

CAS 2025/A/11569 WADA v. International Canoe Federation & Yoana Georgieva
CAS 2025/A/11812 International Canoe Federation v. Yoana Georgieva

ARBITRAL AWARD

delivered by the

COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

sitting in the following composition:

President: Mr. Romano **Subiotto KC**, Solicitor-Advocate in London, UK
Arbitrators: Ms. Marianne **Saroli**, Attorney-at-law in Montreal, Canada
Mr. Patrick **Lafranchi**, Attorney-at-law in Bern, Switzerland

in the consolidated arbitration proceedings between

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), Lausanne, Switzerland

Represented by Messrs. Nicolas Zbinden and David Baker, Attorneys-at-law with Kellerhals Carrard, Lausanne, Switzerland, and Mr. Ross Wenzel, WADA General Counsel

Appellant in CAS 2025/A/11569

and

International Canoe Federation (ICF), Lausanne, Switzerland

Represented by Ms. Ayesha Talpade, Ms. Charlotte Frey and Mr. Anton Sotir, Attorneys-at-law, International Testing Agency, Lausanne, Switzerland

Appellant in CAS 2025/A/11812
First Respondent in CAS 2025/A/11569

Yoana Georgieva, Sofia, Bulgaria

Represented by Dr. Boris Kolev and Ms. Elena Todorovska, Attorneys-at-law with Kolev Todorovska Law Firm, Sofia, Bulgaria

Respondent in CAS 2025/A/11812
Second Respondent in CAS 2025/A/11569

I. PARTIES

1. The World Anti-Doping Agency (“WADA”) is a Swiss private law foundation co-founded by the governments of over 140 nations along with the International Olympic Committee. Its legal seat is in Lausanne, Switzerland, and its headquarters are in Montreal, Canada. WADA was created in 1999 to promote, coordinate and monitor at international level the fight against doping in sport in all its forms. It does this on the basis of the World Anti-Doping Code (the “WADC”).
2. The International Canoe Federation (the “ICF”) is the world governing body for the multidiscipline canoeing and kayaking sports. The ICF conducts its fight against doping on the basis of its Anti-Doping Rules, which incorporate the WADC (the “ICF ADR”). The ICF has delegated the implementation of its anti-doping programme to the International Testing Agency (the “ITA”), which is a not-for-profit foundation tasked by International Federations and Major Event Organizers to deliver independent anti-doping programmes on their behalf. Pursuant to this delegation, the ICF is represented by the ITA in these proceedings.
3. Ms. Yoana Georgieva is an elite athlete from Bulgaria who has been competing in international-level canoe events since 2018 (the “Athlete” or “Ms. Georgieva”).

II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

A. Background Facts

4. Below is a summary of the relevant facts and allegations based on the Parties’ written and oral submissions, pleadings and evidence adduced. Additional facts and allegations found in the Parties’ written submissions, pleadings and evidence may be set out, where relevant, in connection with the legal discussion that follows. While the Panel has considered all the facts, allegations, legal arguments and evidence submitted by the parties in the present proceedings, it refers in its Award only to the submissions and evidence it considers necessary to explain its reasoning.
5. WADA and the ICF appeal a decision, whose operative part was rendered on 15 July 2024 and reasoned part on 23 May 2025 by a single judge (the “Single Judge”) of the Court of Arbitration for Sport Anti-Doping Division (“CAS ADD”), who rejected the ICF’s charges that the Athlete committed two anti-doping rule violations (“ADRVs”): evasion pursuant to Article 2.3 of the ICF ADR and tampering pursuant to Article 2.5 of the ICF ADR (the “Appealed Decision”). In particular, the Single Judge found that the doping control personnel had failed to sufficiently confirm the identity of the Athlete and that “[it] is a fundamental requirement and the whole testing process is premised upon having the right athlete identified to provide the Sample. That was not achieved in this case.”
6. The Athlete was included in the ICF Registered Testing Pool (“RTP”) at the time of the said alleged ADRV. The Athlete was therefore required, *inter alia*, to file her whereabouts information each quarter, update the whereabouts information when necessary, be available for unannounced out-of-competition testing at the location in

her whereabouts filings at any time and at any place, and provide a daily 60-minute time slot when she would be available for unannounced testing during a full hour.

7. The Athlete had indicated on her whereabouts filing in the Anti-Doping Administration and Management System (“ADAMS”) that her daily 60-minute time slot for 15 December 2023 was from 19:30 to 20:30 at “*Selo Enchev, yazovir Kardzhali, Kardzhali, Kărdžali, Bulgaria*” (the “Training Camp”). The Athlete also indicated that her overnight accommodation and regular daily address for 15 December 2023 was at the Training Camp.
8. On 15 December 2023, at approximately 19:30, a Doping Control Officer, Mr. Nikolay Kostadinov (the “DCO”), and a Blood Control Officer, Ms. Valentina Florova (the “BCO”), both mandated by the ITA on behalf of the ICF went to the Training Camp to collect a sample from the Athlete during her designated one-hour time slot for that day.
9. The DCO and BCO headed towards an apartment (“Apartment A”) on the second floor of a two-story building (“Building 3”), as they indicated that it was the first apartment they saw with the lights on.
10. WADA and the ICF, on the one hand, and the Athlete, on the other hand, see the events that took place at the Training Camp on the evening of 15 December 2023 differently.
 - a. **WADA and the ICF’s version of events**
11. According to WADA, supported by the ICF, the DCO knocked on the door of Apartment A and a woman, Ms. Pamela Ivanova, answered. The DCO asked for the Athlete by her full name. Ms. Ivanova called out to the Athlete, and a woman subsequently came to the door. A male athlete, Mr. Angel Stoyanov, was also present.
12. At approximately 19:36, the woman who had come to the door confirmed her name as Yoana Georgieva. The DCO identified himself, showed her his accreditation and explained that he and the BCO were there to conduct an out-of-competition anti-doping test. The Athlete acknowledged the DCO, agreed to the test and explained that she wanted to inform her coach. The conversation took place in Bulgarian.
13. In accordance with Article 5.4.1(d)(i) of the WADA International Standard for Testing and Investigations (“ISTI”), the DCO permitted the Athlete to leave the room and find her coach.
14. According to WADA, supported by the ICF, the Athlete was wearing sports bottoms and a bright coloured top, and put on a large dark hooded jacket and a pair of pink sliders prior to exiting the apartment. She then left the apartment and walked down the stairs from the second floor to the ground floor, ahead of the DCO and BCO who were following her to ensure continuous chaperon. Once she reached the bottom of the stairs, she entered another building (“Building X”) and did not emerge.
15. A man emerged shortly afterwards from Building X. He introduced himself as the Head Coach of the team, Mr. Tsvetan Ivanov (the “Coach”).

16. The DCO explained to the Coach that he had come to conduct an anti-doping test on the Athlete. The Coach told the DCO and BCO that the Athlete was not at the Training Camp and that she had gone to take exams in Sofia and must have forgotten to change her whereabouts. The Coach then left the DCO and BCO, walked to Apartment A, where he spent approximately five minutes. The lights were switched off when he left.
17. In the meantime, another man emerged from Building X. He identified himself as the manager of the Training Camp without giving his name (the “Manager”). The DCO identified himself and explained the situation. The Manager stated that the Athlete was not at the Training Camp, and repeatedly told the DCO and BCO to move away from the building and go to the nearby restaurant. The DCO and BCO refused.
18. At 19:59, the DCO began to message his mission manager, Mr. Sharapov of Clearidium, a worldwide Sample Collection Authority, to explain what was happening. The DCO wrote that “[t]hey hide her”, that “*I spoke with her, she told me just to go to inform the coach*”, and that the woman “[w]ent fast into another building and all the people are telling me she is not here”.
19. At that point, the Coach returned and asserted that the Athlete was not in Apartment A.
20. The DCO stated that he believed that the woman he had encountered was the Athlete, as he had already spoken with her and informed her she had been selected for an out-of-competition test. The Coach told the DCO that there must have been a mistake, and that the DCO had probably spoken with another female athlete who had the same first name as the Athlete but the surname “*Bachvarova*”.
21. The DCO asked whether the Coach could bring Ms. Yoana Bachvarova to him. The Coach said that he would call Ms. Bachvarova and proceeded to make a telephone call in Bulgarian, using the words “*where are you*” and asking whoever was on the other end to return to the Training Camp. The Coach then explained that Ms. Bachvarova was in the nearby city and would return in 15-20 minutes. This took place at approximately 20:00.
22. The DCO and BCO then agreed to the repeated requests from the Manager and Coach and went to the nearby restaurant, while the BCO kept watch on Building X into which the Athlete had gone. Upon a recommendation from his manager, the DCO then began to complete a Supplementary Report Form for the Coach to sign. However, the Coach refused to sign it after having had the form explained to him in Bulgarian.
23. According to WADA, supported by the ICF, the BCO saw a woman exiting Building X, which the Athlete had entered, wearing sportswear and a hoodie consistent with the clothing worn by the Athlete at Apartment A earlier that evening. She walked towards Building 3 in which Apartment A was located. The BCO began to follow her. The woman said hello when she was on the second floor, but the BCO could not identify her as the lights had been switched off. The BCO then returned to the restaurant.
24. Ms. Bachvarova then appeared at the Training Camp at approximately 20:47. According to the DCO and BCO, her clothes were “*completely different from [the Athlete]*” whereas the Athlete “*was wearing casual sportswear, slippers and a hoodie*”. The DCO

similarly stated that Ms. Bachvarova “*was not the same woman that I notified earlier*” and that “*she was wearing darker clothes with black bottoms, and shoes not slippers*”.

