



**TAS / CAS**  
TRIBUNAL ARBITRAL DU SPORT  
COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT  
TRIBUNAL ARBITRAL DEL DEPORTE

## MEDIA RELEASE

### WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES MILANO CORTINA 2026 SKELETON

#### THE CAS AD HOC DIVISION DENIES APPLICATION BY VLADYSLAV HERASKEVYCH (UKRAINE) AND FINDS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION GUARANTEED AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES, BUT NOT ON THE FIELD OF PLAY

*Milan, 13 February 2026* – The CAS Ad hoc Division has denied an application by Skeleton athlete Vladyslav Heraskevych (Ukraine) against the International Bobsleigh & Skeleton Federation (IBSF) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The Sole Arbitrator, whilst fully sympathetic to Mr Heraskevych's commemoration, is bound by rules in the IOC Athlete Expression Guidelines. The Sole Arbitrator considers these Guidelines provide a reasonable balance between athletes' interests to express their views, and athletes' interests to receive undivided attention for their sporting performance on the field of play.

The application challenged the IBSF Jury Decision to withdraw the Athlete from the Men's Skeleton event with immediate effect from the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 (2026 OWG). The IBSF decision stated that Mr Heraskevych intended to wear in competition a helmet displaying portraits of Ukrainian athletes who lost their lives in the war, which was considered as being inconsistent with the Olympic Charter and Guidelines on Athlete Expression. The IBSF decision was rendered in execution of an IOC decision of 10 February 2026, stating a violation of the Olympic Charter, which was not challenged in this application and remains in force.

The Sole Arbitrator appointed for this matter wished to state that she is fully sympathetic to Mr Heraskevych's commemoration and to his attempt to raise awareness for the grief and devastation suffered by the Ukrainian people, and Ukrainian athletes because of the war. She heard the arguments and examined the Athlete Expression Guidelines, which state that freedom of speech is a fundamental right of any athlete competing in the Olympic Games, but limit the right to express views during competitions on the field of play. The Sole Arbitrator found these limitations reasonable and proportionate, considering the other opportunities for athletes to raise awareness (in mixed zones, in press conferences, on social networks, or in Mr Heraskevych's case, wearing the helmet during four training runs). The Sole Arbitrator notes that the goal of this is to maintain the focus of the Olympic Games on performances and sport, a common interest of all athletes, who have worked for years to appear in the Olympic Games, and who deserve undivided attention for their sporting performances and sporting success.

The Sole Arbitrator is bound by such proportionate rules and has no means to override them. As a consequence, the application was dismissed.

The Sole Arbitrator adds that it was unfair to withdraw Mr Heraskevych's accreditation in these circumstances and supports the decision of the IOC to return it.

#### **Procedural timeline**

- 10 February 2026: IOC decision stating the violation of the Olympic Charter
- 10 February 2026: Statement of the athlete that he will compete with his helmet.



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- 12 February 2026: IBSF decision to withdraw the athlete from the starting list for the Men's skeleton event of the same day.
- Application to CAS and request for provisional measures filed at 16:30 on 12 February 2026.
- Mr Heraskevych's application requested the annulment of the IBSF Jury decision and, by way of provisional measures, that CAS reinstates him in the 2026 OWG with immediate effect, or in the alternative, that the athlete performs a CAS supervised official run pending the final decision.
- The request for Provisional Measures was denied at 00:15 on 13 February 2026, until the case was heard.
- A CAS Ad hoc Division hearing took place in Milan at 09:00 and concluded at 11:55. The athlete attended with his father in person.
- CAS final decision issued on 13 February at 17:00. The CAS procedure lasted just over 24 hours.

This is an unofficial summary for media use. A decision with grounds will follow and for legal purposes, only the wording used in the written decision is binding.