of care

47 Despite international and national guidelines and protective measures, systematic and structural failures occur in practice when implementing the duty of care. The cause is a process that (1) takes place within cultural context; (2) occurs through sport-specific often idealised and normalised mechanisms (e.g. coaching and

training methods) and consists of physical, mental and sexual violence, and neglect; and (3) has various individual and organisational consequences.

48 Paragraphs 2.4.1. and 2.4.2. show which factors encourage violence, boundary violations and neglect, and which factors inhibit such undesirable effects. For a similar use of the term in the law, see paragraph 3.1.2.

2.4.1 Factors that can lead to violence

49 Research has identified a multitude of factors that can lead to violence, boundary violations and neglect, and complicate implementing the duty of care.

50 The idealised and normalised performance sport value system has created a basic context and mechanism of failure in implementing the duty of care. The system prioritises performance and competition results and idealises and normalises expectations such as devotion to sport, training and performance despite pain, injuries and mental discomfort, and continuous aspiration for more and more or better results. Both the system and the expectations rationalise the use of force against others and self-inflicted violence as necessary, motivating and performance-increasing behaviour. In this context, protective measures can be perceived as soft, disruptive and even performance-decreasing. The higher the level of performance, the more this performance sport value system is considered to apply.

51 The following organisational and systemic factors emanating from the performance sport value system can increase the likelihood of violence, boundary violations and neglect:

- (1) 'winner takes all' funding system
- (2) commodification of athletes ('considering athletes as products');
- (3) insufficient clarity as regards duty of care responsibilities;
- (4) insufficient knowledge about forms of violence and neglect;
- (5) lack of or insufficient supervision of officials, coaches and supporting staff;
- (6) inadequate means of reporting violence and neglect (e.g. no independent reporting office, internal and unclear procedures);
- (7) insufficient or unsatisfactory disciplinary procedures and the relevant bodies' insufficient power to impose penalties.

52 Due to these factors, sports organisations might not recognise and therefore accept, tolerate and fail to prevent violence and boundary violations, or they might ignore reported abuse or investigate it inadequately.

53 Interpersonal power relations constitute another essential contextual element and an important mechanism in the failure to implement the duty of care. Key examples are persons holding positions that allow them to set performance targets for others, carry out assessments and selections, and exercise responsibility for performance development (e.g. heads of performance sports, coaches). Often, persons

holding these positions have 'gatekeeper' status towards the athletes, which further strengthens their authority.

54 The trainer-athlete relationship is the most important interpersonal relationship in (elite) sport. Studies show that athletes, i.e. young athletes in particular, develop a strong bond with their coaches. Athletes are a form of 'currency' for coaches, whose job and career development opportunities may depend on their athletes' performances. Strict hierarchy and the fact that in general coaches are beyond reproach often enhance this dependency. Athletes (and their parents) recognise early on who plays what role and what behaviour is expected from them. Researchers refer to this as a 'normalisation process'. This normalisation can be understood as an unconscious adaptation in order to perform 'productively' in a certain context and thus to meet the expectations of everyone involved so as to be able to work together successfully.

55 The term 'grooming' is normally seen in the context of sexual abuse but has recently become a term used in the context of analysing the normalisation of artistic gymnasts. It includes four stages: 1st targeting the potential victim, e.g. by integrating him or her into a carefully selected training team; 2nd building trust and establishing friendship, e.g. by promising that the coach can develop an athlete to achieve peak performances; 3rd developing isolation, control and loyalty, e.g. by excluding parents; and 4th initiating the abuse and guaranteeing that it is kept secret, which can be done without threats, because often athletes are aware that complaining would be to their disadvantage. Hence, research reveals that athletes do not report boundary violations to their parents because they are afraid of their parents' possible reactions (worry, complaints to the federations or coaches, exclusion from training), and they want to avoid their situation becoming more difficult.

56

The exclusion of parents is not the only factor furthering violence. Overzealous parental behaviour can also be conducive to violence, for example when their demands on the coaches are too high or even unrealistic, and when they interfere (too much) in training activities. This can lead to tension and disagreements between parents and coaches, have a negative effect on the relationship between coach, athlete and parents, and put (further) pressure on the athlete. Under certain circumstances, these disagreements can lead to violence (the coach develops a bad relationship with the athlete), which can prove particularly detrimental to the welfare and performance of young athletes (and even to the continuation of their careers).

2.4.2 Factors that can prevent violence

57 Researchers recommend a series of factors that can prevent violence, boundary violations and neglect.

58 One of the main factors is empowerment, i.e. giving athletes a say in both the organisational structures of their sports federation or club and their interpersonal relationships. Other options are athlete unions and strategies for personally or jointly deciding which training and performance goals should be pursued.

59 Researchers see another strategy in establishing a comprehensive prevention system. There is criticism that sports organisations usually react to violence, boundary violations and neglect with individual changes, such as dismissing a trainer ("bad apple approach"). Systemic changes (bad barrel and ecosystem approach) are considered more sustainable in the long term; however, they are complex and often very 'painful'. Involving the various parties concerned (bottom-up approach) is crucial to bringing systemic change.

For further statements, refer to the investigation report, Chapter B 10.

3. The Swiss sports system seen from a legal standpoint

60 In the course of the investigation, athletes testified that they were hit, pinched and pushed around during training. One athlete was pulled by the hair, others experienced forced stretching. Some athletes said that because they were not taken seriously, they had to continue their gymnastic activities despite suffering from a bone fracture. Several interviewees experienced bullying and favouritism or were criticised about their weight. Experiences like these can cause physical and psychological health problems.

For the numerous and in some cases harrowing testimonies about the situation of athletes, refer to the investigation report, Chapter D 1.

61 With regard to the allegations made, we will first examine the existing protection mechanisms and standards.

3.1 Protective rights

3.1.1 The rights of athletes under the age of 18

3.1.1.1 Best interests of the child and guarantors for the best interests of the child

62 Although the best interests of the child is the point of departure and arrival of full child protection and numerous relevant legal principles exist, the term has no uniform definition in Switzerland. For the purpose of the investigation (in line with the Swiss Civil Code), the best interests of the child has been considered as the minimum standard for child protection, and consequently as the threshold value for endangering a child's well-being. In other words, the best interests of the child are endangered when the right to healthy development is no longer guaranteed.

63 Parents are primarily responsible for their children's development and education, their welfare. The Confederation and the cantons respond to the needs of children and adolescents – in sports, for example, by making public funds available, but subject to compliance with ethical guidelines. In these circumstances, it is reasonable to anticipate and to expect the sports system to be professional or semi-professional but in any case competent. Parents who entrust their children to this system – as in the school education system - should and must be able to trust that their children will be taken care of in a professional manner

64 In addition to parents, the Confederation has a - subsidiary - role in safeguarding the best interests of the child. Switzerland has committed itself to this principle in various national and international provisions (see below).

65 Third parties in the child's environment can be required to report risks to a child's well-being to child protection services. However, child protection legal principles only regulate the parent-child relationship; they do not grant child protection services the power to intervene against third parties causing danger to a child.

3.1.1.2 Endangering the well-being of a child

66 When assessing specific risk situations, the terms taken from the Convention on the Rights of the Child, namely neglect, psychological and physical violence, were used. Sexual violence was considered a subcategory of physical violence (for similar scientific terminology see point 2.2). Athletes reported on experiences and observations made in all these categories of violence. The review of preventive protection standards for athletes has provided the following picture:

67 Legal protection for the fundamental rights' core content is provided by Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR, Protection against inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment), by the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and by Article 10 paragraph 3 of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation (Cst.: 'Torture and any other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are prohibited'). The provisions apply absolutely and without exception. Thus, every infringement constitutes a violation. According to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, however, the infringement must be of a certain seriousness. Some coaches' behaviour that athletes described in the investigation went far beyond tolerable levels and are in the investigation team's opinion inhuman and degrading. Without further details, it is impossible to say for certain if these behaviours reach the seriousness to be considered violating the legal principles mentioned above – this would require a thorough examination on a case-by-case basis.

68 Apart from its inviolable core content, Article 10 paragraph 2 of the Federal Constitution guarantees a person protection from interference with their physical and mental integrity. This provision also covers children and young people, who furthermore have the right to special protection under Article 11 of the Constitution (which has the heading 'Protection of children and young people'). However, an attack on personality or physical integrity is only considered a violation of Article 10 paragraph 2 if the person concerned suffers to a certain minimum extent and if harm is done to fundamental aspects of personal development. In addition to their function of providing a defence against the state action (which is not an issue here), fundamental rights also provide (statutory) protection against harm caused by third parties. In this context, national legislation must draw a line between unlawful endangerment and acceptable residual risk. The relevant standards are established in both the criminal law and employment law, but there are no provisions on this in the field of sport.

69 In the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Article 19, Switzerland explicitly commits itself to protecting children from physical and mental violence and from neglect by family members and other caregivers. According to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (expert committee), this provision explicitly includes sports bodies and their coaches. The investigation showed that the Convention on the Rights of the Child was violated in numerous respects. Article 19 CRC focuses primarily on proactive violence prevention. The expert committee emphasises that all forms of violence against children must be expressly prohibited. States are required to take all necessary measures to ensure that adults responsible for the care, upbringing and education of children respect and protect these children's rights. Prevention includes public health measures and measures to positively encourage respectful, non-violent parenting for all children, measures to address the root causes of violence that involve the child, the family, the perpetrator, the community, the institution and society. Preventive measures offer the greatest long-term benefits. However, this commitment to prevention does not reduce the obligation of states to respond effectively to violence when it actually occurs. In principle, violence against children should be addressed in an integrated, coherent, interdisciplinary and coordinated manner. Isolated activities and programmes have only limited effect. Failure by a state to comply with the relevant obligations ultimately implies a violation of the Convention.

70 Article 19 CRC is addressed to the State. This provision has the character of a programme and is not self-executing. Therefore, it is impossible to derive direct third party obligations from it. Parliament is responsible for the required legislation. The Convention provision requires Switzerland to protect children from violence. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has to this day unsuccessfully called on Switzerland to explicitly or specifically prohibit by law any type of physical punishment. However, contrary to international recommendations, Switzerland has remained at a standstill, although experts agree that given the serious consequences, existing measures regarding physical and other forms of cruel and degrading punishment of children are insufficient. The Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights (SCHR) considers that a change in mentality would be necessary in order to enforce an explicit legal ban. To this day, young (elite) athletes are thus not sufficiently protected by law.

3.1.2 The rights of young adult athletes

71 As regards fundamental rights violations, we would refer to the testimonies of athletes under the age of 18, and to the investigation report, Chapter D as regards personal rights violations of both young adult athletes and athletes under the age of 18. This summary focuses on employment law, which also applies for athletes under the age of 18 from the level of young talents and junior squad onwards. The gymnasts (artistic, rhythmic and trampoline gymnastics) sign an athlete's agreement with the Swiss Gymnastics Federation. This atypical employment contract entails rights and obligations. Under Article 328 of the Swiss Code of Obligations, an employer must acknowledge and safeguard an employee's personality rights. The protected personality rights include life and health, physical and mental integrity, personal and professional honour, freedom of personal expression, etc. In particular, the employer must protect employees from sexual

harassment, bullying, stress, work overload, downgrading, discredit and discrimination. The protection applies to both physical and mental health. The employer must not create or tolerate a working environment that endangers or harms the mental health of employees.

72 Within the employment relationship, the employer must also take appropriate measures to protect employees against personality violations by superiors, co-workers, customers, etc. The employer must check from time to time if the precautions taken are still effective. If the necessary protective measures are not taken or prove to be inadequate, the employer may be liable for damages and satisfaction. The acceptable condition of rooms, equipment, protective measures, etc. is also part of the duty of care. However, this is limited by what is technically feasible and financially reasonable. In this case, the employer's duty of care was probably insufficiently fulfilled. Furthermore, very few athletes under the age of 18 have such a contract and thus are denied this protection.

3.1.3 Protection of all athletes' physical and psychological integrity under criminal law

73 After it became apparent that the preventive measures failed to provide sufficient protection, the effectiveness of the criminal law penalties was examined.

74 The question arises of whether eating disorders and/or depression, which the athletes attribute to attacks on their bodies and self-image, the pressure of the 'tyranny of the scales' and controlled food and fluid intake meet the conditions of serious assault laid down in Articles 122 and 125 of the Swiss Criminal Code (SCC). However, as the symptoms are caused by multiple factors, it is probably impossible to establish a causal link between the act and the disease. Thus, it does not seem that offences under this provision can be proven on a regular basis.

75 Common assault under Articles 123 paragraph 2 and Article 125 SCC was considered for acts such as forced stretching and failing to let athletes' injuries heal. It must be assumed that this offence was committed in individual cases, but each case must be individually examined. Furthermore, in some cases acts of aggression under Article 126 SCC were probably committed (pulling hair, hitting, pinching, etc.).