25. Ms. Bachvarova produced her identity card to the DCO and stated that after the team dinner, which she said ended at approximately 19:30, she had gone to the city to meet friends at a café. Ms. Bachvarova signed a Supplementary Report Form, stating in her own words: “*After dinner which was around 19:30 I went to café art. After I sat down my coach called me to get to our base – Grebna baza Kardzhali. An athlete my name is Yoana Bachvarova.*”
26. According to WADA, supported by the ICF, when the BCO went to take photographs of the various sites within the Training Camp, she observed that the lights in Apartment A were back on. The BCO also saw the same pink slippers/sliders that the woman had been wearing when she first left Apartment A with the DCO and BCO earlier that evening. The slippers/sliders were “*just to the left of the door*” to the apartment.
27. The DCO and BCO completed the remaining testing of the male athletes at the Training Camp and departed. Both completed Supplementary Report Forms detailing the events that had taken place. On 18 December 2023, the DCO completed an Unsuccessful Attempt Form and transferred the relevant documentation to Clearidium and the ITA.

b. The Athlete’s version of events

28. The Athlete contends that she was not present at the Training Camp on 15 December 2023. She states that on 14 December 2023, she attended an awards ceremony in Sofia. On 15 December 2023, she travelled to the University of Plovdiv to meet with her university teacher, A., to conduct consultations on various subjects and check exam dates. Due to extremely bad weather and warnings not to travel, she was unable to return to the Training Camp and stayed the night at her sister’s home in Plovdiv. The Athlete states that she forgot to update her whereabouts in ADAMS due to the excitement following the award she had received, and that she had no reason to evade doping control, having already been tested four times in December 2023.
29. The Athlete contends that the DCO did not ask Ms. Ivanova, who had opened the door, whether she was Ms. Yoana Georgieva by her full name but only asked if she was “*Yoana*”, or alternatively that only the first name “*Yoana*” was heard by those inside the apartment. The Athlete contends that as a result of the DCO calling out only the first name “*Yoana*”, Ms Ivanova called Ms. Yoana Bachvarova (who resided in Apartment A and shares that first name) to the door, and that it was Ms. Bachvarova, not the Athlete, who dealt with the DCO and BCO throughout the evening.

B. The charge

30. On 7 February 2024, the ICF, represented by the ITA, informed the Athlete that her conduct during the sample collection on 15 December 2023 could amount to an ADRV under Article 2.3 and/or 2.5 of the ICF ADR and invited her to provide her written explanations (the “Notification Letter”).

31. On 9 February 2024, the Athlete provided her response to the Notification Letter denying the commission of any ADRV (the “First Explanations”). The Athlete asserted that on 14 December 2023, she attended an awards ceremony in Sofia and that, on 15 December 2023, she was at the university of Plovdiv where she had to conduct consultations on various subjects and check exam dates and was unable to travel back to the Training Camp (her whereabouts location for 15 December 2023) due to extremely bad weather and warnings not to travel. The Athlete stated that she had forgotten to change her whereabouts information due to the euphoria and excitement from the award received and had no reason to hide from the doping control as she had been tested four times in December 2023 already.
32. On 17 April 2024, the ICF, via the ITA, charged the Athlete with ADRVs pursuant to Articles 2.3 and/or 2.5 of the ICF ADR (the “Notice of Charge”).
33. On 19 April 2024, the Bulgarian Canoe Federation (“BCF”) sent a letter to the ITA *inter alia* to “analyse and clarify the situation that arose on 15.12.2023. in the town of Kardzhali, during a training camp, where the athlete Yoana Georgieva was not found for testing by the ITA”. In summary, the BCF reiterated the First Explanations of Ms. Georgieva namely that on 14 December 2023 she was at an awards ceremony in Sofia and on 15 December 2023 she was in Plovdiv to visit her university and was unable to return to the Training Camp due to bad weather. The BCF also requested the ITA to “reconsider its decision” and stated that this was the first time the Athlete “had not reflected a change in location and missed testing.”
34. On 2 May 2024, the Athlete repeated that she was not at the Training Camp on 15 December 2023 or had not committed an ADRV. The Athlete reiterated that she had an appointment at the University of Plovdiv on 15 December 2023, that the weather turned bad and she spent the night in her sister’s house in Plovdiv. Further, the Athlete explained that she did not know why her coach said that she was in Sofia and that she had no reason to hide from doping control personnel and that she had been tested four times in December 2023 alone. She provided a statement from her sister confirming that she was in Plovdiv on 15 December 2023, and an undated photograph of her receiving an award.
35. On 30 May 2024, the ICF, via the ITA, informed the Athlete that, after review of her two replies, the ICF maintained that she had committed ADRVs under Article 2.3 and/or Article 2.5 of the ICF ADR. The ICF stated that the matter would be referred to the CAS ADD for adjudication and that it would be up to the CAS ADD to rule on the Athlete’s ADRVs and ensuing consequences.
36. On 10 June 2024, the ICF, via the ITA, imposed on the Athlete a provisional suspension pursuant to Article 7.4.2 of the ICF ADR. The ICF made the Athlete aware that by virtue of the provisional suspension the Athlete was not permitted to participate in any competition (at either international or national level) or any activity, until the resolution of the matter.

C. Proceedings before the Court of Arbitration for Sport Anti-Doping Division

37. On 10 June 2024, the ICF, via the ITA, submitted to the CAS ADD its Request for Disciplinary Proceedings under Article 8.1 of the ICF ADR (the “Request”) and in accordance with Rule A13 of the Arbitration Rules – CAS Anti-Doping Division (“CAS ADD Rules”). Further, the ITA noted that the Athlete was scheduled to compete at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games (the “Paris Games”) starting on 26 July 2024, and requested, pursuant to A19.5 of the CAS ADD Rules, that the proceedings be dealt with in an expedited manner with a view to obtain the award (or at least the operative award) before 15 July 2024.
38. On 11 June 2024, the CAS ADD Office notified the Athlete of the Request and the request for the proceedings to be expedited and requested the Athlete to confirm by 13 June 2024 whether she agreed with the ICF’s request for expedition together with other details regarding the proceedings.
39. On 13 June 2024, the Athlete confirmed her agreement with the proceedings progressing on an expedited basis in accordance with Article A19.5 of the CAS ADD Rules and a decision being rendered by no later than 15 July 2024.
40. On 20 June 2024, the CAS ADD Office informed the Parties that pursuant to Article A16 and A17 of the CAS ADD Rules, on behalf of the President of the CAS ADD, Ms. Susan Ahern SC had been appointed as the Single Judge (the “Single Judge”).
41. On 1 July 2024, the Athlete’s Answer was filed and provided by the CAS ADD Office to the ICF. The ICF was invited to file its Rejoinder by 4 July 2024.
42. On 9 July 2024 (after a series of intermediary procedural steps), the ICF, via the ITA, wrote to the CAS ADD Office to confirm that it would not be filing a Reply to the Answer filed by the Athlete on 1 July 2024, but reserved its right to address all allegations raised by the Athlete directly at the hearing. It also requested receipt of the witness statements of the Athlete’s five witnesses.
43. On 10 July 2024, the witness statements of the Athlete’s witnesses were provided.
44. On 12 July 2024, a video hearing was held in which both Parties participated.
45. On 15 July 2024, the Single Judge issued the operative part of her decision dismissing the Request and finding the Athlete not guilty of an ADRV pursuant to Articles 2.3 and/or 2.5 of the ICF ADR (the “Operative Decision”).
46. On 23 May 2025, the Single Judge rendered the reasoned Appealed Decision.

III. PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

47. On 3 July 2025, WADA filed its Statement of Appeal in accordance with Article R47 of the Code of Sports-related Arbitration (the “Code”).

