



## MEDIA RELEASE

### TENNIS – ANTI-DOPING

#### THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT (CAS) REDUCES THE BAN OF MARIA SHARAPOVA TO FIFTEEN MONTHS

*Lausanne, 4 October 2016* – The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has issued its decision in the arbitration procedure between Maria Sharapova and the International Tennis Federation (ITF). The CAS Panel in charge of the matter has reduced her period of suspension, by nine months, from two years to fifteen months, beginning on 26 January 2016.

On 1 January 2016, the World Anti-Doping Agency’s latest list of prohibited substances came into force and included Meldonium for the first time. In March 2016, Ms Sharapova was informed by the ITF that a sample she provided on 26 January 2016, during the 2016 Australian Open tennis tournament, had tested positive for the presence of Meldonium. Ms Sharapova waived her right to have the B sample tested and publicly announced that she had inadvertently committed an anti-doping rule violation as a result of taking Mildronate tablets that had been prescribed by her doctor for many years since she and her team had failed to notice that Meldonium, marketed as Mildronate, now featured on the Prohibited List.

On 6 June 2016, the Independent Tribunal appointed by the ITF to hear the player’s case found that Ms Sharapova had committed an anti-doping rule violation, disqualified her results at the 2016 Australian Open, and imposed a period of ineligibility of two years on the player. On 9 June 2016, Ms Sharapova filed an appeal at the CAS against the Independent Tribunal’s decision, arguing that she did not take Mildronate to enhance her performance and that her period of ineligibility should be reduced on the basis of “No Significant Fault”. The ITF requested that the Panel reject the player’s plea of “No Significant Fault” and leave the Independent Tribunal’s decision undisturbed.

The arbitration was conducted by a panel of CAS arbitrators: Prof. Luigi Fumagalli, Italy (President), Mr Jeffrey G. Benz, USA and Mr David W. Rivkin, USA. The Panel held a hearing with the parties in New York on 7 and 8 September 2016.

Tribunal Arbitral du Sport



Court of Arbitration for Sport

The Panel found that Ms Sharapova committed an anti-doping rule violation and that while it was with “no significant fault”, she bore some degree of fault, for which a sanction of fifteen months is appropriate. The Panel wishes to point out that the case it heard, and the award it has rendered, was only about the degree of fault that can be imputed to the player for her failure to make sure that the substance contained in a product that she had been taking over a long period remained in compliance with the anti-doping rules.

The Arbitral Award is published on the CAS website: <http://www.tas-cas.org/en/jurisprudence/recent-decisions.html>

For further information related to the CAS activity and procedures in general, please contact either Matthieu Reeb, CAS Secretary General, or Katy Hogg, Communications Officer. Château de Béthusy, Avenue de Beaumont 2, 1012 Lausanne, Switzerland. [media@tas-cas.org](mailto:media@tas-cas.org); Tel: (41 21) 613 50 00; fax: (41 21) 613 50 01, or consult the CAS website: [www.tas-cas.org](http://www.tas-cas.org)