76 In individual cases sexual harassment in accordance with Article 198 SCC may have been committed. Shouting at someone is reprehensible from the pedagogical point of view but it is not an offence, in contrast to insulting behaviour as laid down in Article 177 SCC, a offence which, according to athletes' testimonies, has most probably been committed repeatedly in some cases. Whether the offence of neglecting duties of care or education laid down in Article 219 SCC was committed against athletes under the age of 18 must remain open.

For further details, refer to the investigation report, Chapter D 1.4.
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3.1.4 Conclusion

77 Despite numerous protective provisions, athletes, especially those under the age of 18, can in practice not be sufficiently protected in their daily lives. The special protection to which children and young people under the age of 18 are entitled is insufficient in the world of sport. The criminal law does not offer better protection as it only comes into play after a violation has occurred. In reaction to psychological harm in particular, often no appropriate standards exist. In addition, the effects of damage to physical and mental integrity are often delayed or only become noticeable after a certain period of time. Sometimes it is also impossible to link injuries to a specific act or circumstance, and criminal proceedings are time-consuming, expensive and stressful for all parties involved.

3.2 Sport promotion and ethics in law

78 In this chapter we will take a closer look at the interaction, as regulated by the law, between public funds allocated to sports organisations and the ethical guidelines that these organisations must comply with.

79 State support for sports is based on complex interlocking provisions (the Constitution, Sport Promotion Act, Subsidies Act) and sporting regulations (Ethics Charter, Code of Conduct) in the multi-party system Confederation-Swiss Olympic-sports federations, in which tasks and responsibilities are distributed in a cascade-like manner.

80 Service agreements between FOSPO and Swiss Olympic are always concluded for one year. They cover the financial support and services the Confederation provides to Swiss Olympic and the national sports federations, and define objectives and measures to be achieved with the funds granted. One of the annual ethics performance targets is that Swiss Olympic is responsible for guaranteeing that the sports federations have ethics programmes in place and that they are continuously adapted to the risks. Swiss Olympic reports on the federations' ethics planning, assesses those plans and provides updates on their implementation. In the integrity clause, Swiss Olympic commits itself to safe and fair sport and to the Ethics Charter. Breaching this clause should normally lead to the termination of the contract. Amounts due are not paid out and funds already allocated are reclaimed.

81 Swiss Olympic concludes service agreements with the sports federations. These agreements regulate the amount of contributions paid to the federations and the services due, based on the five categories of the classification system. The service agreements all contain a section on 'Ethics: performance areas, services and indemnities'. In specific terms, Swiss Olympic is responsible for promoting and monitoring the implementation of ethical measures in the sports federations. The federations must undertake to comply with ethical requirements and provide proof of their commitment. The Ethics Charter is a key issue that comes up again and again. The federation is required to appoint a person responsible for ethics, implement a multi-year ethics plan, implement its own code of conduct and assess its activities in the ethical field towards the end of the contractual period. In the case of a serious breach of ethical rules,

contributions are to be reduced. Wilful or negligent violation of Swiss Olympic's code of conduct can lead to early termination of the contract.

82 The survey revealed that the ethical guidelines, i.e. the conditions for granting funds, are often only put into practice on paper and do not reach the grassroots level. Actual implementation is not supervised. The persons responsible justify this failure on the grounds of limited staff and the fact that they assume that the sports federation implements its ethics planning, since its commitment to the Ethics Charter is laid down in the statutes, and the ethics guidelines are included in the service agreement. The funding agencies (FOSPO, Swiss Olympic) make no use of the contractual options provided for in the service agreements either. Thus, despite contract-breaching irregularities, federal funding was still received in full. At the same time, the current system of penalties does not appear to be appropriate since it places the responsible persons in the dilemma of either not enforcing the contract and thus losing their credibility or, by actually imposing penalties, affecting the weakest in the system, i.e. athletes under the age of 18.

83 Swiss Olympic requires the sports federations to incorporate the requirement to comply with the ethics charter in their own statutes, which ultimately also turns out to be a paper solution that has not been sufficiently respected in practice. On the one hand this is due to inadequate oversight and on the other to the vague formulation of the Ethics Charter, which is the core of ethical principles. There is little or no guidance on interpreting the Ethics Charter. This also applies to the codes of conduct for athletes and coaches that are based on the Charter.

84 The regulations, i.e. the ethics charter and the codes of conduct, are not formulated in such a way that they can effectively serve as a basis for imposing penalties. Thus, the parties involved cannot be sure when the peculiarities of an elite sport that are tolerable have been exceeded and ethical violations have occurred. For this to be clear, more detailed regulations and penalty procedures, such as those that the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) has implemented (recently), are required. The basic question arises of why the interpretative document on ethical principles has not been made more legally binding and enforceable, e.g. at secondary legislation (ordinance) level. The investigation has shown that both FOSPO and Swiss Olympic, which has sovereign authority in this area, assumed that the current Code of Ethics - in contrast to their service agreements - provides a weak legal basis for funding reductions. Despite the fundamental nature of this observation, nothing has been done.

85 The weakest link, at the far end of the chain of sport promotion, are the athletes in technical compositional sports, who are usually under the age of 18. In this context, contracts must be examined with regard to the balance between rights and obligations. The sports federation as an employer must fulfil and regularly guarantee its duty of care towards all employees, coaches and athletes.

86 Finally, FOSPO has the authority to conclude framework agreements directly with individual sports federations. In this matter FOSPO has made its infrastructure and services available to the Swiss Gymnastics Federation in a framework agreement and has declared that compliance with the ethical principles is

essential. Non-compliance with these principles should result in the termination of the contract and the non-payment or reimbursement of contributions. FOSPO resorted to this provision when it withdrew the contractual services to rhythmic gymnastics at the Federal Performance Centre Magglingen in spring 2019 (see chapter on responsibilities below), which led to undesirable consequences.

3.3 Sports regulations and policies

87 Overall, there is a multitude of regulatory mechanisms, policies and programmes in sport, both at national and international levels. They are all devoted to ethical issues and to the protection of athletes, in particular those under the age of 18. This diversity of approaches can only be interpreted as meaning that the challenges and the actual need for action have been recognised and acknowledged at a strategic level. Nevertheless, the investigation repeatedly revealed that the current and long-term health, safety and welfare of athletes has not been placed above everything else as the most valuable asset, as explicitly required in the FIG Code of Conduct.

88 While many programmes are purely voluntary, the FIG and Gymnastics Ethics Foundation (GEF) regulations are binding and can also be enforced through a professionalised sanctions system. The investigation showed that the Swiss Gymnastics Federation failed to comply with the FIG's obligation to report (because the federation did not identify any ethics violations), thus preventing both improvements from being made and penalties from being imposed.

For the legal aspects, refer to the investigation report, Chapters B 7.2., B 7.3. and D.
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4. Experts' view on the target state

89 While the investigation report mainly focuses on the sport system's weaknesses, the experts were tasked to provide their opinions on the ideal situation, which in addition to the scientific findings on the sport disciplines examined also revealed where improvements are required.

90 Athletes, coaches and scientific experts largely agreed in their 'blank sheet thinking' as to how the 'ideal world' of women's and men's artistic gymnastics and rhythmic gymnastics should look.

91 Both the athlete and the coach expert groups think that training of coaches, especially in pedagogics, didactics and psychology, should be improved. They also felt that more incentives should be created to obtain qualified coaches. The coach expert group considered their profession as not particularly attractive in many respects, for example because of long and irregular working hours, low salaries and false incentives. The scientists also insisted that coaches' training should provide trainees with the necessary soft skills, including awareness of boundary violations and knowledge of developmental psychology and paediatrics, and of educational-psychological methods. The coaches would also need the support of the whole system in the form of appreciation and security. The latter could for example be achieved by no longer concluding fixed-term employment contracts.

92 Athletes and coaches disagreed on the question of whether, on reaching a certain level, athletes should be made to pursue their careers at a national centre such as Magglingen. However, there was consensus on the requirement that any centralisation should be adapted to the needs of children, e.g. by raising the age limit or providing better care. Access to a trusted external person was proposed, which was also welcomed by the scientists ('Godparent principle').

93 The coach and athlete expert groups came to the conclusion that many other people should be involved in an athlete's sports career. The involvement of medical professionals seems to be crucial and their instructions must be followed strictly. Parents also play an essential role, and therefore particular importance should be attached to education them and providing them with information. This aspect was emphasised by several scientists, who stressed the importance of raising awareness, providing information and training on the topics of violence, abuse and mental health in elite sport and their importance in the context of a young person's overall development...

94 In several scientists' opinions, it is essential to have an effectively functioning network. In their view, there should be an open and transparent dialogue between the different stakeholders (athlete, federation, coach, parents, school, medical and psychological professionals, etc.). Independent exchanges between athletes are valuable. Independent reporting and counselling offices with easy access are also needed. These offices could be given the task of clarifying alleged abuse and taking action, but also of undertaking educational work. Some scientists suggested that topics such as violence and abuse should be included in a mandatory annual review by an independent professional. Several scientists pointed to the health risks of competitive

sport at a young age. These risks could be avoided by revising the judging regulations with input from the scientists, and by raising the starting age.

95 Another key problem in an athlete's career, according to the athlete and coach expert groups, is being able to balance education/vocational training and the high number of training hours. With regard to life after the sports career, several researchers pointed out how tremendously important overall development is (in contrast to a biographical fixation on the 'athlete ego'). It enables athletes to recognise abusive or abnormal relationships, develop a healthy self-esteem, body image, self-identity, personal values and interests, and to take personal responsibility, to participate in decision-making and to cooperate as partners with other stakeholders.

96 The insufficient equal treatment of male and female athletes, the shortage of female managers in key positions and female role models were also criticised on several occasions.

97 The athlete and coaches expert group repeatedly mentioned the short-term squad contracts and the Swiss Olympic Cards as a stress factors. The resulting uncertainties lead to wrong decisions regarding recuperating and recovering from injuries, and to withdrawals from elite sport due to insufficient long-term prospects.

98 From a scientific point of view, several experts also claimed there had been a cultural change: breaking with the neutralisation and minimisation strategies and the 'culture of silence' and taking a proactive approach to issues such as violence, abuse and boundary violations, which are no longer taboo. Such a cultural change also means abandoning the 'whatever it takes' mentality that is not in the best interest of athletes. In order to change the culture, more comprehensive criteria for the distribution of funds must be introduced. In this context, the focus should not only be on success, but also on the ethically responsible development of young athletes.

For further responses from the expert groups, refer to the investigation report, Chapter C 1.-3.
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5. The situation abroad

99 The investigation team looked more closely at approaches that comparable countries had taken to this matter. Comparable are countries similar to Switzerland in size and structure, in which gymnastics disciplines had already been studied (Belgium, Holland, New Zealand). Due to the cultural proximity, the situation in Switzerland's neighbouring countries (Germany, France, Italy and Austria) was also examined, although only Germany had already carried out a study on this subject. All study results were published in spring 2021 and are therefore recent.

100 In general, it can be noted that in all countries examined incidents have occurred in various sport disciplines. Not every country, however, has reported incidents in gymnastics.

101 The surveys have shown the need to work with coaches in the majority of the countries examined. Coaches must be supported with training models, professional development options, and awareness-raising, advanced education and information measures. Information events aimed at raising their awareness on issues such as violence and sexual abuse in sport have already been held. Furthermore, coaches will be required to sign a code of honour. Before being employed they will also be more thoroughly screened for criminal offences. Another goal is to train more former athletes to become coaches. In addition, athletes must be protected by trusted advisers or other persons whom they trust. These confidants must be independent from the coaches and have experience in education and psychology. Also, more consideration should be given to athletes' developmental needs and injuries.

102 Information documents were published in response to various studies. Safeguarding policies requiring, among other things, safeguarding officers to be present at international competitions have been introduced. In addition, prevention and intervention policies and ethical charters are used as codes of conduct.

103 The different investigation teams have also requested to raise the age at which athletes can participate in international competitions and to adapt the FIG's code of points to the development of the athletes.

For further information on the situation of the countries examined, refer to the investigation report, Chapters B 9 and E.
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6. A basic look at technical compositional sports

6.1 Anonymous questionnaire survey of athletes

104 The investigation team had to determine whether it found further incidents in artistic gymnastics and rhythmic gymnastics that are similar to those mentioned in the ‘Maggingen Protocols’, whether such abuses are systemic in comparable sports and in which comparable sports there is a need for action.

105 There was therefore a need to examine artistic gymnastics, which is divided into women's and men's artistic gymnastics, more closely. Rhythmic gymnastics was also examined, but athletes were only questioned randomly (see below). Ultimately, the investigation team defined the Olympic disciplines that are also part of the technical compositional disciplines, namely trampoline, figure skating, diving and artistic swimming, as comparable sports disciplines and included them in the investigation.