48. On 8 July 2025, the CAS Court Office confirmed receipt of WADA's Statement of Appeal, filed on 3 July 2025, challenging the Appealed Decision issued on 23 May 2025, which was registered under reference *CAS 2025/A/11569 WADA v. ICF & Yoana Georgieva*. In its Statement of Appeal, WADA nominated Ms. Marianne Saroli, Attorney-at-Law in Montreal, Canada, as arbitrator. The CAS Court Office further invited the ICF and the Athlete to jointly nominate an arbitrator from the CAS list within ten days, pursuant to Article R53 of the Code, failing which the President of the CAS Appeals Arbitration Division, or her Deputy, would appoint an arbitrator in their stead.
49. On 14 August 2025, following an agreed-upon extension of time, WADA filed its Appeal Brief, in accordance with Article R51 of the Code.
50. On 3 October 2025, following an agreed-upon extension of time, the ICF filed its Answer to the Appeal Brief and its Cross-Appeal, which was registered under reference *CAS 2025/A/11812 International Canoe Federation v. Yoana Georgieva*.
51. On 6 October 2025, following an agreed-upon extension of time, Ms. Georgieva filed her Answer to the Appeal.
52. On 7 October 2025, the ICF's Cross-Appeal was consolidated with WADA's Appeal.
53. On 21 October 2025, following exchanges and an agreed-upon extension of time, the CAS Court Office acknowledged the nomination of Mr. Patrick Lafranchi, Attorney-at-law in Bern, Switzerland, as arbitrator.
54. On 6 November 2025, Ms. Georgieva filed her Answer to the ICF's Cross-Appeal, in which she, *inter alia*, raised objections as to the admissibility of the Cross-Appeal and the CAS's lack of jurisdiction to review it.
55. On 18 November 2025, WADA filed a request for document production directed at Ms. Georgieva.
56. On 26 November 2025, the ICF filed its position on the objections raised by Ms. Georgieva concerning the inadmissibility of the Cross-Appeal and CAS's lack of jurisdiction to review the Cross-Appeal.
57. On 27 November 2025, the CAS Court Office informed the Parties, on behalf of the President of the CAS Appeals Arbitration Division and in accordance with Article R54 of the Code, that the Panel appointed to adjudicate the present case was constituted as follows:

President: Mr. Romano Subiotto KC, Solicitor-Advocate in London, UK

Arbitrators: Ms. Marianne Saroli, Attorney-at-law in Montreal, Canada

Mr. Patrick Lafranchi, Attorney-at-law in Bern, Switzerland
58. On 1 December 2025, the Athlete filed her position with respect to WADA's request for document production.

59. On 18 December 2025, the CAS Court Office informed the Parties that the Panel had decided to hold a hearing in Lausanne and that it would rule in the Award with respect to its jurisdiction over and the admissibility of the ICF's Cross-Appeal, and requested that Ms. Bachvarova, her witnesses at first instance, her former boyfriend, and the Manager be made available for cross-examination. Concerning the Athlete's request of 5 December 2025 for the transcripts of the proceedings before the CAS ADD, the Panel advised her to ask the CAS ADD for the recording of the hearing, on the basis of which she may produce transcripts for submission in the present proceedings. Concerning the admission of the testimony of WADA's confidential witnesses requested by WADA in its Appeal, the Panel ruled that the redacted witness statements submitted with WADA's Appeal Brief in respect of each Confidential Witness be admitted to the record; Confidential Witnesses 1-3 be allowed to testify anonymously; Any questions for cross-examination of the Confidential Witnesses be reviewed and approved by the Panel prior to the date of the hearing; Prior to their giving evidence at the hearing, the identity of each confidential witness be confirmed (either in person or via video link) by the Panel and a CAS Counsel; Any questions posed during the hearing, which were not included on the list of questions just described above, not be translated into Bulgarian and/or put to the Confidential Witnesses unless and until the Panel approved the relevant question; If giving evidence remotely via video link, the Confidential Witnesses be permitted to give evidence without having their cameras switched on, and with the aid of a voice scrambler, if necessary. Concerning WADA's request of 18 November 2025 that the Athlete produce relevant documents, the Panel noted the Athlete's position communicated on 1 December 2025 that she was willing to provide full assistance, but that she could not be held responsible to produce documents, which would require the assistance of third parties and that some of the requested documents may have become unavailable for objective reasons, and requested that the Athlete produce all documentation and information requested by WADA, or to provide explanations, separately for each category of documents or information sought, as to why such production would not be possible, at least two weeks prior to the hearing.
60. On 5 February 2026, the CAS Court Office notified the Parties that the hearing would take place in Lausanne on 31 March and reiterated the Panel's prior order concerning WADA's confidential witnesses and the document production request directed at the Athlete.
61. On 13 February 2026, the Parties requested that the duration of the hearing be extended to two days.
62. On 20 February 2026, the CAS Court Office granted this request.
63. On 26 February 2026, the CAS Court Office informed the Parties that the Athlete had filed an application for legal aid.
64. On 27 February 2026, the CAS Court Office received the signed Order of Procedure from WADA and the ICF, and a draft jointly agreed hearing schedule.
65. On 4 March 2026, the CAS Court Office received the signed Order of Procedure from the Athlete.

66. On 5 March 2026, the Panel clarified and directed that Ms. Yoana Bachvarova was required to testify in person at the hearing scheduled for 31 March and 1 April, that the Athlete's physical presence was also required, and that WADA indicate which witnesses would attend in person or remotely.
67. On 17 March 2026, the Athlete provided documents in response to WADA's request for production, addressed the requests for production of documents from Ms. Bachvarova and the Athlete's call logs, providing explanations as to why those documents are not within Ms. Georgieva's control, reported on their efforts to obtain a transcript of the CAS ADD hearing recording, and requested the Panel's leave to submit the recordings as video files, or alternatively, additional time to provide them in transcribed form.
68. On 18 March 2026, WADA provided a revised draft hearing schedule.
69. On 23 March 2026, WADA requested that four newly produced documents be added to the record, namely Yoana Georgieva's Bank Accounts - December 2023, Gergana Georgieva's Bank Accounts - December 2023, Chats extracted from Yoana Georgieva's phone, and a translation of chats extracted from Yoana Georgieva's phone, and raised a number of concerns regarding the Athlete's compliance with the Panel's document production order, including: incomplete bank statements and not original copies; gaps and untranslated messages in the chat logs, questions as to the correct sequence of the messages, and correct attribution of certain chats; absence of any communications with A. without express confirmation that none exist; and failure to produce any documents from Ms. Bachvarova or adequate explanation for such failure.
70. On the same day, the ICF observed that the Athlete had failed to comply, either in full or in part, with a number of the document requests filed by WADA in its letter of 18 November 2025, and reserved its right to comment at the hearing on the implications of the Athlete's non-compliance with the document production and its impact on the Athlete's burden of proof. The ICF agreed to WADA's proposed modifications to the tentative hearing schedule.
71. On 24 March 2026, WADA confirmed that one Confidential Witness would no longer be available and that it would circulate a revised timetable, reported that no technically feasible solution had been found to modulate the Confidential Witnesses' voices, and proposed a protocol whereby witnesses would identify themselves to the Panel with cameras and microphones on, after which their testimony would be relayed orally through WADA's translator via a private telephone line, such that the witnesses' voices would not be audible to the hearing room.
72. On 25 March 2026, the CAS Court Office confirmed that the confidential Order on the Athlete's application for legal aid had been rendered on the same day by the Athletes' Commission of the International Council of Arbitration for Sport.
73. On the same day, the Athlete submitted transcripts of the recording of the proceedings before the CAS ADD and confirmed that she had no objections to the revised draft hearing schedule.

74. On the same day, the ICF repeated that the Athlete had failed to comply in full or in part with WADA's document request, confirmed that it considered WADA's request for additional documents and information from the Athlete to be reasonable and raised no objection to it, and agreed that all document produced by the Athlete on 17 March 2026 should be added to the case file. The ICF further confirmed that it had no objection to WADA's suggested protocol for the examination of confidential witnesses.
75. On 26 March 2026, the Athlete informed the CAS Court Office that Ms. Yoana Bachvarova and her former boyfriend would not be available to testify at the hearing, whether in person or remotely, proposed a further amendment of the hearing schedule, and submitted the original Bulgarian bank statements, an updated translation of Ms. Georgieva's chat communications, a declaration signed by the Athlete confirming the information requested by WADA, suggesting to provide an interpretation of the bank statement entries and to clarify the sequence of the chat messages at the hearing. The Athlete did not comment on WADA's proposed protocol for the examination of confidential witnesses.
76. On the same day, WADA submitted a revised draft hearing schedule, and informed the CAS Court Office that Confidential Witness 3 would be unavailable to testify and that Confidential Witness 2 would not be available on 31 March but may be available on 1 April 2026.
77. On the same day, WADA noted that the Athlete had asserted in her Answer that she had withdrawn cash sufficient to last a number of days for fuel, food and drink and the Athlete's other needs and that such was shown by the bank statements, but WADA objected to the Athlete's document production. First, as regards the Athlete's bank statements, WADA pointed out that it requested that the Athlete confirm which transactions from which bank account she asserted represent the cash withdrawals to which she referred in her Answer, but the Athlete explained that she had provided full and clean bank statements covering the full month of December 2023 to assist the Panel and the other parties understand and check by themselves how the relevant transactions and their dates as well as the cash withdrawals were recorded in the statements, adding that she was not a bank expert able to provide authentic interpretation of the entries and how they were made, and suggesting that any doubts could be discussed at the hearing. WADA noted that, at the time, the Athlete appeared able to identify those transactions, but was now refusing to provide this information ahead of the hearing.
78. WADA also objected to the Athlete's production of the requested chats. On 23 March 2026, WADA had pointed out that there was at least one instance of what appears to be 'cut off' messages and/or a gap between messages that was not fully set out in the screenshots produced by the Athlete and that it was not clear whether the messages sent by the Athlete's mother at 15:33 on 15 December 2023 directly preceded the Athlete's subsequent messages sent at 22:43 on 15 December 2023. WADA requested the Athlete reproduce updated screenshots showing the full sequencing of messaging. WADA objected that the Athlete had refused to do so, suggesting that it would clarify the sequence of the messages and dates at the hearing. Furthermore, WADA objected that the Athlete had failed to answer WADA objections in its email of 23 March 2026 resulting from its observation that the chat between the Athlete and her mother/sister

