



## Open letter

Central committee  
Schweizerischer Turnverband (STV)  
Bahnhofstr. 38  
5000 Aarau

It is our understanding that on December the 2nd and 3rd in Baku [a vote will be held](#) to change the statutes of the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG), to ratify its appropriation of parkour as the 8<sup>th</sup> discipline of gymnastics. As practitioners and representatives of the biggest parkour organisations in Switzerland, we are firmly opposed to the unilateral appropriation of our discipline by an external organisation.

Parkour is a sovereign discipline, historically and culturally different from gymnastics. We have our own values (to be and to last; to be strong to be useful) and our own modes of practice: no rules, hardly any competitions, mainly training outdoors and on non-adapted structures (i.e. on the street)... As FIG is not involved in the international parkour community, and has shown its disregard for the opinion of this community, we fear the loss of all the elements that make parkour a precious thing in our eyes. This is in direct alignment with the report [Youth perceptions of the Olympic Games](#) commissioned by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and written by Dr. B. Wheaton and Dr. H. Thorpe. This report concludes and recommends working with sport-specific federations instead of trying to integrate disciplines like parkour in pre-existing structures « that may not understand and respect the unique cultural value systems and be aware of the important issues within these sports. »

The joint signature of this letter by our organisations representing hundreds of practitioners should suffice to convince you that in Switzerland, Parkour is autonomously organized, and that while we are open to collaborations, we do not need the unilateral intervention of FIG or any other institution. Our action comes in support of those undertaken by practitioners in dozens of other countries<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, an international organisation called Parkour Earth already exists. It was created by the voluntary agreement of independent national Parkour federations, and therefore seems more legitimate in our eyes.

It seems to us in the best interest of gymnasts not to take this decision lightly. One of the main objectives of FIG is to bring parkour to the Olympic Games. However, the Olympic Charter and the IOC limit the number of disciplines and athletes that can take part in the Olympics. Adding parkour means removing another discipline. Likewise, the number of athletes in other disciplines will have to be reduced to make space for parkour athletes. This means a reduction of the chance for other gymnastic disciplines to have a space in the Olympics. Similarly, the

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<sup>1</sup> United-Kingdom, France, Australia, New-Zealand, South Korea, Argentina, Mexico, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Singapour, Spain, Denmark, Italy, Israël, Colombia, Indonesia, Austria...

likelihood of a reduction in the number of gymnasts taking part in the Olympics is not negligible.

We also bring to your attention that FIG has been acting *ultra-vires* for [nearly two years](#). FIG has undertaken the development of parkour as early as February 2017. It is therefore only retrospectively that you have the possibility of voting this decision, that has already been taken without the agreement of FIG members and beyond the power given by its statutes. This appears to indicate a troublesome problem of bad governance.

Furthermore, if FIG members can now vote this decision, it is evident that it has not been submitted to the vote of the members of the Parkour community and therefore is unilateral. We draw your attention to the fact that nearly all Parkour practitioners that had accepted to enter the FIG Parkour committee have recently given their [letter of resignation](#). They have denounced a lack of transparency and of involvement of the parkour community. They conclude their letter with « We see problems that worries [sic] us for the future of parkour ». Those of us who have been disapproving vocally for over a year did not suspect less.

We noticed that article 2.2 and following articles of the statutes of the STV indicate the desire for an ethical commitment, and evoke the ideal of personal, social and socio-political development, the respect of your surroundings and the collaboration with other sport organisations. These are values we share. We have a lot of respect for your athletes, practitioners and teachers, as well as for the long term success of your organisation. The popularity of gymnastics in Switzerland commands respect. We wish to ask you that this respect be mutual. By our efforts, and often without support, we have developed a practice, organisations and a community. Now that our efforts are starting to pay, an outsider organisation is intervening and trying to take control. We feel that creating a precedent of mutual respect and cordial relations right now would facilitate future collaborations and partnerships, and therefore be beneficial for parkour as well as for gymnastics.

For all the reasons above, we enjoin you cordially to abstain from voting, if not to vote NO at the inclusion of parkour. We hope that you will recognize our autonomy and thereby accept the mutual respect relationship that we are offering.

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Apatrix, Janik von Rotz

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Free-Z, Ahmed Ajil

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Féli-D Mouvement, Frédéric Voeffray

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Parkour Luzern, Raphael Bicker

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Parkour Lausanne, Yann Daout

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Freerun Zürich, Marco Vollenweider

Borrajo Elias

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Parkour Valais, Elias Borrajo



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Associazione Ticino Pk/Fr, Damien Mattei



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Nurf Culture, Florian Sager



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Parkour Family St.Gallen, David Marti

M. Kiatprasert

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IG Freestyle-Halle Zug, Marut Kiatprasert



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Freerun Bern, Timo Bollinger



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Parkour Baar, Marco Sievi

Cc : Swiss Olympic  
Parkour Earth  
Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique  
Comité International Olympique