106 Rudin Cantieni Rechtsanwälte AG commissioned gfs-zürich, an institute specialising in market and social research, to conduct an anonymous survey. 1,935 athletes who had a Swiss Olympic card in the sports mentioned above were sent an invitation to participate. 970 athletes completed the questionnaire, which corresponds to a response rate of 50.1%. 60% of the respondents were 14 years old or younger. 59% of the survey participants were artistic gymnasts (30% male and 29% female). The distribution of respondents is representative of all the athletes who were invited to participate.

107 The questionnaire contained questions regarding possible negative experiences, boundary violations, violence, the system or possible factors that according to scientific findings further or inhibit such violence (cf. investigation report Chapter B 10.1.3.). As regards possible violence, the survey distinguished between testimonies on emotional or psychological violence, physical violence, interpersonal or organisational neglect and sexual abuse. This distinction corresponds to the scientifically defined forms of violence and neglect (see point 2.4. above and investigation report Chapter B 10.1.3.).

108 The main findings, which apply to all the sports investigated, are presented below. The focus was placed on statements that indicate a need for action. Significant deviations in individual disciplines are discussed in the paragraphs on the respective sport. The investigation report compares the survey results with the scientific findings where appropriate and offers an interpretation from a scientific perspective.

For comprehensive results, numerous graphics and detailed explanations, refer to the investigation report, Chapter B 2, B 4.7., B 5.2., and B 8. And B 10.
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6.1.1 Mental/psychological violence

109 For the scientific definition of psychological violence and boundary violations, refer to paragraph 2.4.1., and the investigation report, Chapter B 10.

110 Survey results regarding mental/psychological violence show the following:

- 16% of the responding athletes testified that they were or still are regularly insulted during training or competitions;
- 20% answered that they had considered quitting or intended to quit elite sport due to unfair treatment, mental exhaustion or conflicts with the coaches;
- 40% reported bad experiences that they had never told anyone about because they feared adverse effects.

111 Of the athletes who reported bad experiences:

- 62% to 70% said that their situation remained unchanged after they told someone about their experiences;
- 9% to 26% said their situation got worse after reporting their experiences.

112 Athletes regularly stated that they were scared to go training, that not everyone was treated in the same way and that their behaviour was criticised on a regular basis.

113 Overall, the survey results provided strong evidence that in women's and men's artistic gymnastics, figure skating, artistic swimming, trampoline and diving, certain forms of mental/psychological violence not only occur but are encouraged or at least not prevented by the system.

6.1.2 Physical violence and boundary violations

114 The definition of physical violence and boundary violations is provided in paragraph 2.4.2. and in the investigation report, Chapter B 10.1.3.1.

115 The survey revealed that:

- 2/3 of the athletes reported being punished with additional drills or observing individuals or groups being punished this way;
- 1/5 reported personally experiencing or observing training methods in which 'violence' was applied, such as forced stretching and (other) physical harm;
- 1/3 reported personally experiencing or observing that basic needs were denied to athletes, e.g. that they were not allowed to drink water or use the toilet during training.

116 As regards nutrition, 34% of the athletes aged 20 or older stated that their diet and food intake was controlled or that they had seen this done to others.

117 The survey showed that normally allowance was made for injuries during training. Nevertheless, the percentage of athletes who responded that injuries were not taken into account to any great extent or not at all is notable (15%).

118 The situation regarding the use of medication looks relatively positive. Between 82% and 85% of respondents had neither experienced nor observed medication being administered to enhance or improve training or competition

performance. Nevertheless, the willingness to administer medication increases with the athletes' age and the length of time they have held an Olympic card.

6.1.3 Sexual violence

119 The definition of sexual violence is provided in paragraph 2.4.3. and in the investigation report, Chapter B 10.1.3.1.

120 Feedback from survey participants on offensive remarks and indecent touching can only be found in artistic swimming, where 26% of the female swimmers had at least witnessed that lewd remarks were made.

6.1.4 Neglect

121 The definition of physical and psychological neglect is provided in paragraph 2.4.4. and in the investigation report, Chapter B 10.1.3.1.

122 In the anonymous questionnaires, 26% of the survey participants mentioned that they had regularly or once in a while experienced or observed situations with insufficient supervision or 23% reported inadequate support/protection (e.g. carrying out of routines without appropriate support, help or safety measures).

123 Only 19% of the respondents had received regular medical care and 5% received regular psychological care. Even if it can be concluded from the survey that care improves as athletes grow older and hold an Olympic card for a longer period of time, the investigation team considers that in particular psychological care for athletes should be intensified, since science confirms this, like involving other third parties, to be a violence-preventing measure.

124 Finally, the survey revealed that athletes, in their own view, have too little time for relaxation, hobbies, leisure, friends and family. To a certain degree, this can be seen as an inevitable side effect of elite sport. Nevertheless, the investigation team believes that this aspect should be given special attention. This is particularly true because this situation, known as 'social' neglect, is not conducive to athletes' well-being and represents a risk factor for any kind of violence or boundary violation.

125 In the investigation team's opinion, action is also needed in relation to the following issues, which scientific research shows to be obstacles to violence in sport: athletes' right of participation must be improved, and parents' rights must be strengthened and they must be given the opportunity to be present at training sessions. Finally, athletes' psychological care must be improved and developed.

In the following, survey results are broken down by sport disciplines. For specific results and related graphics refer to the investigation report, Chapters B 4.7., B 5.2. and B 8.

6.1.5 Women's artistic gymnastics

126 Based on the artistic gymnasts statements, mental and psychological violence by ignoring athletes is more widespread than in other sport

disciplines (with the exception of artistic swimming). As a result, artistic gymnasts seem to have more fears about training. A comparison between women's and men's artistic gymnastics in relation to issues of mental/psychological violence shows that female artistic gymnasts assess their situation as being worse than that of their male colleagues. Similarly, the higher the training level, the worse the situation. On the basis of these results, the investigation team concluded that in women's artistic gymnastics, especially at national level, particular importance should be attached to incidents of mental/psychological violence and their prevention.

127 It is evident that the situation regarding possible neglect is exacerbated as the level of training increases, and that psychological care for female (and male) athletes is even less regularly claimed in artistic gymnastics than in other sports. In the investigation team's opinion, the survey results indicate that in women's artistic gymnastics there is special need for action in this respect, and that particular attention should be paid to relevant occurrences at cantonal and regional levels.

128 With regard to factors that encourage or prevent violence, the survey also indicated that artistic gymnasts consider that, especially at a national training level, they have less say than the average athlete has in any other sport. The involvement of parents as recipients of information and as spectators appears to be lower in women's artistic gymnastics than in any other sport, particularly at national and regional training levels. Strengthening the parents' rights, especially making it possible for them to be present at training sessions, is therefore even more advisable in women's artistic gymnastics than in other sports.

6.1.6 Men's artistic gymnastics

129 Physical violence, such as coaches applying their body weight to athletes to force stretching, is much more prevalent in men's artistic gymnastics than in most other sports, and apparently so is punishing individuals or groups with additional physical drills. The burden in terms of time weighs especially heavily on athletes training at national and regional levels, but all male gymnasts feel that they have too little time for hobbies, leisure, family and friends.

130 As regards neglect, it is obvious that in men's artistic gymnastics (as in women's) psychological care is less in demand than in other sports. Also with regard to neglect, the situation at a national level tends to be worse than at regional and cantonal levels.

131 As regards factors that encourage or prevent violence both female and male artistic gymnasts feel that they have less say, especially at a national training level, than the average athlete has in any other sport.

6.1.7 Trampoline gymnastics

132 In the anonymous questionnaires, trampoline gymnastics stood out most favourably on average compared to other sports. Physical violence was also less prevalent than in other sports. However, as regards neglect, trampoline gymnastics was rated worse than average in some of the answers. Psychological care in trampoline

gymnastics is nevertheless better than in other sports. The athletes have also more say than athletes in other sports but spectators are not welcome at normal training.

6.1.8 Figure skating

133 Even though according to the federation, Swiss ice skating has hardly any assessment and control procedures in force, figure skating was rated rather well overall in the anonymous questionnaires, which also showed that less physical and psychological violence has been reported than in other sports. Nevertheless, on the topic of neglect, athletes are put under more pressure than in other sports regarding their nutrition. At the same time, they receive better support with nutritional advice. However, this should not hide the fact that in Ticino there seems to be a cluster in which incidents are accumulating, so that action is urgently required. Another issue that the federation considers evident is training coaches at sports federation level, and educating, coaching and supervising coaches of foreign mentality.

6.1.9 Artistic swimming

134 Even though the federation states that the required ethical guidelines are met at its level and that it has set up several reporting offices, there is a gap between theory and practice. Artistic swimming had the worst results of all the sports that participated in the anonymous questionnaire survey. The significantly higher occurrence of psychological violence (in particular shouting, insults, threats, or being ignored) and physical violence (forced stretching, punishment, and suppression of basic needs) but also sexual harassment (lewd remarks) are striking. The findings in the context of neglect (e.g. lacking time for other areas of life, sleep or recuperation, too little consideration given to injuries, and the control of nutrition, even though artistic swimming came top as regards nutritional advice) were also criticised by the federation's doctor, who pointed to permanent stress and overwork in the sports associations.

135 The need for action in artistic swimming has become evident. In particular, sports federations, and athletes and their parents must be more involved. The federation has pointed out that the different mentality of many foreign coaches requires that they are educated in Swiss practices and subsequently advised and supervised, etc.

6.1.10 Diving

136 In diving, the gap between theory and practice regarding ethical issues is much smaller than in other sports, and the results from the anonymous questionnaires showed the best average rating of all sport disciplines. The figures must be interpreted with caution because of the rather small number of survey participants but since diving is a true minority sport, trends can nevertheless be deduced from the survey results. Diving athletes suffer less psychological and physical violence than their colleagues in other sports. In this discipline, injuries are taken into account much more, neglect is rare and athletes have more of a say than in other sports. Overall, the atmosphere during training is good. According to the investigation team, the good survey results for the sport are also due to the fact that the coaches are competing for good athletes, which

automatically leads to the athletes being more appreciated. Frequently held parents evenings, coaches meetings, athletes meetings, etc., allow a regular exchange between all parties involved and the development of relationships of trust, which in combination with the improvements made in the last few years have probably led to the current result.

6.2 Random interviews with rhythmic gymnasts

137 The investigation team had to find out if additional incidents comparable to those published in the media had occurred in rhythmic gymnastics. In order to avoid burdening the female athletes with several interviews, only the results of the Pachmann enquiry (in which all female rhythmic gymnasts who held a Swiss Olympic card between 2012 and 2020 had been questioned) were examined randomly. Eleven female athletes participated in this survey and were mentioned anonymously in the investigation report, like those who had participated in the anonymous questionnaire survey. In order to avoid the athletes being traumatised again, interviews were carried out using four fictitious case scenarios (that in prior scientific tests had been found to be suitable). In general, it can be said that the results of these random interviews largely correspond to those of the Pachmann enquiry.

138 With regard to pain and injury management, training has been found to often be accompanied by pain or to trigger and intensify pain. In elite sport, a normalisation of injuries and pain can be observed. Based on testimonies, it must be assumed, in line with scientific findings (see investigation report, Chapter B 10.1.2.2.), that the athletes have developed an distorted perception of pain. Some athletes said that they were scared to talk to their coaches about pain and injuries because they were afraid of being rejected. In the opinion of the investigation team, a critical eye should be cast over the management of injuries and pain. Coaches' awareness in this respect must be raised and their skills in the management of injuries and pain must developed.

139 As regards violating physical and psychological integrity, the female athletes interviewed said they had not themselves experienced physical violence such as being hit nor had they observed such acts done to others. However, they showed great respect (or even fear) for coaches when it came to psychological matters. They had all been shouted at, most of them regularly, but they distinguished between coaches shouting to be heard in a noisy gymnasium and coaches shouting in anger. Insults seemed to be less frequent but recurrent. The athletes also reported unequal treatment, humiliation and being ignored. The investigation team believes that athletes perceive this kind of behaviour as normal (see also investigation report, Chapter B 10.1.2.2.). Such a culture can have a negative effect, especially on young athletes, and negatively impact their self-confidence and self-esteem. All in all, it is impossible to speak of equality in communication between female coaches and female athletes. It remains unclear whether this is due to the athletes young age and/or to the power imbalance between coaches and athletes. It should be noted that a cultural change is necessary.

140 When questioned about the topic of body weight and eating, most gymnasts said that their weight is not or no longer being checked. They put their statements into perspective by adding that until two years ago their weight and height

were measured in what were called age category tests or at annual medical examinations. Despite this change, body weight remains an issue. The athletes confirmed that coaches no longer directly address athletes about weight and appearance, but it was apparent that a certain undefined ideal physique and body shape remain deeply rooted in their minds. This ideal body shape is considered a decisive performance criterion and successful female athletes are expected to dedicate themselves to this ideal. Since rhythmic gymnastics is one of the sports with a significantly high incidence of eating disorders (cf. investigation report, Chapter B 10.1.1.5.), guidance and information on nutrition would be appropriate.