was cut-off at 15 December 2023. WADA also requested that the Athlete produce messages from the group chat with her mother/sister for 16 December 2023, since it was clear from the materials already disclosed that clearly relevant communication were also shared on 16 December 2023 addressing the Athlete's case that she stayed with her sister on the night of 15 December 2023 and only departed Plovdiv on 16 December 2023. WADA also noted that the Athlete produced a number of chats outside the 13-15 December 2023 range, for example her chat with Mr. Stoyanov on Viber containing messages from 5 November 2023 only, and her chat with Mr. Stoyanov on WhatsApp containing messages from 11 December and 18 December, and her chat with Mr. Stoyanov on Instagram containing messages from September 2022, May 2023 and December 2024, and her chat with Ms. Ivanova on Viber containing messages from November 2023, and January 2024.

79. On the same day, the CAS Court Office acknowledged the Athlete's communication that Ms. Bachvarova and her then boyfriend would be unavailable to testify at the hearing, and that the Athlete had no comments on WADA's proposed protocol to hear its Confidential Witnesses. The CAS Court Office also acknowledged WADA's communication that Confidential Witness 2 and 3 would be unavailable to testify at the hearing. Finally, the CAS Court Office recalled that the hearing dates were confirmed on 5 February 2026, that the attendance of Ms. Bachvarova was ordered on 18 December 2025, and insisted that she attend the hearing, ordered each Party to submit an updated list of attendees, specifying their contact details and whether they would be attending in person or remotely by 26 March 2026, and convened a Case Management Conference for 27 March 2026.
80. On the same day, the ICF reserved the right to comment at the hearing on the Athlete's non-compliance with the document production order and its implications for the Athlete's burden of proof, and raised no objection to the hearing schedule modifications proposed by WADA.
81. On 27 March 2026, the Panel held a Case Management Conference to ensure that there were no objections to the protocol proposed by WADA to hear its Confidential Witnesses, which was confirmed, and to discuss WADA's outstanding document production request, namely the completion of the chats, inclusion of 16 December chats and explanation of which entries in the bank statements represented cash withdrawals, which the Athlete did, and a revised hearing schedule as a result of the unavailability of a number of witnesses that had been ordered or expected to attend.
82. On the same day, the CAS Court Office asked the Parties to submit a revised jointly agreed hearing schedule, the Athlete to produce any outstanding relevant documents, as agreed between the Parties, and WADA to confirm its consent to the admission of the recording of CAS ADD hearing by 30 March 2026.
83. On 28 and 29 March 2026, the Athlete submitted the messages requested by WADA in the form of a video file recording the scrolling made by the Athlete of her group chat with her mother and sister during the relevant period, as well as a translation.

84. On 30 March 2026, WADA informed the CAS Court Office that it had not received any relevant documents, as agreed between the Parties, as directed by the Panel on 27 March 2026, referring to the documents WADA requested in its communication of 23 March 2026, and requested that the Panel again direct the Athlete to provide them. WADA confirmed at the hearing that this request was no longer outstanding.
85. On the same date, WADA submitted two versions of a revised hearing schedule, depending on whether Ms. Bachvarova and her former boyfriend would be available to testify, objected to the Athlete's suggestion that any time made available by their absence be used to listen to the recordings of Ms. Bachvarova testimony before the CAS ADD because WADA submits that these recordings and transcripts are of no evidential value absent witness testimony in these proceedings, not least because WADA would have no opportunity to cross examine Ms. Bachvarova. WADA also indicated that it was not opposed to the admission of the recording and transcripts of the first instance hearing into the record, but WADA submitted that they were devoid of any evidential value and could not replace live witness evidence in these proceedings.
86. On the same date, the ICF indicated that it did not object to the admission of the recording and transcripts of the first instance proceedings into the record, stressing that they carried very little evidentiary weight as they could not substitute the examination of witnesses in these proceedings particularly in view of the *de novo* nature of these proceedings. The ICF also requested the inclusion in the record of two new documents, namely excerpts of a Viber exchange between the DCO and the BCO of 15 December 2023, which were not previously accessible and whose existence only came to light during recent pre-hearing discussions with the witnesses.
87. The Athlete replied on the same date indicating that she did not object to their inclusion, and requested the inclusion in the record of a transcript of a communication of ITA with Ms. Bachvarova between 21 February 2024 and 11 April 2024, a video of the messages between Ms. Georgieva and Ms. Bachvarova showing how the said correspondence was forwarded to her, and a video from the surveillance camera at the training camp recorded on 11 February 2026. WADA and the ICF did not object to their inclusion at the hearing.
88. On 31 March and 1 April 2026, a hearing was held at the headquarters of the CAS in Lausanne, Switzerland. In addition to the members of the Panel and Mr. Francisco Mateo Pavia, CAS Counsel, the following persons attended the hearing:
89. For WADA:
- Mr. Nicolas Zbinden, Counsel [in person]
 - Mr. David Baker, Counsel [in person]
 - Mr. Ross Wenzel, Counsel [in person]
 - Mr. Cyril Troussard, Counsel [in person]
 - Mr. Nikolay Kostadinov, Witness [by videoconference]
 - Ms. Valentina Florova, Witness [by videoconference]
 - Ms. Olympia Dusheva, Witness [by videoconference]
 - Ms. Ognyana Dusheva, Witness [by videoconference]
 - Confidential Witness 1 [by videoconference]
 - Ms. Nevena Walcheva, Interpreter [by videoconference]

For the ICF: Mr. Anton Sotir, Counsel [in person]
Ms. Cynthia Chen, Counsel [in person]

For the Athlete: Ms. Yoana Georgieva, the Athlete [in person]
Mr. Boris Kolev, Counsel [in person]
Ms. Elena Todorovska, Counsel [in person]
Ms. Zlatka Chervenкова, Interpreter [in person]
Ms. Pamela Ivanova [by videoconference]
Mr. Angel Stoyanov [by videoconference]
Mr. Tzvetan Tzvetanov [by videoconference]
Mr. Nikolay Cholakov [by videoconference]

90. The Panel heard evidence from the Athlete and the above-mentioned Witnesses. They were all instructed by the President of the Panel to tell the truth. The Parties and the Panel had full opportunity to examine and cross-examine the Athlete and the Witnesses.

The Parties were given full opportunity to present their cases, submit their arguments and answer the questions posed by the Panel.

At the outset of the hearing, the Parties confirmed that they had no objections as to the constitution of the Panel or to the procedure adopted up to that point, and confirmed, at the end of the hearing, that their right to be heard and to a fair hearing had been fully respected in the proceedings to date. Furthermore, all witnesses were invited to tell the truth subject to sanctions of perjury under Swiss law.

IV. SUBMISSIONS OF THE PARTIES

A. WADA

91. In its Appeal, WADA submits that a proper assessment of the evidence indicates that the Athlete evaded doping control by disappearing after being notified by the DCO, thereby committing an ADRV, namely evasion pursuant to Article 2.3 of the ICF ADR, and then lying about what she had done (and procuring that others lie on her behalf), thereby committing another ADRV, namely tampering pursuant to Article 2.5 of the ICF ADR. WADA submits that the ineligibility period pursuant to Article 10.3.1 of the ICF ADR should be four years, which should be increased to six years pursuant to Article 10.4 of the ICF ADR because of “*aggravating circumstances*” resulting from the Athlete’s commission of multiple ADRVs, and deliberately deceptive attitude resulting from her absconding and continued lie as to her whereabouts on the evening of 15 December 2023 and her reliance on witnesses to perpetuate this lie. Pursuant to Article 10.13 of the ICF ADR, this ineligibility period should start from the date of the Award with credit given for the period of provisional suspension served by the Athlete, provided that it has been effectively served. WADA further submits that the Athlete’s competitive results should be disqualified pursuant to Article 10.10 of the ICF ADR as from 15 December 2023.
92. With respect to Article 2.3 of the ICF ADR, WADA submits that a case of evasion is established if the athlete was aware that an anti-doping organisation wanted to conduct

a test on them, and took steps that were intended to avoid being tested, and that it is not necessary to prove that the athlete was given formal notice that they were required to provide a sample, or that the athlete had a reason why they wanted to evade sample collection.