141 Finally, in one case scenario, gymnasts were confronted with the ideal conditions for a strong and lasting relationship between female coaches and female athletes. For the most part, they themselves had experienced one (or more) such or equally favourable scenarios. The quality of the relationship between athlete and coach seems to be of great importance to an athlete's successful long-term career prospects. According to the athletes, a good and strong relationship is based on mutual trust, open communication, the coach's ability to take criticism, and her respect for the athlete as a human being and a fully-fledged person - which is also scientifically confirmed (investigation report, Chapter B 10.1.2.2.). The athletes also wished to be more actively involved in managing and developing their careers. Opting out of a career early due to humiliation or a bad relationship between the athletes and their coaches is still an issue. However, contrary to the widespread assumption in rhythmic gymnastics circles, no connection can be established between the quality of the coach and her nationality.

For the specific content of individual case vignettes and the female athletes' statements, refer to the investigation report, Chapter B 2.2. The scientific background to the different scenarios is explained in the investigation report, Chapter B 1 O., Health risks or non-compliance with the duty of care.

6.3 Anonymous questionnaire survey of coaches

142 In addition to examining whether there are indications of other similar incidents in artistic and rhythmic gymnastics at national, cantonal or regional level, the investigation team considered it essential to investigate the working conditions and the nature of the coaches' tasks. Another goal of the anonymous questionnaires was to gain an insight into the coaches' knowledge of the ethical guidelines and regulations and their implementation, and of the coaching and training philosophy they were pursuing.

143 gfs-zürich was also commissioned to conduct the anonymous questionnaire survey (online). 85 of 153 contacted coaches (women's artistic gymnastics, men's artistic gymnastics and rhythmic gymnastics at the national, cantonal and regional level) participated in the survey, which corresponds to a response rate of 55.6%. The random distribution is representative of all coaches who were invited to participate.

Only the survey results for which the investigation team considers the need for action are stated in the following. For the comprehensive results and detailed explanations refer to the investigation report, Chapter B 2.3.

6.3.1 Basic knowledge

144 With regard to ethical guidelines it should be noted that 20% of respondents were unfamiliar with, or had only heard of FOSPO and Swiss Olympic's Ethics Charter or the code of conduct for coaches, which complements the basic ethical principles.

145 Coaches are even less familiar with FTEM (athletes' pathways specific to the relevant sport). 57% of the survey participants said they were completely unfamiliar with FTEM or had only heard the name mentioned.

146 Almost every respondent coach who claimed to know the documents in question (ethical principles, FTEM) well, stated that in their work they comply or try to comply with the regulations in these documents.

147 In the opinion of the investigation team, the percentage of coaches who are unfamiliar with the content of the ethics documents and the FTEM is too high.

6.3.2 Working conditions

148 The need for action was also noted as regards working conditions and seems to be more important at cantonal level than elsewhere. Only a few of the coaches interviewed have regular performance reviews with their superiors and they are rarely given the opportunity to discuss pending problems in the context of coaching, supervision or mentoring.

149 The survey also showed that coaches regularly work unpaid overtime. There is also room for improvement, if not to say a need for action, in relation to the statement that coaches are under constant pressure to achieve the objectives set for them.

150 In addition, coaches do not appear to be satisfied with their salaries, although the situation seems to be better at a national than at hierarchically lower levels.

6.3.3 Objectives

151 Respondents were given the opportunity to list issues they thought their employers would place particular emphasis on. They stated that compliance with the Ethics Charter and the code of conduct for coaches was particularly important, as well as healthy and happy athletes, long-term and sustainable performance development, a large pool of young talent and long athletic careers, an athlete-oriented coaching philosophy and, finally, the athletes' sporting success. Although the statements suggest that employers' awareness regarding these issues has increased, they are apparently reluctant to introduce coaching, supervisory or mentoring measures, which raises doubts as to whether they take implementing the guidelines seriously enough. Even among coaches, ethical guidelines seem to be largely unknown. It would therefore be appropriate to set sufficiently specific objectives: the survey clearly shows that the objective most frequently set for coaches is the athletes' sporting success at competitions

(68%). Objectives relating to the health of athletes (53%), the code of conduct (45%) and the Ethics Charter (41%) were mentioned as second to fourth priorities only. Thus, health and ethical objectives seem to be secondary to sporting success. The coaches view compliance with the Ethics Charter and the code of conduct, and the athletes' health as being of superficial importance to their superiors. However, this is only partially reflected in the priorities set by the superiors.

6.3.4 Involving parents and third parties

152 Scientific studies show that involving parents or third parties is a protective factor against violence, boundary violations and neglect (see investigation report, Chapter B 10.1.3.). It seems that talking to parents is less a part of coaches' tasks at national level (45%) than of coaches at lower levels, where the percentage lies between 71% and 78%. This can be explained by the fact that athletes who train at national level tend to be older. Usually, there is also a physical distance between artistic gymnasts, especially those who train at the national performance centre in Magglingen, and their parents. Slightly more than half of the coaches who participated in the survey answered negatively or partially negatively about the right of parents or third parties to attend training sessions. 47% said that parents or third parties were allowed to attend as spectators.

6.3.5 Right to have a say

153 The survey gave a mostly positive picture of the relationship between coaches and athletes, and of the coaching philosophy. The coaches' answers to the questions of whether they give reasons for the decisions they make to athletes and whether athletes could give their opinion on important training issues and have a say in everything that concerns them yielded very high values. This stands in contrast to the anonymous questionnaires, in which the athletes confirmed that they hardly have any say.

6.3.6 Age

154 The coaches also highlighted the problem concerning the athletes' young age in both rhythmic gymnastics and women's artistic gymnastics.

6.4 Written survey of regional performance centres and cantonal training centers in rhythmic gymnastics

155 A survey was carried out of regional performance centres and cantonal training centres in order to determine if there were indications of other similar incidents in rhythmic gymnastics. By means of questionnaires, which were completed by all six centres, participants were able to express their views on various topics, including the findings of the Pachmann enquiry, the random interviews with female rhythmic gymnasts and the anonymous questionnaire survey of the female coaches.

The most important results are summarised hereinafter. For more details, particularly on the topics weight, infrastructure, medical care, athletes' age, the cooperation with parents and the Swiss Gymnastics Federation, refer to the investigation report, Chapter B 3 .6.

156 With regard to the management of ethical principles and violations, interview responses showed that incidents have been reported in recent years at all regional performance centres and cantonal training centres. They all have corresponding regulated procedures, which are promptly initiated. The investigation team advises making the brochure 'Rhythmic Gymnastics – Challenges and Solutions' available to everyone concerned and if necessary providing appropriate training. .

157 The investigation team thinks that there is a discrepancy between the feedback received from the female gymnasts concerning the tone of verbal exchanges and their fear of the coaches, and the perception of the centres in this respect. The centres mostly stated that this problem is not known in their facilities and claim that athletes are not afraid of their coaches, but rather have 'great respect' for them.

158 Female athletes' feedback in the Pachman report revealed that, despite the centres' efforts, actions for improving injury and pain management must be taken. At the same time, some centres pointed out that it is not only their task to create the necessary conditions for healthy sport (infrastructure) and effective health protection (type of training). Better cooperation is needed between the centres and the Swiss Gymnastics Federation in this area overall and particularly in training matters.

159 A basic problem that the centres face as regards rhythmic gymnastics seems to be their funding. This leads to problems that are not specific to one facility, but concern regional performance centres and cantonal training centres in Switzerland in general. The claimed insufficient funds has an impact on the centres' infrastructure. The only gymnasium temporarily equipped with flooring suitable for rhythmic gymnastics in all of Switzerland, for example, is at the National Performance Centre in Magglingen. Young athletes who cannot train on rhythmic gymnastics flooring risk long-term damage to their locomotor system. The insufficient funds probably also has an effect on the number and quality of coaches that the centres can hire, which also has an adverse impact on the development of (physically and psychologically) healthy young athletes with good basic techniques.

160 Furthermore, it has become apparent that the funding for elite athletes which the Swiss Gymnastics Federation grants the regional performance centres puts the coaches under pressure to develop successful elite athletes. The coaches secure funding for the relevant centre and thus ultimately secure their own salaries and jobs. The pressure to develop young elite athletes can create stress for coaches, which can be passed on, at least in part, to the athletes (harsh conversational tone resulting in fear of the coach, pressure to achieve quick results at the expense of athlete's health).

6.5 Written survey of regional performance centres and cantonal trainings centres in women's and men's artistic gymnastics

161 As with rhythmic gymnastics, the question was addressed of whether there was evidence of other similar incidents at a regional and cantonal level in artistic gymnastics. For this purpose, ten regional performance and cantonal training centres for gymnastics were contacted. Seven completed the questionnaire. With the exception of the questionnaire returned from the centre at which only female artistic athletes train, the completed questionnaires did not allow a separate analysis of the situation for female and male artistic gymnasts.

The most important findings are summarised below. For more details, particularly regarding athletes' age and the Swiss Olympic card, stress and regeneration, and cooperation between parents and the Swiss Gymnastics Federation, refer to the investigation report, Chapter B 4.8.

162

Three of the regional performance centres and cantonal training centres stated that violations of the Ethics Charter and the code of conduct had been reported in the past five year. However, two of them stated that the incidents reported were isolated and minor. The third centre stated that just the week prior to the survey, the Swiss Gymnastics Federation's ethics committee had forwarded them a report on an athlete who had been dismissed from the squad in an unprofessional manner and in respect of whom a preliminary investigation had been opened.

163 The centres seem to apply several complementary proactive and reactive methods in the gymnasium to counter rudeness of tone in verbal exchanges with athletes. However, it is questionable if this approach is sufficient given the number of athletes' responses suggesting the contrary,.

164 Furthermore, it can be seen that the centres are generally satisfied with their infrastructures. Some centres even consider their existing or future facilities to be highly modern, and only one of them would like to see its infrastructure improved. The centres seem to counter rudeness of tone in verbal exchanges in the gymnasium by raising the coaches' awareness and through open communication.

However, it should be noted that not all feedback from athletes was equally positive, which may imply that the approach is sometimes ineffectively implemented.

165 The differing views on stretching forced by a third party are noticeable. Some centres believe that this method is necessary but for others it is taboo. This topic must be addressed in a manner that will generate an approach that is binding for all centres, as forced stretching can cause injuries.

166 Weight is a controversial issue, especially in women's artistic gymnastics. Some centres state that only men are weighed. If low weight is considered to protect the joints, weighing only men makes no sense. Even more so when considering that weight also represents a health risk when an athlete falls or suddenly lets go of the

bar because he or she lacks the strength to hold on properly. The investigation team recommends finding a uniform and ethically acceptable way to deal with this issue.

167 Contributions to infrastructure costs of the regional performance centres are paid in an annual lump sum, the amount of which is determined by the extent the criteria defined by the Swiss Gymnastics Federation are met. The maximum annual lump sum per centre is CHF12,000 for women's artistic gymnastics and CHF15,000 for men's artistic gymnastics. There are also significant differences in the contributions to the centres for elite men's and elite women's squads, i.e. CHF 8,000 annually per male and CHF 4,800 annually per female elite squad athlete. The differences are explained as historical. The contributions paid to the regional performance centres, which are mainly used to finance infrastructure, equipment and coaches, are also considerably different from those paid to cantonal training centres. As a result the regional performance centres possibly try to develop as many athletes for their elite squad as possible in order to increase their revenue. This goal can put great pressure on coaches.

7. The allegations in the 'Maggingen Protocols'

7.2 Rhythmic gymnastics

168 Three of the five rhythmic gymnasts who testified in the issue of 'Das Magazin' dated 31 October 2021 also participated in this investigation, as did one other athlete who had given an interview on another occasion. In addition, the Swiss Gymnastics Federation and FOSPO were interviewed about rhythmic gymnastics.

169 Rhythmic gymnastics is both an Olympic individual discipline and a team discipline. However, Switzerland did not take part in individual competitions before the end of 2020 and up to that date the Swiss national team and the athletes participating in the junior European championships project trained for group competitions only. In 2021 individual participation became possible. In the summer of 2021, the Swiss Gymnastics Federation disbanded the national team group.

170 Three periods must be considered for the following statements. The periods are related to the respective head coaches (for 2014-2016 national team coaches):

- 2010 to 2013
- 2014 to 2016
- 2017 to 2020

Since the following statements are highly summarised, reading the investigation report, Chapter B 3., is advised. The report includes numerous quotes by persons interviewed and provides detailed information on the various processes, differentiated according to views on the physical and mental state of the athletes, the management of nutrition and weight, and the behaviour of coaches. Finally, some information about periods with other coaches is also included.

7.1.1 In the 2010 to 2013 period

171 Concerning the 2010 to 2013 period, athletes talked in their interview with 'Das Magazin' of young women crying and about having been hit on legs and arms, and about head coach 1 and national team coach 2 having pinched, verbally abused and ridiculed athletes. They said they were manipulated and forbidden to speak out and that they had the feeling of being constantly watched. They also said that young female athletes' weight was an ongoing issue and that they were monitored in other areas as well. They also described endless training sessions.

172 FOSPO employee 1, for example, told the investigation team that what the rhythmic gymnasts had told him went beyond what was published in the 'Magglingen protocols'. He added that drilling the athletes and wearing them out simply used to be part of the tradition that everyone was aware of and witnessed.

173 Overall, the interviews revealed that in the period from 2010 to 2013, employees of FOSPO and Swiss Gymnastics Federation employees observed physical abuse only occasionally. However, several persons involved clearly said that the athletes had to train excessively that their pains and injuries were not sufficiently taken into account and that their locomotor systems were overstrained.

174 The prevailing pressure and the coaches' harsh tone caused the athletes to suffer mentally, too. It was further confirmed that in the period from 2010 to 2013, strict checks on the athletes' body weight played a central role, which probably led to some athletes developing eating disorders. Several interviewees also confirmed that on various occasions they had noticed that the coaching team had created a climate of fear. Other interviewees also confirmed they had realised on various occasions that the coaching team had created a climate of fear.

175 Based on the scientific position and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the incidents mentioned must be considered to be forms of violence and neglect.

176 The Swiss Gymnastics Federation failed to take the situation seriously enough for a long time despite the observations made and reports submitted from various persons. It was 2013 before Head Coach 1 and National Team Coach 2 were only dismissed without notice. Even if today the Swiss Gymnastics Federation clearly distances itself from the training methods and its coaches' behaviour at the time, it failed to put strict control mechanisms in place. Until 2019, decision-makers such as the central committee and the management board remained of the opinion that the situation at the time was due to a coaching problem which had been solved with the dismissal of the coaches.

7.1.2 In the 2014 to 2016 period

177 National Team Coach 3 stated in an interview with 'Das Magazin' that she had taken over a group of talented athletes who were struggling with 'stress fractures to their bodies and minds' and lacked confidence. She added that the athletes' rehabilitation had taken place in close collaboration with FOSPO's medical service. She

7.1.3 In the 2017 to 2020 period

183 In 2017, the new Coaches 4 and 5 took over – for financial reasons – only one gymnastics group, some of whose athletes were still injured, in certain cases chronically and severely. Nevertheless, the Swiss Gymnastics Federation restated its objective of qualifying for the 2020 Olympic Games and the set ambitious performance targets for the 2018 European and World Championships. As a result, gymnasts trained while injured and in pain. They were held responsible for the future of rhythmic gymnastics in Switzerland, which generated additional pressure and anxiety. After the national team narrowly missed out on 24th place at the 2018 World Championships, the Swiss Gymnastics Federation disbanded it due to insufficient success and subsequently formed a new national team.

184 In the October 2020 issue of 'Das Magazin', an athlete described National Team Coach 4 as an unpredictable, offensive, cold and distant woman who could become very angry. Another athlete said that the whole thing was a system, and no more efforts were made than necessary to keep this system going. She also said that the Swiss Gymnastics Federation knew very well how the coach treated the athletes, and that she knew that other athletes had also contacted the Swiss Gymnastics Federation regarding the National Team Coach 4. In addition, the article referred to a letter the president of a regional performance centre sent at the beginning of 2020, in which specific criticisms were made of Coaches 4 and 5. Health-endangering training methods were mentioned, and athletes who had been sent to competitions even though they had been certified unfit by doctors. In the press, other athletes gave testimonies that shed both a favourable and an unfavourable light on the coaches in question.

185 In the course of the investigation, the athletes mostly confirmed their earlier statements. Two opposing viewpoints could be observed: some athletes illustrated the coach's incorrect behaviour with personal examples, while others thought her to be a strict but humane coach.

186 The survey carried out among FOSPO staff gave a fairly uniform picture of the situation, showing both the difficult relations with the Swiss Gymnastics Federation and the coaches' improper conduct during this period. FOSPO's decision in 2019 to end the payments for rhythmic gymnastics due to ethical breaches must be seen in this context.

187 Swiss Gymnastics Federation respondents argued the opposite. In their opinion, the conduct of the coaches did not correspond to what was written in the press. This view is consistent with the fact that the Swiss Gymnastics Federation, unlike in 2016, did not dismiss the coaches after they failed to achieve the required ranking at the 2018 World Championship, but dissolved the national team instead. The FOSPO's ending of the payments for rhythmic gymnastics did not have any impact on Head Coach 4 either. The files submitted do not contain any indication that conditions were attached to her continuing coaching. On the contrary, in December 2019, the Swiss Gymnastics Federation signed a four-year contract with her. These facts lead to the conclusion that the Swiss Gymnastics Federation at least tolerated how the athletes were treated.

individually disturbing but understandable in the overall context. In retrospect, it is impossible to say which perspective is correct or preferable. In this context it is a fact that after the media publications, the national women's and men's artistic gymnastics teams' both backed their coaching team, which in principle challenges the perspective presented in the media. It is nevertheless a fact that while they trained at the National Performance Centre in Magglingen, Athlete **x** developed an eating disorder, and Athletes **x** and **x** suffered from mental problems. Even though the athletes' state of health attracted the attention of some interdisciplinary team members, no one intervened, perhaps because responsibilities had not been clearly established. That in itself would be a reason to take action. In the professional environment of a national squad, it should not be the case that athletes suffer from eating disorders or depression and the like for months or years. Untreated psychological disorders represent a danger to best interests of the child and there is also a risk that they might become a long-term chronic problem for affected athletes.

195 Insofar as Athletes **x** and **x** felt an underlying negative attitude of the coaching staff towards them, such feelings are subjective perceptions. Often such situations are not recognisable to outsiders and only come to light once they are particularly accentuated, which in this example was not the case. The conduct at issue was not recognisable to most third parties interviewed and thus could not be sufficiently objectified. Whether and which subtle patterns of behaviour took place among the participants must therefore be left open. It is impossible to determine whether or which subtle behaviour patterns occurred between the parties involved.

196 The dynamics in relation to the two athletes show that there is a network around young athletes (parents, amateurs, specialists such as coaches, medical centre, psychologist, etc.) but that its use is optional, which could be an obstacle for adolescent and conformity conscious young athletes, who feel that making use of these services is shameful. The investigation team concludes that regular multidisciplinary professional support for athletes is essential and that the athletes should not have to ask for this service. This also applies to services such as nutrition counselling and sports psychology, which should be integrated into the athletes' weekly programme. A system must be established in which responses are quick and effective.

7.2.2 Other specific incidents in women's artistic gymnastics

197 In the course of the investigation, another case at the National Performance Centre was brought to the attention of the investigation team. According to FOSPO's elite sport department, the issue at stake was 'overload instead of respectful development in training' as defined in the Ethics Charter, and the head of elite sport's allegedly inadequate behaviour towards the parents. According to a FOSPO internal note and the responses from the head of elite sport and the Swiss Gymnastics Federation, there seems to have been a subsequent dialogue between coaches, specialists and parents in this regard. Therefore and also in order to protect athlete **xxxxxxxxxx**'s personality, this matter has deliberately not been pursued in greater depth.

7.2.3 Further events

198 During this investigation, the Swiss Gymnastics Federation dismissed Head Coach 8, and Assistant Coaches 9 and 10 on grounds that they were planning to make a new start in sport and in view of the allegations made by former athletes. On this last point, it has to be said that shortly after the publication of the Magglingen Protocols, the entire national team (both in women's and men's artistic gymnastics) rallied behind their coaches.

7.2.4 Specific evidence of incidents in men's artistic gymnastics

For further details, refer to the investigation report, Chapter B 5.

199 After the investigation team was made aware that for years the head of the Swiss Gymnastics Federation's young talents development in men's artistic gymnastics had been rude and insulting towards athletes, it investigated these allegations. It found that corresponding allegations were indeed noted in the personnel file of the head of young talents development. Also recorded in the files were allegations of physical abuse, racism and insulting and humiliating comments, which had led to the departure of a gymnast. Both the Swiss Gymnastics' former director and former head of elite sport were informed about these allegations. And even though the latter was under pressure and asked for support, no action was taken. In this matter the investigation team observed similar patterns to the incidents in rhythmic gymnastics: for years, various people had informed the former director and the former head of elite sport about specific issues. The testimonies were downplayed and no action was taken to remedy the situation.

7.3 Roles and responsibilities

For further details and numerous quotes, refer to the investigation report, Chapters B 3., B 6., B 7. and D 2.

7.3.1 FOSPO's role

7.3.1.1 In processing the incidents in rhythmic gymnastics at the national performance centre in Magglingen

7.3.1.1.1 In 2010 to 2013 period

200 Although FOSPO was aware of the physical and psychological stress on young gymnasts at the time, no effective efforts were made to change the situation until 2013. It is not clear whether FOSPO stopped working with the Swiss Gymnastics Federation in rhythmic gymnastics in the medical field (except for emergency care) from 2010 to 2014 or whether the coaching team stopped requesting sports psychology services of its own accord. However, the situation of athletes under the age of 18 remained unchanged: they lacked support. FOSPO thus had no suitable instruments for goal-oriented intervention available. Swiss Olympic should have thus been motivated to limit - as an indirect measure to exert pressure - the sports funds granted to the Swiss Gymnastics Federation. If Swiss Olympic had not supported this course of

action, FOSPO would have had to put Swiss Olympic directly under pressure and cut funding to the umbrella federation (the necessary adjustments to the Ethics Charter and the service agreements are discussed below).

7.3.1.1.2 In the 2014 to 2016 period

201 The investigation did not reveal any serious concerns from 2014 to 2016. Opinions were that the situation was generally improving – even though there were still many health problems and the team was still struggling with the psychological long-term effects of the previous coaching era. Subsequently, FOSPO and National Team Coach 3 developed the Health & Performance project, which was aimed at investigating injuries and increasing stress tolerance. The coach’s contract was not extended due to the insufficient successful results and the project was discontinued.

202 In the investigation team’s opinion, no FOSPO interventions were necessary in this period.

7.3.1.1.3 In the 2017 to 2020 period

203 With the new coaches, many elite athletes still suffered from chronic injuries and lost their motivation due to excessive physical and psychological pressure. By October 2017 at the latest, FOSPO had the first indications of excessive training, which is scientifically defined as a form of violence, after which it sought to enter into discussions with the Swiss Gymnastics Federation’s operational bodies. In summer 2018, one gymnast experienced a serious mental crisis. Until early 2019, the reports to FOSPO about athletes’ ethically unacceptable overload multiplied. This knowledge was processed in an internal report and was the reason why FOSPO wanted to terminate the hosting rights for rhythmic gymnastics under the framework agreement, although in the end it only terminated its services (partial termination). The services provided for the gymnasts included diagnosis (services, psychology, medicine, talent) and care (medicine, physiotherapy). Finally, the use of the facilities (sports facilities, accommodation, meals and ProLern) was still allowed but limited because of the restricted availability of the gymnasium (renovation of the ‘End der Welt’ gymnasium). In the context of the events related to the withdrawal of services, the Swiss Gymnastics Federation’s central committee apparently thought that no actual incidents had occurred and that with its actions FOSPO was simply trying to protect its reputation.

204 FOSPO had probably terminated the contract with the intention of protecting the athletes, but as far as the investigation team could see, it had not given any thought to how this would affect them. The athletes, however, suffered most from the termination of services and the prioritised use of the gymnasium. They were primarily based in Biel, but had to go to Bern for medical care, and trained alternately in Lyss and in Magglingen. This situation disrupted the injured athletes’ daily routines and caused them to spend much time traveling. As the elite sport department was no longer responsible for the gymnasts, it could not intervene when the athletes’ protection was not guaranteed. That said, the interventions of this department had not protected the gymnasts before either. After two months, the gymnasts were finally able to resume their training in Magglingen (but were not given priority and provided with

209 The expert report showed that in the case of several athletes from different sports disciplines, the Ethics Charter and the codes of conduct were breached. The ethical principles are therefore insufficiently implemented in everyday life. FOSPO assumes that – in contrast to their own service agreements - the current Ethics Charter provides an unstable legal basis for contribution cuts. Although this fundamental conclusion has been acknowledged, nothing has been done so far, and the interpretative document on ethical principles has not been given a more legally binding and enforceable basis, e.g. at secondary legislation level. An enforceable basis would also be a condition for the cut in contributions as mentioned above.