93. WADA submits that the key features of evasion are that the athlete either ensures that they never come into contact with a doping control officer or removes themselves from the presence of a doping control officer once they have been confronted by the same.
94. WADA explains that the key distinction between evasion and a refusal (or a failure to submit) is that evasion does not require the athlete to have been formally notified of the requirement to provide a sample as authorised by the applicable anti-doping rules (in this case, the ICF ADR). The athlete merely needs, or ought, to be aware that a doping control officer is present to test them, and fails to provide the sample and absconds. The athlete cannot, in any case, say that they intended to take the doping test at some later point or that they did in fact do so.
95. With respect to Article 2.5 of the ICF ADR, WADA recalls that the ICF ADR defines tampering as any intentional conduct that subverts any part of the doping control process and which does not fall within the definition of prohibited methods.
96. As for aggravating circumstances, WADA recalls that they have been found to exist, for example, where an athlete submits false testimony (including from the athlete themselves or third parties, including family members) to deliberately mislead a panel in an effort to avoid being found guilty of the ADRVs with which the athlete had been charged.
97. As to the facts, WADA points to Ms. Olimpiya Dusheva's evidence that she trained and lived with the Bulgarian national canoe team, including the Athlete, at the Training Camp between 2020 and 2023, that one of her associates, who was located at the Training Camp on the evening of 15 December 2023, had told her that the Athlete was there at the time and not at the University of Plovdiv, that a testing mission came to the Training Camp to test the Athlete that evening and she hid in Mr. Damyan Damyanov's apartment, the technical director at the BCF, and that the Athlete's presence at the Training Camp and her hiding from the DCO and BCO was confirmed via WhatsApp messages the witness exchanged with an individual who was at the Training Camp at the time.
98. WADA supplements Ms. Olimpiya Dusheva's evidence with a witness statement of her mother, Ms. Ognyana Dusheva, in which she states that her daughter showed her the chat just mentioned, and that, after seeing the chat, she phoned that individual, who confirmed twice seeing the DCO and BCO at the Training Camp on 15 December 2023, that the DCO and BCO were searching for the Athlete, who was at the Training Camp, which she left the next day, and that two other athletes warned Ms. Bachvarova not to tell the inspectors that the Athlete was at the Training Camp.
99. WADA also relies on three confidential witnesses. The first says that they spoke with an individual, who was at the Training Camp on 15 December 2023, and who confirmed that the Athlete was there at the time, having returned from the award ceremony in Sofia

on 14 December 2023, and evaded the test, adding that someone warned a certain kayaker called Erik and his partner from K2 to warn “*little Yoana*” to say that Yoana Georgieva was absent. This confidential witness also says that they heard a call between Ms. Ognyana Dusheva and that individual, who confirmed that they had seen that the Athlete was in Sofia on 14 December 2023 and at the Training Camp at the time of the attempted test.

100. The second Confidential Witness states that efforts were made to provide athletes with advance notice of doping control officers visiting the Training Camp, for example by having people posted at entry points provide early warning when the doping police was on its way, that athletes would be hidden or otherwise protected so that they would not be found, that doping control personnel would be told that the athlete is sick or absent, and that the BCF has also used doubles with fake identity documents in order to provide doping control samples *in lieu* of the athlete being doped.
101. The third Confidential Witness states that evading doping control has become quite common within the Bulgarian national canoe-kayak team, and that they knew of another teammate, who, on a separate occasion, claimed to be sick, and another teammate, who again, on a separate occasion, claimed they were somewhere else, in order to avoid doping control.
102. WADA rejects the Athlete’s explanations. The Athlete first explained that she was in Sofia for an awards ceremony on 14 December 2023, returning to the training camp thereafter (556 km roundtrip), and that, on 15 December 2023, she had commitments at the University of Plovdiv, where she says she studies pedagogy of physical education and had to consult on various subjects and check exam dates, (188 km roundtrip to the training camp). The Athlete says her meetings lasted a long time and that she did not return to the Training Camp on the same day because of the extremely bad weather and the warnings not to travel. She explains that she had forgotten to update her whereabouts in ADAMS.
103. WADA also points out that the Athlete at first did not mention having allegedly stayed with her sister on the evening of 15 December 2023, but only after she received the Notice of Charge three months later. In her witness statement, the Athlete’s sister stated that the Athlete was very tired due to the emotional strain, her travel and her university commitments. They decided it would be unreasonable for her to travel back to Kardzhali, and her sister suggested she stay and sleep at her home. They ordered pizza and tried to have a little feast. They had not seen each other for a long time, and they had a lot to talk about.
104. WADA notes that the Athlete provided no evidence of her travel arrangements, of the alleged meetings at the University of Plovdiv, of any expenditure within the city of Plovdiv for 15 December 2023, of any conversations between her and her sister making the alleged arrangements, of the pizza order, or of any communications with anyone at the Training Camp (in particular the Coach) regarding the Athlete’s sudden change of plans.

105. WADA points out that the Athlete's evidence of the bad weather conditions on 15 December 2023 cover the period from 00:00 hours on 15 December 2023 until 03:00 hours on 16 December 2023, but that the Athlete fails to explain why she felt sufficiently confident to drive to Plovdiv in the morning of 15 December 2023, as she alleges, but not to return.
106. WADA also rejects the evidence proffered by the Athlete's other witnesses. Ms. Ivanova, who opened the door to the DCO and BCO, states that they asked only for "Yoana" rather than "Yoana Georgieva", but that is flatly contradicted by the clear evidence of the DCO and BCO. WADA notes that Ms. Ivanova accepts that she did not witness the conversation between the DCO and BCO and the athlete who presented herself to the DCO and BCO, who Ms. Ivanova says wrongly was Ms. Bachvarova.
107. WADA adds that none of Mr. Stoyanov's evidence contradicts the evidence given by the DCO and BCO, save that he states that the athlete who presented herself to the DCO and BCO was Ms. Bachvarova.
108. As to Ms. Bachvarova, WADA recalls that she stated that, following dinner on 15 December 2023, she was getting ready to go out with her boyfriend in Kardzhali to meet other friends as well, heard someone calling for her, and went to the front door where a man and a woman asked her if she was "Yoana". She said yes, and was handed a doping form, which, she says, was the first time she saw one, and thus wanted to talk to her Coach, to which the man and woman agreed. WADA notes that there are no suggestions at this stage that Ms. Bachvarova had any difficulty in hearing what the man and woman allegedly said to her. She then headed to the Coach's bungalow, where she explained that she had been requested for doping testing and the Coach explained that that was impossible. The Coach told her that he would go and see who the man and woman wanted to see. She decided to maintain her initial plan and headed with the car of her boyfriend towards a café in downtown Kardzhali. They had just arrived at the café when she received a call from the Coach who told her to go back to the Training Camp, which she did, arriving about 40-50 minutes after the man and the woman were in front of the door of Bungalow 3. She saw the woman who had spoken to her earlier and greeted her, and then went to the restaurant. She was informed that she needed her identification card so she went to her room to get it. She then completed the Supplementary Report Form.
109. The Coach states in his witness statement that, after 19:30, Ms. Bachvarova knocked on the door of Building X where he lived. She informed him that she had been selected for doping testing. He knew that that could not be the case because she was not in the testing pool. He told Ms. Bachvarova to take a rest and that he would resolve matters with the DCO and BCO. He went outside and met the doping control officers next to his building. He thought the DCO and BCO might be looking for Yoana Georgieva and that was confirmed when he spoke to them. He said that she was probably at the University of Plovdiv and that he had heard her over the phone an hour before and that she had told him that she had just finished her business at the university. The DCO and BCO asked him whether he was sure and so he went to check Apartment A to see if the Athlete was in her room. He checked and there was nobody. He returned to the DCO and BCO and explained that the Athlete had not come back and that they had talked to Yoana

Bachvarova. He then called Ms. Bachvarova over the phone so she would come to the restaurant of the rowing campus. He discovered that Ms. Bachvarova had gone into Kardzhali to a café whereupon he got angry and asked her to return immediately. He was later asked to sign a form but refused to do so.