210 The question also arises as to whether FOSPO has sufficiently verified Swiss Olympic's compliance with the contract. With regard to the implementation and evaluation of ethical principles, FOSPO accepted an Excel list which in the investigation team's opinion shows that Swiss Olympic had not met its obligations. However, reimbursement or reduction of contributions was not requested. It therefore remains unclear if FOSPO has handled the public funds with sufficient care. FOSPO insists that the question remains open as to whether Swiss Olympic has violated the service agreement or the agreement has not been formulated clearly enough. These statements are regarded as having been made to protect FOSPO's position. It is obvious that it lies in the public interest to carry out checks on the recipient of the contributions, to formulate the agreements clearly and to make maximum use of the legal mechanisms for financial contributions. In this context it should be pointed out that FOSPO is considering the inclusion of organisational liability in the sports promotion ordinance.

7.3.2 Swiss Olympic's role in processing the incidents at the national performance center in Magglingen

7.3.2.1 In rhythmic gymnastics

211 It was not possible to prove in the investigation report that after the quiet period from 2014 to 2016, i.e. from 2017, Swiss Olympic was aware of any specific ethical violations in rhythmic gymnastics. However, it was possible to confirm that around the period of the partial termination, and from February 2019 at the latest, Swiss Olympic and FOSPO had been in frequent dialogue. Swiss Olympic was in favour of this partial termination, on ethical grounds, but did not intend to reduce the contributions itself. However, in the investigation team's opinion, that would have been the correct procedure because Swiss Olympic was definitely aware of the facts (partial termination based on the violation of the Ethics Charter).

7.3.2.2 In women's artistic gymnastics

212 The investigation did not provide any indication that Swiss Olympic was aware of any ethical breaches in women's artistic gymnastics at a national level. Nevertheless, as already mentioned above, Swiss Olympic must be criticised for failing to provide sufficient foundations for implementing the ethical principles (at all levels). That ethical principles were violated during the daily training sessions was

revealed by many of the anonymous questionnaires completed by athletes (paragraph 6.1.).

7.3.2.3 In the classification system

213 In practice, Swiss Olympic's mostly performance-oriented classification system encourages sports federations to set unrealistic performance targets in order to receive higher contributions. In everyday life, these goals put pressure not only on the federation itself, but also on the coaches and the athletes. The resulting strong focus on performance presumably encourages ethical violations. It was known that the Swiss Gymnastics Federation central committee's objectives for rhythmic gymnastics were unrealistic. It must be taken into account, however, that the umbrella association Swiss Olympic did not have a direct option of veto (see, however, the options offered by the service agreements).

7.3.2.4 In the service agreements

7.3.2.4.1 Service agreement with the Swiss Gymnastics Federation

214 According to the 2014-2016 service agreement between Swiss Olympic and the Swiss Gymnastics Federation, the latter should have developed and implemented a code of conduct on current challenges in sports by the end of October 2016. It did so, but with a two-year delay. This breach of contract had no consequences. The question is whether Swiss Olympic should have adjusted the government's contribution under federal law to the Swiss Gymnastics Federation in accordance with the contract, or whether it should simply have terminated the contract there and then. As has already been mentioned with regard to FOSPO, the question arises as regards Swiss Olympic as to whether public funds were used correctly.

215 With regard to the implementation of ethical principles, Swiss Olympic had argued that the federations were sufficiently monitored and were obliged to implement them. In the view of the investigation team, the umbrella organisation assumed that it would have noticed if ethical violations had occurred in the associations. The anonymous questionnaires completed by the athletes, however, disclosed the opposite and that Swiss Olympic's confidence in the absence of ethical violations was not reflected in practice.

216 The investigation further showed that Swiss Olympic had not paid enough attention to the implementation of ethical principles in practice, justifying this with insufficient personnel resources, the unclear Ethics Charter and the autonomy of the national federations. Above all, the investigation team checked whether policies and plans existed, as in its opinion, the correlation between these factors fosters a 'laissez faire culture' in which the awareness of responsible behaviour towards athletes and the proper management of public funds was insufficient. What would be necessary would be to use mandatory control instruments and the practice-based evaluation of the adherence to ethical principles, e.g. by introducing regular surveys.

7.3.2.4.2 Performance agreement with FOSPO

217 As mentioned above, in the investigation team's opinion Swiss Olympic did not sufficiently fulfil its responsibility to implement the ethical principles in federations by keeping an Excel spreadsheet. In practice, there was no supervision of the implementation of the principles. As a result, Swiss Olympic did not sufficiently meet the requirements of the service agreement it concluded with FOSPO. This observation is not altered by the fact that Swiss Olympic adopts the position that the responsibility for implementing the ethics principles also lies with the sports federations, since the Ethics Charter is part of their statutes and the ethical principles part of the service agreement with FOSPO. In addition, Swiss Olympic noted that it does not merely draw up Excel spreadsheets, but regularly exchanges information with the federations. The present investigation has amply proven that this practice is insufficient for monitoring the implementation of the ethical principles.

7.3.3 Swiss Gymnastic Federation's role in the incidents at the national performance center in Magglingen

7.3.3.1 Rhythmic gymnastics

218 A letter from the Swiss Gymnastics Federation central committee to FOSPO in March 2018 outlining the fundamental difficulties (recruitment of coaches, opting out of careers early, inadequate results, health, nutrition, infrastructure, ethical principles, and training management, organisation and methods) that had existed for years, shows that the Swiss Gymnastics Federation was aware of these problems. It is therefore all the more surprising that the federation did not meet its responsibilities and become more active. Despite knowledge of the latent issue, the association did not notice the ethics problem, which had become acute again since 2017. Alarm signals from the outside were ignored and ethical violations were not acknowledged as such - not even when FOSPO justified withdrawing its services on the grounds of ethical violations. The Swiss Gymnastics Federation instead thought that FOSPO was taking this measure in order to prevent damage to its reputation. It is therefore not surprising that ethical violations – since they were not perceived as such - were not reported to the FIG either. Apparently, only the results of the Pachmann investigation raised the necessary awareness within the Federation (see central committee Central Federation below).

7.3.3.2 Artistic gymnastics

219 Concerning Athletes **x**, who made statements in the 'Magglingen protocols', the current state of knowledge does not permit any clear conclusion as to whether the Swiss Gymnastics Federation definitely knew of ethical violations in women's artistic gymnastics (at national level). The investigation team came to the conclusion that there is a standardised and idealised performance sport value system with corresponding systemic issues, as the results from the anonymous questionnaires had shown as well. The investigation team found a similar situation with regard to the value system of performance sport in men's artistic gymnastics, except that here a coach

had been the subject of reports to the Swiss Gymnastics Federation for years. However, in the opinion of the investigation team, no specific measures had been taken.

7.3.3.3 Ethical principles

220 As requested, the Swiss Gymnastics Federation in 2012 created a position for an ethics officer, whose primary task was to ensure that Swiss Olympic's ethical guidelines were fulfilled. As has been mentioned already, the investigation team considers that inadequate attention was given to policies that had not been implemented. The fact that they were not sufficiently well rooted in practice became apparent when in 2019 the hosting rights for rhythmic gymnastics were to be terminated. In addition, the ethics officer lacked the required time and technical expertise. Both of these aspects had been specified in almost every annual meeting since 2012. The former director, in contrast, claimed that the issue of overstrain had never been addressed, and the ethics officer argued that he had not been aware of any such violations in rhythmic gymnastics either.

7.3.3.4 Swiss Gymnastics Federation central committee's role

221 The investigation team gained the impression that the central committee fully trusted its board and hardly ever questioned its actions. The minutes show that for the most part the committee agreed with the board's proposals, rarely asking for changes or adjustments. It is not clear if the members of the committee had sufficient expertise or experience of the strategic management of federations and of risk management. And so the central committee, after the dismissal of the coaches in 2013, was convinced that all was well (bad apple approach) and did not request changes to the system (bad barrel approach). It never asked the operational bodies to explain how to proceed in order to prevent similar incidents from occurring in future, nor did it ever enquired as to whether everything was going well at their level. The dismissal of the National Team 3 coach for insufficient success was accepted without asking if what had been expected from the coach was realistic, based on the course of events at the time. The central committee considered neither the dissolution of the national team in 2018, nor the termination of the provision of services for the National Performance Centre in Magglingen, which in its view happened absolutely unexpectedly, as a warning sign. The involvement of the head of elite sport and the coaches in this was never questioned. Controls and monitoring were not increased and achieving sporting success remained the only object. The current president of the committee considered the results of the Pachmann report as the only warning signal.

222 With regard to the internal communication within the federations, it must be doubted that the former president of the committee exercised his management role vis-à-vis the director properly. However, it is also unclear whether the director provided him with enough information.

223 The investigation team questions the adequacy of the structure of the Swiss Gymnastics Federation. Although there were many plans, whether they were implemented was never checked. An effective controlling system that includes regular reporting is therefore essential.

224 Based on the investigations, it is also questionable if the control committee (CC) has carried out the tasks it is responsible for in accordance with the rules of procedure; its role is to 'control and monitor the management'. According to the investigation results, the CC limited its control and monitoring function primarily to financial matters.

7.3.3.5 The management board's role

225 The investigation revealed that within the Swiss Gymnastics Federation elite sport had a special status, over which the head of elite sport was in sole charge. The Swiss Gymnastics Federation's human resources department was not involved in personnel matters either. Several processes implemented - e.g. annual staff appraisals - were not carried out properly in the area of elite sport. It is also incomprehensible why, for example, criminal records information was as matter of principle obtained for new employees but not for new coaches, even though they worked with athletes under the age of 18 on a regular basis.

226 The fact that elite sport was managed individually most probably made it more difficult for the board members to identify and tackle these problems. It also seems that the former head of elite sport and the former director of the board (who had previously held the position of head of elite sport too) were very powerful as a combination and regularly took decisions without consulting anyone else. They often presented the other board members with a *fait accompli*. This could explain why so little information was provided and why the termination of the rhythmic gymnastics' host rights had been unexpected. Nevertheless, the question remains of whether the board assumed its responsibilities sufficiently or if it should have been involved more actively. The events in the 2010 to 2013 period (dismissal of coaches for ethical reasons) and the constant problem of injuries in rhythmic gymnastics should have been investigated. Many aspects are difficult to reconstruct, since not all decisions have been recorded in the board meeting minutes and hardly anything has been documented.

7.3.3.6 The former director's role

227 Swiss Gymnastics Federation's former director worked with heart and soul for his federation. But he was unable to cope. Furthermore he was not schooled in the management of a federation or a non-profit organisation. This might be the reason why he failed to implement a system for monitoring potential risks (risk management). In any case he did not realise that the explosive character of some incidents in rhythmic gymnastics and in women's and men's artistic gymnastics constituted a risk that had to be mitigated or eliminated with appropriate measures.

228 To him the fact that for years the situation of female artistic gymnasts had been worse than that of their male colleagues in several areas (salary,

accommodation, food, etc.) did not seem to be a problem that he should have solved. Guaranteeing gender equality would also have been necessary in view of the Swiss Gymnastics Federation risking reputational damage. Furthermore, the director did not take the injury issue seriously and considered that injuries in rhythmic gymnasts were not 'real injuries'. Since he recognised the issue neither as a problem nor as a risk for the association, he did not give it due consideration, ignoring that in meetings with FOSPO the risk had been recognised.

7.3.3.7 The former head of elite sport's role

229 The former head of elite sport's excessive workload and his insufficient interest in rhythmic gymnastics were presumably reasons why there was minimal supervision of the sport. He hardly ever attended training sessions in the gymnasium, which increased the probability of ethically sensitive situations occurring (presence as violence preventing factor). He also ignored other people's advice and opinions, even those of experts. It remains unclear if he intentionally chose to ignore allegations reported to him personally, and if he informed his superior sufficiently about the challenges and problems, in order to avert potential risks for his employer.

230 The question remains unanswered of the extent to which the head of elite sport's behaviour towards FOSPO staff contributed to the partial termination of the framework contract for rhythmic gymnastics, which statements made by the head of FOSPO seem to indicate.

7.3.3.8 The role of the head of department at the time

231 The head of the department decisively influenced rhythmic gymnastics for ten years. Although she was a volunteer, she worked full-time and was extraordinarily committed, passing on to the athletes the high expectations she placed on herself. She was of the opinion that gymnasts should train even when in pain. And she apparently told the athletes that they had to ignore their own needs for two years in order to guarantee rhythmic gymnastics' survival. Based on information received in the course of the investigation, it appears she considered the opinions of experienced medical staff, who focused on the athletes and their psychological and physical health, to be of secondary importance.

232 The head of department had hardly any decision-making powers. However, the heavily overburdened head of elite sport relied on her judgement. Thanks to her close involvement, she had a good overview and knew all the players. As a result she filled a gap that the Swiss Gymnastics Federation had allowed to develop due to its decision-makers' insufficient interest in rhythmic gymnastics.

233 The head of department, perhaps influenced by personal friendships, assessed the situation at the National Performance Centre Magglingen differently from the elite sport department and FOSPO and its medical experts. She praised the coaches who FOSPO ranked poorly and vice versa. For example, according to the head of department National Coach 3 'messed up' and was unsuccessful, while the elite sport section saw a ray of hope in her and that she might bring a change. In the end,

National Team Coach 3 had to give up her position to persons who were friends with the persons who held power unofficially.

7.3.3.9 Infrastructure

234 The investigation revealed that gymnasium infrastructure and flooring at the National Performance Centre Magglingen was inadequate. This problem had been known for years but was never addressed. For reasons of space, rhythmic gymnastics was moved to the remote ‘End der Welt’ gymnasium at the end of 2010. This location seemed better suited than the ‘Jubiläumshalle’ used till then. However, the special flooring for rhythmic gymnastics (carpet and subfloor), which was unique in Switzerland, could not be laid during winter time, because track and field athletics was prioritised in the use of the gymnasium. None of the regional performance centres had these special floors. For years, rhythmic gymnasts had mainly trained on inadequate surfaces, i.e. without a subfloor, only on gymnastics carpets or artistic gymnastics mats or floors, on regular mats or even directly on the floor. The main reason for this was said to be insufficient financial resources. The investigation team considers this situation as serious, because without adequate mats and flooring the athletes were and still are at risk of suffering injuries and long-term and consequential damage.

235 The investigation also revealed other infrastructure deficiencies, such as in the provision of medical care for rhythmic gymnasts, whose situation deteriorated when FOSPO withdrew its services in 2019, and no longer provided athletes with sports medical support (with the exception of emergency treatment), sports psychology and sports physical therapy.

8. Incident-reporting options

8.1 Swiss Gymnastics Federation’s legal assistance office and ethics committee

236 On 1 January 2021, the former Swiss Gymnastics Federation legal assistance office closed and was replaced with the new Ethics Commission. The Ethics Commission’s current heavy workload proves the necessity of such an institution. To some extent, the Commission serves as a valuable example. However, it has become apparent that the Commission’s independence, its resources and procedures should have been better planned. It is also necessary that its services are as easily accessible as possible. So far, no satisfactory solution has been found.

8.2 Reporting options at national level

237 On 1 January 2022, a new national reporting office will become operational and replace the provisional ‘Swiss Integrity’ reporting office, which was established on 1 January 2021. This office is responsible for the triage of incidents but does not investigate incidents themselves. Reports are forwarded to the federation concerned and thus in the worst case scenario an athlete’s report could be sent to the very person the athlete has reported for misconduct. In a small federation it is difficult for the reporting person to remain unknown, even if anonymity has been guaranteed. The

investigation team considers the triage inappropriate. This issue must be taken into account in the processes of the future national reporting office.

C. Recommendations

238 The recommendations were formulated based on the interview results and scientific observations and mainly address the factors that inhibit violence, boundary violations and neglect (description of the factors: investigation report, Chapter B 10.; summary, Chapter B 2.).

239 Factors that can lead to violence are:

- **Idealised childlike body shape, specialising in a sport early on, high number of training hours and young performance age:** These factors carry health risks and are considered risk factors that can lead to the use of violence against athletes or a failure to protect them;
- **An idealised and normalised performance sports value system:** The system prioritises performance and competition results and idealises and normalises expectations such as devotion to sport, training and performance despite pain, injuries and mental discomfort, and continuous aspiration for more or better results. In this context, protective measures are perceived as soft, disruptive and even performance decreasing ;
- **Organisational and systemic factors** and systemic factors emanating from the performance sport value system can become a basis for violence, boundary violations and neglect: (1) the ‘winner takes all’ funding system; (2) the commodification of athletes (‘considering athletes as products’; (3) insufficient clarity as regards the duty of care; (4) insufficient knowledge about forms of violence and neglect; (5) insufficient or inefficient supervision of officials, coaches and supporting staff ; (6) poor procedures for reporting violence and neglect (e.g. no independent reporting office, internal and unclear procedures)); and (7) insufficient or unsatisfactory disciplinary processes and insufficient authority on the part of the relevant entities’ to impose penalties;
- **Interpersonal power relations** (gatekeeper, e.g. heads of performance sports, coaches) and hierarchical dependency relationship between coaches and athletes;
- **Exclusion of parents and overzealous parents.**

240 Factors that can prevent violence are:

- Giving athletes **a say** in the federation/association and interpersonal relationships, athletes’ unions, strategies for self/co-determination in setting trainings and performance targets;
- **Reaction to violence, boundary violations and neglect with systemic change** (‘bad barrel’/ecosystem approach») instead of with **individualised change** (e.g. dismissal of coach, ‘bad apple approach’);
- Effective observation of **human rights and child’s rights.**

1. Creating basic principles

1.1 Creating a clear language: Developing definitions and interpretation aids for the Ethics Charter

241 **Justification:** In comparison with international codes, the current Swiss Olympic and FOSPO Ethics Charter is extremely brief and only lists principles. An accompanying report or materials documenting the creation were not available as interpretation aids. Swiss Olympic's code of conduct for coaches and the code of conduct for athletes contain some information on the Ethics Charter. However, the actual implementation of the individual provisions remain the task of the addressees.

242 The investigation reveals several ethical violations, which were rather difficult to subsume under individual points because of their open formulation.

243 Contributions provided to the sports federations are linked to the Ethics Charter. Ethical violations can lead to contribution cuts and the termination of service agreements. In practice, however, the wording of the Ethics Charter was considered too 'vague' to serve as basis for enforcing the service agreements.

244 **Recommendation:** The investigation team recommends an ethics charter that defines more clearly the boundaries between permissible and intolerable conduct, for example between encouragement and excessive demands. This requires concepts to be defined and interpretation aids to be provided. Definitions for physical, sexual and psychological injury and neglect are essential. General accessibility to this knowledge creates a common basis.

245 **Factors that inhibit violence:** A clear and binding language can counter performance sports value system and the organisational and systemic factors of commodification, insufficient knowledge of violence and insufficient clarity about duty of care obligations.

1.2 Creating a legally binding basis: anchoring the Ethics Charter at secondary legislation level

246 **Justification:** Contributions to the sports federations are subject to compliance with the Ethics Charter. If the ethical principles are violated FOSPO or Swiss Olympic, exercising public authority in this area, can reduce contributions or terminate the contract. In practice, however, both authorities consider the current Ethics Charter legally too unstable a foundation to enforce a contract.

247 The investigation revealed additionally that the current Ethics Charter is insufficient to adequately protect athletes under the age of 18. Any ethical violations must be dealt with under the criminal law on an individual basis. This approach focuses on individuals (usually coaches), but not on the underlying sports system.

248 **Recommendation:** The investigation team recommends bringing ethical principles to a legally binding level – secondary legislation level as a minimum – and to anchor protection principles and control mechanisms in the law. The following points are deemed necessary:

- Athletes under the age of 18 must be expressly protected by stating their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular Articles 3 and 19 CRC, and the third-party effect..
- The third-party effect of the fundamental rights according to the ECHR and the Federal Constitution must be declared for all athletes.
- A way of dealing with pain and injuries (including regeneration and rehabilitation) must be stipulated for everyone involved.
- Monitoring implementation requires control mechanisms. There is a need for reporting offices, regular anonymous surveys and the involvement of parents.
- Sanctions that affect the system without penalising the athletes are needed. For this purpose, organisational liability in particular is considered expedient.

249 **Violence inhibiting factors:** Binding codification can counter the performance sport value system. The actual implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the guidance on how to deal with injuries inhibit the commodification of athletes and provide knowledge about forms of violence. Thereafter, the recommended control mechanisms and organisational liability counterbalances the organisational and systemic factors that can lead to violence.

2. Introducing fundamental control mechanisms

2.1 Carrying out anonymous surveys regularly

250 **Justification:** To date, *compliance* with the ethics principles has been checked primarily on the basis of reports from the sports federations to Swiss Olympic and from Swiss Olympic to FOSPO. Processes that existed on paper were examined. This approach does not indicate sufficiently where problems exist in practice.

251 **Recommendation:** The anonymous questionnaires clearly highlighted the problems of everyday training and competitions. The investigation team recommends institutionalising this instrument and imposing on Swiss Olympic the obligation to carry out regular surveys as part of the service agreements with FOSPO. These surveys must be considered ‘ethical checks’ and be carried out with the stakeholders at various levels. The results can serve as a basis for further measures.

252 **Violence inhibiting factors:** Regular anonymous surveys with the prospect of publication act as controls and thus have a preventive effect. The results are an indicator for the problems at grassroots level and form the basis for further measures.

2.2 Monitoring the implementation of ethical principles in practice

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Justification: To date, *implementation* of ethics principles has been checked primarily on the basis of reports from the sports federations to Swiss Olympic and from Swiss Olympic to FOSPO. Processes that existed on paper were examined. Implementation in practice was not the subject of the review - however, the anonymous anonymous questionnaire survey with athletes revealed a need for action in various areas. The current approach does not indicate sufficiently where problems exist in practice.

254 **Recommendation:** What happens at grassroots level must be included in the implementation assessment. The investigation team recommends including the future reporting office's investigation results (while respecting the protection of privacy) in the implementation reviews on a mandatory and regular basis. .

255 With the ethical checks, Swiss Olympic already as an excellent tool at hand. The investigation team recommends that its regular use be declared mandatory for the national federations and regional and local sports federations. The results of the ethical checks should also be included in the implementation assessment.

256 **Violence inhibiting factors:** The federations are measured against the yardstick of an independent third party. The prospect of the reporting office's findings being made public has a preventive effect. Swiss Olympic's ethical checks are an indicator for the problems at grassroots level and the basis for further measures, and therefore have a preventive effect.

2.3 Introducing the sports federations' control mechanisms in regional and local sports federations

257 **Justification:** The investigation showed that the national sports federations have little influence on the affiliated, but independent, regional and local sports federations. It also highlighted differences and contradictions between the federations and their subordinate levels as regards selecting coaches, interacting with athletes, handling weight issues, etc. The investigation team considers the ethical guidelines to be equally binding at all training levels and for all.

258 **Recommendation:** It is recommended that ethical standards be enforced in the member federations of the national sports federations. Awarding an ethical label that is reviewed regularly might be an option. This label would be awarded to federations that commit to ethical principles, human rights and in particular to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and that have created the necessary foundations, processes, controlling etc. The results derived from anonymous surveys and from the reporting office (see recommendations 2.1. and 2.2) should be used to regularly assess if a federation is entitled to hold the ethical label. In addition, a mechanism could be created in which a local sports federations loses national federation membership if it does not comply with certain guidelines or has poor results from the control mechanisms (surveys, reporting office). Finally, consideration should be given to whether the national sports federation should have a right of veto over the employment of coaches.

259 **Violence inhibiting factors:** A regularly reviewed ethical label counterbalances the performance sports value system and prevents the

commodification of athletes. It clarifies the duty of care responsibilities. Unethical conduct can be sanctioned with label withdrawal. The commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child can also prevent violence.

3. Clarifying access to and the working methods of the reporting office

260 **Justification:** In the course of the anonymous questionnaire survey, many athletes said that nothing had changed after they reported incidents (in the current structures) or that they refrained from reporting incidents because they were afraid of adverse effects. The investigation also revealed that athletes making reports might be referred to the person that they wanted to report against, because that person was in charge of the relevant sports federation's reporting office. Another problem was that parents who contacted the Swiss Gymnastics Federation officials in charge were referred to the Swiss Gymnastics Federation ethics committee. Subsequently, neither the parents nor the Swiss Gymnastics Federation officials made a report to the ethics committee.

261 **Recommendation:** This is a recommendation for both the national reporting office and the federations' internal reporting offices: the reporting office must be organised in such a way that the persons concerned can report without fear of adverse effects. This requires the option for anonymous reporting, which in turn requires that the reporting office staff are objective, personally independent and impartial, and that there is no conflict of interest between them and the sports federations, third parties, etc.

262 Access to the reporting office must be easy, especially for young athletes. Accessibility must be possible through different communication channels. Third parties, such as coaches, family members, friends, officials, etc., must be entitled to report. In addition, it should be guaranteed that persons making reports can speak to an independent contact person and are not just left to themselves.

263 Confidence increases when the procedures of the reporting office are well known. The public should be able to learn about positive changes after reports (while protecting personal privacy). The sport system's stakeholders should be regularly informed.

264 The investigation team considers it necessary that the reporting office is given the opportunity to take measures or to impose penalties (recommendation 1.2.). It is also recommended that their findings are included in the ethical assessments of the federations (recommendation 2.2).

265 **Violence inhibiting factors:** An independent, external reporting office with clear procedures, and penalty and intervention options is one of the organisational and systemic factors that may be regarded as inhibiting violence.