110. WADA points out that none of these statements is supported by documentary evidence, whether regarding timing of Ms. Bachvarova's alleged excursion to the café in Kardzhali or of the Coach's alleged call with the Athlete approximately one hour prior to his interaction with the DCO and BCO, or of any contact the Athlete may have had with them to explain her alleged change of plans.
111. WADA also questions the Coach's and Ms. Bachvarova's evidence concerning the timing of Ms. Bachvarova's alleged excursion to the café in Kardzhali. The DCO and BCO state that the woman at the door to Apartment A was notified at 19:36. After a short conversation, the notified athlete then went to Building X. The Coach then appeared to talk to the DCO and BCO. WADA deduces that the Coach left Building X at approximately 19:50 because the documentary evidence demonstrates that the Coach returned from checking Apartment A for the Athlete before 20:00, and, according to the DCO, the Coach was gone for approximately five minutes, after an initial conversation with the DCO and BCO.
112. WADA compares this with Ms. Bachvarova's evidence that, after the Coach left to talk to the DCO and BCO, she headed into Kardzhali town centre to go to a café. Her evidence is that she walked from Building X to the car park located underneath the bridge from Building X to the restaurant. The Coach's evidence is that he called Ms. Bachvarova almost as soon as he returned from checking Apartment A to see if the Athlete was there. The evidence from the DCO and BCO is also that the Coach placed a telephone call once he had returned from checking Apartment A. WADA infers that the call was made at approximately 20:00-20:01, because the DCO's WhatsApp chat log with his supervisor shows that he had a three-minute call with the supervisor at 20:01, which call took place after the Coach had made his own telephone call. Yet the Coach's evidence was that Ms. Bachvarova had just arrived and was just entering the café when she answered his call. WADA reasons that, on the assumption, absent call log evidence, that the Coach placed the call at 20:01, that would mean that Ms. Bachvarova had managed to walk from Building X to Car Park C, enter her boyfriend's car, make the journey into Kardzhali town centre, park the car up and walk to the café all in the space of eleven minutes, when the DCO's evidence is that the journey time from the Training Camp to the city is 15-20 minutes, which is consistent with a Google maps calculation of the distance and to travel between the Training Camp and the "*Art bar & dinner*" in Kardzhali, not accounting for the wet and dark conditions.
113. WADA also questions the Coach's and Ms. Bachvarova's evidence concerning the timing of Ms. Bachvarova's return from alleged excursion to the café in Kardzhali. Assuming the call made by the Coach to Ms. Bachvarova was placed at around 20:00-20:01 and the journey between the Training Camp and the centre of Kardzhali is 15-20 minutes, if Ms. Bachvarova had just arrived at the café in Kardzhali at the time when she received the call from the Coach, she would have been back at the Training Camp by approximately 20:25, allowing for time to walk to the car, drive back to the camp

and walk from Carpark C up to the restaurant. In fact, it appears that Ms. Bachvarova only appeared before the DCO and BCO at approximately 20:47, which is when the DCO messaged his supervisor saying that they “[t]hey *brang* [sic.] *another Yoana*”.

114. WADA submits that the inescapable conclusion is that the Athlete, who was wearing precisely the same clothes as when she left Apartment A with the DCO and BCO, left Building X, as further confirmed by the fact that the BCO saw the same pink slippers on the floor in the corridor leading to the stairwell, just to the left of the door of Apartment A, when the BCO went to take photographs of the various locations.
115. WADA recalls that the Athlete was, and is, an elite international-level athlete, who was preparing for the Paris Games, that, at the time of the attempted sample collection, the Athlete had been subject to at least 12 antidoping tests and was therefore well aware of her anti-doping obligations, particularly that she was required to submit to sample collection promptly upon being notified by the DCO. However, the Athlete chose to wilfully disregard her obligations and, under the pretext of wanting to talk to her coach, absconded into another building and could not be located thereafter.
116. WADA also contests the Appealed Decision’s conclusion that the DCO and BCO failed to sufficiently confirm the identity of the Athlete. WADA submits that: (i) both the DCO and BCO had a clear visual image of the Athlete, having each conducted prior Google searches; (ii) both separately and independently confirmed that the athlete they notified was the Athlete; (iii) the Athlete’s full name was used both to request her presence and upon her arrival; (iv) the Athlete confirmed that she was Yoana Georgieva; and (v) the conversation took place in the Athlete’s native language, precluding any honest misunderstanding. WADA further submits that, in any event, for an ADRV of evasion it is not necessary to establish that the athlete was given formal notice as required under the applicable anti-doping rules. It is sufficient that the athlete was, or ought to have been, aware that a doping control officer was present to test her, and that she absconded without providing a sample.
117. In the alternative, WADA submits that, for all of the foregoing reasons, the Athlete committed the ADRV of refusing to submit to sample collection under Article 2.3 of the ICF ADR. WADA submits that: (i) the Athlete was notified that she was required to provide a sample by a duly authorised person, namely the DCO; (ii) the Athlete refused to submit to such sample collection; and (iii) the Athlete’s refusal was intentional, as her conduct in leaving the DCO and BCO and entering the Coach’s building cannot be considered as anything other than deliberate.
118. As a result, WADA respectfully requests the CAS to rule as follows:
 - “1. *The appeal of WADA is admissible.*
 2. *The decision rendered by the CAS ADD in the matter of Yoana Georgieva (with operative dated 14 July 2024 and reasons dated 23 May 2025) is set aside.*
 3. *Yoana Georgieva is found to have committed an anti-doping rule violation under Article 2.3 and/or Article 2.5 of the ICF ADR.*

4. *Yoana Georgieva is sanctioned with a period of ineligibility of between four and six years starting on the date on which the CAS award enters into force.*
5. *Any period of provisional suspension effectively served by Yoana Georgieva before the entry into force of the CAS award shall be credited against the total period of ineligibility to be served.*
6. *All competitive results obtained by Yoana Georgieva from and including 15 December 2023 are disqualified, with all resulting consequences (including forfeiture of medals, points and prizes).*
7. *In the highly unlikely event of there being any arbitration costs, such arbitration costs shall be borne by the ICF, or in the alternative by the Respondents jointly and severally. WADA is granted a significant contribution to its legal and other costs.”*

B. The Athlete

119. In her Answer, the Athlete asserts that she was in Plovdiv at the relevant time. She argues that the DCO did not ask the person who answered the door, Ms. Ivanova, whether she was Yoana Georgieva, but whether she was “Yoana”. Yet, the Athlete adds, Ms. Ivanova is significantly shorter, with dark hair, unlike both Yoana Georgieva and Yoana Bachvarova, who both have light hair. The Athlete argues that the DCO’s question shows that he did not know what the Athlete looked like, despite his claims that he had googled the Athlete beforehand and could thus verify whether her online photographs matched the person he saw at the Training Camp on 15 December 2023. In addition, the BCO stated in her witness statement with respect to the photograph of the Athlete that “*this is probably the first woman that was notified*”.
120. The Athlete adds that the DCO asked only for “Yoana”, or that the surname was in any event not heard by those present in the apartment due to the stormy weather and the noise inside the apartment, which explains why Ms. Bachvarova went to the door. The Athlete further notes that Mr. Stoyanov was using a washing machine at the time and that Ms. Ivanova was cooking for her dogs, both of which contributed additional noise inside the apartment. Ms. Bachvarova also confirmed that the DCO and the BCO asked her whether she was “Yoana” without mentioning any surname.
121. The Athlete also points to specific inconsistencies in the DCO’s own reports. In his initial Supplementary Report of 15 December 2023, the DCO wrote: “*She opened and I asked her if she is Yoana Georgieva*”, indicating that he asked Ms. Ivanova directly, rather than calling a name into the apartment. In his later amended report, the DCO changed this to: “*a woman opened and in that moment I asked for Yoana Georgieva*”. Notably, the ICF’s own description of events in its Request for Disciplinary Proceedings before the CAS ADD also recorded that the DCO “*asked her if she was Yoana Georgieva*”, this being consistent with the initial report. The Athlete submits that this inconsistency between the initial and amended accounts is significant and indicative of an attempt to revise the factual narrative after the fact.

122. The Athlete further states that CAS case law confirms that the evidence from an experienced DCO is not entitled to special treatment. What is more, the DCO and BCO have reasons to conceal their mistakes during the course of the doping test procedure, including very important ones concerning the notification of the athlete and the requirement for continuous chaperoning. Point 126 of the Appealed Decision reinforces this when noting that the DCO in this case had never dealt with an athlete disappearing or hiding, as he claims, and that, according to the Athlete, the evidence on file shows that he was unable to cope with the situation. The Athlete points specifically to the DCO's WhatsApp exchange with his mission manager, Mr. Sharapov, whose first question upon being contacted was "*Did she sign the notification?*", at which point the DCO realised he had failed to obtain a signature. The DCO's subsequent messages "*Can I insist? What to do?*" and "*For first time someone is hiding*" reveal that he was unable to manage the situation and had a clear incentive thereafter to attribute his procedural failures to the Athlete's alleged evasion rather than to his own mistakes. The reluctance of the DCO and the BCO to admit their mistakes is valid also with respect to their denial that Ms. Bachvarova was the same woman they had initially met. The Athlete notes several inconsistencies in the DCO's evidence. In particular, the DCO described Ms. Bachvarova as "*shorter and thinner*" than the Athlete, when, according to the identity cards of both athletes, Ms. Bachvarova is in fact five centimetres taller than the Athlete. The Athlete recalls that the Single Judge did not need to see the two athletes side-by-side because she noted their similarity on her computer screen.
123. With respect to WADA's claims that the two athletes wore different clothes, the Athlete comments that these differences were not mentioned in the initial and supplementary reports delivered immediately after the events of 15 December 2023, as pointed out by the Single Judge, but were raised only five months later. The Athlete then recalls the BCO's own evidence that the darkness meant that she did not recognise a woman - who, the Athlete says, was Ms. Bachvarova - who greeted her and was wearing a hoodie, and whom the BCO saw only at the last minute. According to the Athlete, these factors, and the BCO's own statement that the Athlete was "*probably*" the first woman who was notified, all support the Single Judge's conclusion that the DCO may have been genuinely mistaken as to the identity of the person who came to the door of Apartment A.
124. Concerning her absence from the Training Camp, the Athlete reiterates that she met her teacher at the University of Plovdiv, A., in the afternoon. She explains that A. did not appear as a witness at first instance because of the pressure, which the Athlete understands was exerted by the university's dean, to resist becoming involved in this matter, which could create negative publicity for the university. The Athlete says the reason for such pressure were public Facebook posts by Ms. Ogniana Dusheva implying that any support of her case that the Athlete could receive from the University of Plovdiv would be fraudulent.
125. As for the lack of contemporaneous evidence supporting her presence in Plovdiv, the Athlete argues that she had no idea that she might need such evidence and therefore did not keep anything, and that her communications with her teacher, her coach and her sister were carried out by phone. She nevertheless submits, as requested, the relevant bank statements from her bank account for the period 13-16 December 2023, from

which, the Athlete says, she had withdrawn enough cash during the relevant period to make payments for fuel, food and drinks and cover all her other needs. The Athlete also provides bank statements from her sister's bank account evidencing that she purchased food on 14 December 2023, and on 15 December 2023 for an amount that corresponds with the amount spent for the dinner with her sister. The Athlete has no receipts for fuel and food for the relevant period since she was not aware and could not be reasonably expected to know that she might need them later, and she used cash. Concerning the request for a call log, mobile operators in Bulgaria are required by Article 251b of the Bulgarian Law on Electronic Communications to retain traffic data for a maximum period of only six months. That six-month period from 15 December 2023 expired on 15 June 2024, i.e., just five days after the ITA filed its Request for Disciplinary Proceedings with the CAS ADD on 10 June 2024. The Athlete submits that this near-miss was not attributable to any fault on her part, and that this retention limitation was confirmed in writing by the mobile operator A1 in response to a request by the Athlete's mother. The burden of proof rests on WADA, and the ITA's failure to request call log preservation in good time should not be held against the Athlete.

126. Concerning the evening of 15 December 2023, the Athlete responds to WADA's claim that there was insufficient time for the Athlete's version of the facts by noting that the DCO does not know precisely when they arrived at the Training Camp, stating that it was between 19:00 and 19:30, and that they allegedly spoke to the Athlete at 19:36. The Athlete states that the DCO's evidence suggests that they were at the apartment door by 19:30, when, according to the Athlete, the DCO spoke with Ms. Ivanova and Ms. Bachvarova. The Athlete points to the DCO's Supplementary Report in which he states that Ms. Bachvarova left the Training Camp at 19:30 and that he met the Athlete at 19:48, adding that he could not have met Ms. Bachvarova since she was already in town. But at point 10 of his witness statement, the DCO states that he spoke to the Athlete at 19:36. The Athlete submits that this difference in timing is indicative of inconsistency in the DCO's account, and submits that the DCO and BCO most likely showed up at the apartment door at 19:30, and that Ms. Bachvarova left the Training Camp at around 19:40, after talking to her Coach, to meet her boyfriend, with whom she drove to town. The Coach then met the DCO and BCO, they talked, and he went to Apartment A to check if the Athlete had returned from Plovdiv. The DCO then texted his mission manager, Mr. Sharapov, at 19:59 and 20:00, before the Coach returned, apologising for the Athlete's absence. They talked and the Coach then called Ms. Bachvarova, asking her to return to the Training Camp. Ms. Bachvarova says she received the call about 40-50 minutes after the DCO and BCO first showed up at the apartment door, at about 20:10. According to Google Maps, it was a 15- minute drive from the Training Camp to the café where Ms. Bachvarova was, but it could have taken longer because of the bad weather and the time needed to park, meaning that she had just arrived at the café when she received her coach's call. The Athlete says that it is also plausible that she was able to return to the Training Camp, meet the DCO and the BCO and, after some time spent talking, that the DCO wrote to his manager at 20:47 that "*they brang [sic] another Yoana*".
127. Concerning the witness statement of Ms. Olimpiya Dusheva at first instance, the Athlete recalls why the Single Judge disregarded it, stating at point 82 of the Appealed Decision that it did not reveal firsthand information of the events of 15 December 2023, as the

witness was not present at the Training Camp on that date. The Athlete submits that Ms. Dusheva's new witness statement should be treated in the same way, as well as the witness statement of her mother Ms. Ogniana Dusheva and the three confidential witnesses.

128. More particularly, concerning the witness statement of Ms. Olimpiya Dusheva, the Athlete points to two screenshots from a chat with an unknown and unnamed person who allegedly was at the camp on 15 December 2023, which mention "*Yoana*", without saying which one is meant, "*hiding*", without indicating who was hiding and from what, "*someone else to go*", without explaining the relevance of these words, and mentioning "*Damyan's apartment*", without stating the relevance of that apartment, given that the person, who, the DCO and BCO thought, was the Athlete, went into the Coach's building and not in "*Damyan's apartment*". The Athlete adds that none of this can be linked logically to the events of 15 December 2023. Indeed, even though the conversation allegedly happened on 20 December 2023, the screen shots are undated, and their date cannot be verified. Also, the Athlete finds it remarkable that the person in the chat did not remember any specific date, but only that it had happened in December. Furthermore, the Athlete recalls that she and Ms. Olimpiya Dusheva were teammates for many years, rivals for the Paris Games, and that Ms. Dusheva made her unhappiness and envy at the Athlete being selected for the Paris Games public in a series of messages sent via Facebook Messenger.
129. The Athlete submits that Ms. Ogniana Dusheva's witness statement is equally unreliable, because the witness spoke to someone, who allegedly was at the training base in the evening of 15 December 2023, and whose identity remains confidential because of safety concerns. The Athlete questions why that person was not willing to benefit from the status of a vulnerable witness and provide testimonies without revealing her/his identity, concluding that this raises serious doubts as to whether such witness exists. In any event, the Athlete submits that the reliability and credibility of this information as well as the potential motivation of that person to spread untruthful information cannot be examined and verified in these proceedings. The Athlete adds that screenshots of Ms. Dusheva's chat with an ITA representative, which allegedly happened on 7 July 2024, merely reproduce the conversation just mentioned. The Athlete fails to see the relevance of this chat.
130. The first confidential witness statement fails to reveal anything about the relevant events. The Athlete questions the assertion that training camps in Bulgaria are deliberately established in isolated places so as to facilitate advance warning of doping controls, pointing to the fact that this Training Camp is only some 15 minutes away from the town of Kardzhali, and that it is next to the road leading to the shore of the Kardzhali dam, a popular destination for Bulgarians, making the area around the Training Camp very easily and freely accessible. Indeed, the DCO and BCO freely entered the Training Camp and went to the building where they were able to talk to the athletes, while the Coach was in another building.
131. The Athlete questions the credibility of this witness, an integral member of the Bulgarian national canoe-kayak team and involved with the BCF for several years, given that witness's apparent knowledge of doping practices of the BCF, such as using

athlete doubles with fake identity documents, which never resulted in any of this being reported to the anti-doping authorities. What is more, that witness states that he or she knows of at least four athletes and their doubles, but has failed to report them. The Athlete calls for the ITA to investigate this witness, who should be found to have committed an ADRV for failure to report this.

132. The Athlete notes that the second confidential witness statement suffers from similar flaws, and the third merely confirms the existence of the hypothetical witness who was allegedly at the Training Camp on 15 December 2023 as well as the phone call made by Ms. Ogniyana Dusheva with the said witness, which is all merely uncorroborated hearsay, and should be rejected.
133. The Athlete recalls that she has been subject to 32 sample collections to date, 20 of which happened since the start of 2024, and has a clean record.
134. Concerning the conditions governing the doping control, the Athlete adopts the position of the Single Judge in the Appealed Decision regarding the breach of the notification requirements and those regarding the continuous chaperoning under the ISTI, namely that section 5.4.3. of the ISTI requires the DCO/Chaperone to *“have the Athlete sign an appropriate form to acknowledge and accept notification”*, which was not the case here. The Athlete asserts that the BCO did not request an ID nor provide a form to sign. The Single Judge stressed that the notification requirement is fundamental and the whole testing process is premised upon having the right athlete identified to provide the sample.
135. In response to WADA’s argument that evasion cases do not require proof that the athlete was given formal notice that they were required to provide a sample, the Athlete says that none of the cases WADA cites in support of its proposition concern a mistaken identity. In CAS 2012/A/2843, the Athlete says that the DCO wanted to show the athlete the official IAAF form and obtain his signature when the athlete moved away. Likewise, in CAS 2016/O/4702, the Athlete says the athlete was verbally notified, but refused to sign the doping control form. The Athlete submits that the identity of the athlete in these cases was not at issue, and a verbal notification together with the established identity of the athlete was sufficient to find evasion.
136. The Athlete adds that, as the Single Judge found, the chaperoning requirements were not respected because the DCO and BCO did not warn the athlete at the door that she had to be chaperoned, and did not chaperone her when the athlete went to Building X. The Athlete notes that the entrance to Building X is on the opposite side from the side visible from Building 3, meaning that the DCO and BCO, standing on the terrace at the door of Apartment A, could not have seen the athlete enter Building X. The consistent evidence of Ms. Ivanova and Mr. Stoyanov is that the DCO and BCO remained in front of Building 3 for some time after the athlete left, which is consistent with mistaken identity rather than deliberate evasion.
137. The Athlete fails to see the relevance of case CAS 2007/A/1415, and adds that its facts, as well as those in case CAS 2015/A/4163, differ significantly from this case. For example, in the latter case, the DCO and his assistant had a visual image of the athlete