4. Changing the funding system

4.1 Revising Swiss Olympic's classification system

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Justification: The investigation showed that the current classification system is more of a ‘sports reward system’ than a ‘sports promotion system’. Important, successful sports with media attention and well-known sponsors are rewarded multiple times under Swiss Olympic's point system. The chances for little known sports, which are actually in need of sports development, are slimmer. In addition, the classification system puts the federations permanently under financial and performance pressure, which then is passed on to the coaches and athletes, and as a result, ethical principles and health are often subordinated to the ‘pressure to win medals’. This is particularly problematic for athletes under the age of 18 and can have health implications (physical and psychological).

267 **Recommendation:** First of all, the fundamental question must be discussed of whether the sports promotion system should continue to focus on rewarding already successful sports or whether the promotional aspect should be given more priority. Regardless of this discussion’s outcome, the pressure must be greatly reduced, at least for athletes under the age of 18. Their ‘success’ cannot be measured by rankings and medals. The investigation team recommends setting development targets rather than performance targets for junior athletes.

268 In addition, the investigation team considers that more importance should be attached to ethical principles in the classification process ethical principles implemented and lived by. Evaluation on the basis of paper documents must be the exception.

269 Furthermore, the classification pressure should not lead to a situation where a well thought out multiannual structure is impossible in a sports discipline. If a sport is not successful, it should be allowed to invest the funding in the development of young talents for a predefined period (instead of being immediately downgraded).

270 **Violence inhibiting factors:** Rearranging the current classification will mitigate the current financing system’s ‘winner takes all’ mentality and its consequences.

4.2 Reconsidering Swiss Gymnastics Federation’s funding of regional performance centres

271 **Justification:** Currently, Swiss Gymnastics Federation allocates contributions to the regional performance centres for athletes who are in the elite teams. Funding the centres with these points carries the risk of putting pressure on the athletes, with the physical and psychological consequences mentioned above.

272 **Recommendation:** The investigation team recommends separating the funding of the regional performance centres from the elite team athletes and thus easing the pressure on athletes under the age of 18. In junior and young athletes’ development, the focus must be put on sustainable young talent development. This requires the pressure on the regional performance centres to develop elite team athletes to be reduced.

273 **Violence inhibiting factors:** The recommendation countersbalances the concept behind the funding system and presents the commodification of athletes.

5. Changing the situation of athletes

5.1 Raising the age limit in technical compositional sports

274 **Justification:** The low minimum age for participating in international competitions in technical and compositional sports disciplines encourages specialisation at an early age (artistic swimming and figure skating: 15 years; women's artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics and trampoline gymnastics: 16 years; diving: 14 years; only in men's artistic gymnastics is the minimum age higher: 18 years). Since they achieve their peak performance at a young age, athletes in technical compositional sports retire young.

275 **Recommendation:** Following the advice of the scientists and in line with foreign investigation reports, the investigation team recommends raising the age limits (minimum age, senior age). Furthermore, it suggests joining like-minded FIG and IOC federations to advocate raising the age limits internationally, but, if necessary, raising age limits only in Switzerland.

276 **Violence inhibiting factors:** The young performance age, the idealised childlike body shape, early specialisation in a sport, and the high number of practice hours pose health risks. These conditions are also considered risk factors that lead to the use of violence towards athletes or the failure to protect them. Raising the minimum ages can counter these risk factors.

5.2 Age-appropriate conditions for centralisation in elite sport

277 **Justification:** The survey showed that centralising the very young athletes geographically at the Federal Performance Centre Magglingen causes a variety of difficulties. They are separated early on from their protective family environment. This separation also coincides with the physical changes during puberty, and the high volume of training hours, etc.

278 **Recommendation:** The investigation team in principle considers it desirable for normal developmental processes to take place in a familiar environment. It would therefore be preferable for athletes to leave home later, which means that the age of admission to the Federal Performance Centre must be raised. In addition (or as an alternative), it is recommended that athletes be assigned a specific person (confidant) to answer their questions, listen to their concerns, etc. A principle of sponsorship within the elite team would also be welcome.

279 **Violence inhibiting factors:** When the young athletes move away, their parents can no longer participate in their everyday lives. The exclusion of parents is considered a violence-furthering factor, which a later centralisation and/or a confidant supporting the athletes could partially offset.

5.3 Defining the parents' role in sports

280 **Justification:** The parents or guardians are among the main reference persons and also play an important role in children's and youth sport. This role is often underestimated in the Swiss talent development system. The involvement of parents is seen as a violence-inhibiting factor. However, it is well known that overzealous parents can negatively affect the relationship between the athlete and the coach such that parents – inadvertently – contribute to furthering violence.

281 **Recommendation:** The investigation team recommends that sports federations address the role of parents and provide training on how to work best with parents. In general, the parents' role and tasks should be defined and their involvement (for athletes under the age of 18) improved. A provision could be added to the athletes' code of conduct on the involvement of parents.

282 **Violence inhibiting factors:** Constructive involvement of parents is seen as a way of inhibiting violence.

5.4 Creating understanding – Regular schooling for athletes, parents, and officials

283 **Justification:** The investigation clearly showed that topics such as psychologic and physical violence, rights and obligation and basic knowledge about development and nutrition are rarely taught systematically and that there is a need for action in this context.

284 **Recommendation:** The investigation team recommends that knowledge be conveyed to athletes, their parents, coaches and officials. They should know and understand the ethical principles. This also implies that they know their own rights and obligations, including the duty of care. From an early age on, athletes should learn to recognise boundary violations and to communicate clear defence signals. The option of reporting incidents to the appropriate authority should also be discussed on a regular basis. Training and further education of all persons involved in developmental paediatrics and psychology, biomedical issues and developmental psychology, bio-medical interrelation and nutrition are also considered relevant.

285 **Violence inhibiting factors:** The broader involvement of parents and third parties and sound fundamental knowledge about the mentioned risk factors have a violence inhibiting effect.

5.5 Guaranteeing broader support of decisions in the sports federations

286 **Justification:** The example of the Swiss Gymnastics Federation shows that not only athletes but entire sports were not listened to enough. It was also found that employing people with specific expertise in a sports discipline makes it possible to better identify and address problems and also to bring perspectives specific to a sport discipline into a federation.

287 **Recommendation:** It is necessary to guarantee that all sports disciplines, genders and functions, and where appropriate other groups (including those

with sport-specific knowledge) are represented without exception in the higher bodies of the federations. In particular, athletes from all sports federations should have a voice at strategic level (as is currently the case with Swiss Olympic). Swiss Olympic's funding contributions should only be paid to sports federations that meet these requirements.

288 **Implementing this recommendation guarantees the realisation of the corresponding right set out in the Athletes Rights Declaration to fair and gender-equal representation.**

289 **Violence inhibiting factors:** The right to have a say provides athletes with self-efficacy and is recognised a violence-inhibiting factor.

5.6 Developing a network for young athletes (under the age of 18)

290 **Justification:** Several scientists and experts considered it essential that athletes (especially those under the age of 18) have access to a functioning network. The investigation showed that the current network is still too weak. Furthermore, since its use is voluntary, some services offered are not used, which is to the disadvantage of athletes. This can happen, for example, when use is considered stigmatising.

291 **Recommendation:** For a network to be functioning, experts in the different disciplines and other stakeholders must work together. This requires an open and transparent dialogue between the different stakeholders (athletes, federations, coaches, parents, school, paediatricians, psychologists and other medical specialists) so that joint and informed choices can be made.

292 Doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists for children and adolescents must be available to support the athletes. Their services should be integrated as a permanent part of daily training routine, but without making the days longer. This also guarantees that it is not for the athletes and their families to decide as they please whether to make use of services such as health checks and consultations.

293 The athletes need access to independent confidants (recommendation 5.2.). Parents and other third parties who have access to training must be part of the network (recommendation 5.3.).

294 **Violence inhibiting factors:** This is a protective measure to prevent avoidable damage in line with the duty of care. A network provides better knowledge about forms of abuse and neglect, which helps to identify and break the hierarchical dependency. Letting parents (and third parties) participate is per se considered violence inhibiting.

5.7 Reducing stress

295 **Justification:** The performance sport value system idealises and normalises athletes' participation in training and competitions when they are injured and ill. The system is supported because athletes are excluded from the elite

team if they are inactive for a longer period of time. This gives them a false incentive to perform to their maximum during convalescence.

296 **Recommendation:** Similar to the system used in Germany, it is necessary to create the option for athletes who are injured or ill to remain elite team members for a fixed period of time without having to perform.

297 **Violence-inhibiting factors:** This recommendation is not only a protective measure to inhibit the effects of the performance sport value system, it also represents a measure in the context of the the duty of care responsibilities.

5.8 Making the required infrastructure available

298 **Justification:** As the investigation shows, the infrastructure for rhythmic gymnastics in Switzerland leaves much to be desired. Only the Federal Performance Centre in Magglingen is equipped with a suitable floor and even there it is not always available. Many gymnasiums do not even have rhythmic gymnastics mats available, forcing rhythmic gymnasts to train on a hard floor, which has serious effects on athletes under the age of 18, sometimes for the rest of their lives.

299 **Recommendation:** The investigation team believes that a sport discipline may only be offered if the required infrastructure (construction measures, equipment, safety features) is available and if every effort is made to protect athletes' health in the long term.

300 **Violence inhibiting factors:** This recommendation is not only an additional protective measure to inhibit the effects of the performance sport value system, it also represents a measure to prevent avoidable damage in line with the the duty of care.

6. Changing the situation for coaches

6.1 The 'bad barrel principle' instead of the 'bad apple principle'

301 **Justification:** When incidents occur or allegedly occur, sports federations often dismiss the coach ('bad apple principle'). At best, this principle can solve a problem in the short term, but the structures remain the same in the longer term, thus leaving fertile ground for new incidents to occur.

302 **Recommendation:** When incidents of violence or negligence occur, trying to improve the individual situation is not recommended; instead an effort should be made to correct the entire system ('bad barrel principle'). This requires organisational and accompanying measures such as meetings, monitoring, coaching, and schooling and, in particular, strict controlling.

303 **Violence inhibiting factors:** Countering violence with the 'bad barrel principle' is considered violence inhibiting and provides the opportunity to change the system effectively.

6.2 Optimising basic and continuing education and training for coaches

304 **Justification:** As the investigation shows, many coaches lack basic knowledge, including knowledge of the Ethics Charter, the code of conduct, the FTEM, and also knowledge of teaching and psychology in order for them to be able to deal with athletes in their childhood and adolescence in an age-appropriate way. Coaches who were trained abroad expressed the need for a more in-depth introduction to the Swiss sports system. In addition, it was noted that methods such as coaching, supervision or intervention, which in similar professional sectors are part of everyday life, are still seldom used in sport.

305 **Recommendations:** The investigation recommends providing education and regular brush-up opportunities in the following subjects:

Basic knowledge

- The Ethics Charter, the code of conduct and the FTEM amount to basic knowledge. Regular training on their content should be provided on the basis of practical examples. Knowledge about physical and psychological violence and neglect is indispensable. For coaches with foreign qualifications, a corresponding basic module should be a requirement for granting equivalence.
- Equivalence/recognition of foreign qualifications should be supplemented with a coach developer module (conform with coach training in Switzerland). During the coach developer module, it should already be possible to pay the contributions towards the coaches' salaries.

Educational-psychologic knowledge

- The coaches must acquire a training philosophy that focuses on the athletes. This implies that the training modules (workload, content) are individually adjusted to each athlete according to their age, ability, progress and current health status. The programme must be adapted to the athletes, not the athletes to the programme. This athlete-centred approach also means that athletes are involved in the development of daily training routines and training programmes.
- Basic and advanced training courses provide knowledge of developmental psychology, developmental pedagogy and developmental paediatrics. This knowledge must be tailored to the respective sports disciplines.
- Sport-specific training guidelines for the science of coaching are needed.
- In addition, coaches must be trained in problem-solving strategies for dealing with difficult situations with athletes, parents and officials.

Reflection and monitoring

- Introducing regular modules on coaching, intervention and supervision.

306 **Violence inhibiting factors:** Better understanding of the basics helps to combat commodification, detect and prevent violence and neglect, and gain knowledge about athletes' rights. Reflection and monitoring provide strategies for problem solving. Effective monitoring per se is considered to inhibit violence.

6.3 Improving coaches' working conditions

307 **Justification:** The investigation results clearly showed that the coaching profession demands a genuine passion for the sport . The salary is proportionally low, the working hours are long and irregular, and the contracts are often fixed-term. This does not make working as a coach a particularly attractive proposition. As a result, the choice of candidates is often very limited.

308 **Recommendation:** Offering more permanent employment contracts and raising the salary levels is recommended. Moreover, remuneration should not only be based on performance, the ethical component must also be taken into account and adequately rewarded. Finally, the coaches' career opportunities must be improved and systematic career planning established.

309 **Violence inhibiting factors:** The performance sport value system (normalisation and expectation of constant peak performance) must also be broken at the coaches' level.