whom they had tested several months previously, and the DCO and his assistant saw him twice before the test. Furthermore, the Athlete states that the testimonies of the witnesses and the athlete's statements were consistent, unlike in this case. During his stay of almost three hours outside the athlete's apartment, the DCO in that case was on the phone with officials of his company. In the present case, the DCO wrote for the first time to his manager some twenty minutes later when he realised that there was another athlete named Yoana at the Training Camp. Furthermore, the DCO in that case was not given the athlete's phone number, whereas the DCO here could easily have found the Athlete's phone number from ADAMS or could have asked the Coach to provide it, and called the Athlete to ascertain that she was not at the Training Camp. Finally, the DCO and BCO saw the woman at the door for a very short time, in darkness, and had never seen the Athlete previously. Moreover, the DCO described Ms. Bachvarova as shorter than the Athlete when she is in fact taller, and the two athletes are quite similar in appearance.

138. Finally, concerning WADA's request to cross-examine the Athlete's witnesses at first instance, Ms. Bachvarova's boyfriend and the Manager, the Athlete submits that the expedited proceedings at first instance enabled their examination soon after the facts. Now, considerable time has passed, and cross-examining all of the Athlete's witnesses at first instance would generate confusion owing to the natural fading of memory over time. The Athlete adds that cross-examining all witnesses who already provided their testimonies at first instance is tantamount to a complete re-hearing of the case, for which the Athlete sees no objective justification. Instead, the Athlete requests that all oral testimonies provided by witnesses at first instance be included in the file of the present proceedings. Furthermore, the Athlete submits that Ms. Bachvarova's boyfriend and the Training Camp Manager are not connected to the Athlete and/or the BCF. The Athlete notes that Ms. Bachvarova has in any event provided a notary-certified declaration confirming her prior testimony for the present proceedings, and that Ms. Bachvarova is no longer in a relationship with the boyfriend referred to in the evidence from the first instance proceedings. The Athlete cannot be held responsible for the potential refusal of any of those individuals to take part in the appeals proceedings as witnesses. Their written testimonies should suffice.

139. In answer to WADA's Appeal in case CAS 2025/A/11569, the Athlete requests the Panel:

- "1. to dismiss entirely the Appellant's appeal;*
- 2. to confirm the decision of the Single Judge of the CAS ADD;*
- 3. to award significant contribution to the Athlete's legal and other costs; and*
- 4. to award the arbitration costs, if any, to the Appellant."*

C. ICF

140. In its Answer to WADA's Appeal and in its Cross-Appeal in CAS 2025/A/11812, the ICF explains to have delegated the implementation of its anti-doping programme to the ITA, which includes the results management and subsequent prosecution of ADRVs under the jurisdiction of the ICF. By virtue of this delegation, and on behalf of the ICF, the ITA is the party filing this Answer and Cross-Appeal.

141. The ICF adopts WADA's version of the facts and legal reasoning, and submits that the Athlete violated Article 2.3 and 2.5 of the ICF ADR. It stresses the short timeframe available for the first instance proceedings before the start of the Paris Games, and explains that, once the Appealed Decision was rendered, the ITA was able to obtain named and confidential witness statements to corroborate that the Athlete was located at the Training Camp on the evening of 15 December 2023, that two other athletes went to warn Ms. Bachvarova not to tell the DCO and BCO that the Athlete was at the Training Camp, and that historically the BCF used doubles to provide doping control samples in lieu of the athlete being doped.
142. The ICF requests that the Athlete be declared ineligible for up to six years and her results disqualified on the same grounds as those adduced by WADA. It points out that credit should be given to the Athlete because she served a period of provisional suspension from 10 June 2024 until 15 July 2024, pursuant to Article 10.13.2 of the ICF ADR.
143. The ICF hereby respectfully requests the Panel to rule as follows:
- “ 1. *The ICF's Answer and Cross-Appeal are admissible. The decision dated 23 May 2025 in the matter 2024/ADD/100 International Canoe Federation v. Yoana Georgieva is set aside.*
2. *Ms Yoana Georgieva is found to have committed Anti-Doping Rule Violations under Article 2.3 and/or Article 2.5 of the ICF Anti-Doping Rules.*
3. *Mr Yoana Georgieva is sanctioned with a period of Ineligibility of up-to 6 years. Any period of provisional suspension served by Yoana Georgieva before the entry into force of the CAS Appeals Division award shall be credited against the total period of Ineligibility to be served.*
4. *All competitive results of Ms Yoana Georgieva from 15 December 2023 until the date of the CAS Appeals Division award are disqualified including forfeiture of medals, points and prizes. The costs of the proceedings, if any, shall be borne only by Ms Yoana Georgieva. A substantial contribution to ICF's legal and other costs associated with these proceedings shall also be borne by Ms Yoana Georgieva.*
5. *The ICF is not ordered to pay any costs such as the arbitration costs of WADA.*
6. *Any other prayer for relief that the Panel deems fit in the facts and circumstances of the present case”*

D. The Athlete

144. The Athlete incorporates her Answer to the Appeal in her Answer to the Cross-Appeal, and objects to the CAS's jurisdiction over the Cross-Appeal and to its admissibility.

V. JURISDICTION

145. The Appealed Decision was rendered by the CAS ADD. In this respect, Article A21(5) of the CAS ADD Rules states as follows:

“[...] the final decision may be appealed to the CAS Appeals Arbitration Division within 21 days from receipt of the notification of the final decision with reasons by mail or courier in accordance with Articles R47 et seq. of the Code of Sports-Related Arbitration, applicable to appeals procedures. In the absence of appeal, the final decision of the CAS ADD is binding and enforceable. [...]”

146. Article R47 of the Code provides as follows:

“An appeal against the decision of a federation, association or sports-related body may be filed with the CAS insofar as the statutes or regulations of the said body so provide or as the parties have concluded a specific arbitration agreement and insofar as the Appellant has exhausted the legal remedies available to him prior to the appeal, in accordance with the statutes or regulations of the said sports-related body.”

147. WADA and ICF both rely on Article 13.2 of the ICF ADR as conferring jurisdiction on the CAS. The jurisdiction of the CAS is not contested by the Respondents in CAS 2025/A/11569 and is confirmed by the Parties' signature of the Order of Procedure.
148. Ms. Georgieva has raised a jurisdictional objection in her Answer to ICF's Cross-Appeal in case CAS 2025/A/11812. She argues that Article 13.2 of the ICF ADR does not expressly provide for an appeal against an award rendered by the CAS acting as a first instance tribunal such as the CAS ADD regarding the Appealed Decision.
149. On 26 November 2025, the ICF filed a response to the Athlete's jurisdictional objections. The ICF submitted that the Procedural Rules of the CAS ADD expressly allow final decisions issued by the CAS ADD to be appealed to the CAS Appeals Arbitration Division. The Athlete never objected to the jurisdiction of the CAS ADD. The ICF adds that Article 8.2.2 together with Article 8.2.1 of the ICF ADR provide that a decision issued by the CAS ADD may be appealed as provided in Article 13 of the ICF ADR, and that Article 13.2 of the ICF ADR provides that a decision that no ADRV was committed, which is the case of the Appealed Decision, may be appealed exclusively as provided in this Article 13.2. Article 13.2.1 further specifies that in cases involving International-Level Athletes, which is the case for the Athlete, the decision may be appealed exclusively to CAS. Article 13.2.3.1 lists the ICF as one of the parties entitled to appeal to CAS in cases involving International-Level Athletes.
150. The Panel finds that it has jurisdiction to review the ICF's Cross-Appeal. Article 13.2 of the ICF ADR provides that the subject of an appeal includes a decision that no ADRV was committed and Article 13.2.1 of the ICF ADR provides that appeals involving International-Level Athletes must be made exclusively to CAS. Furthermore, Article 13.2.4 of the ICF ADR provides that any Cross-Appeal must be filed at the latest together with any Answer to an Appeal before CAS. It follows that CAS must have jurisdiction to review such a Cross-Appeal if it has jurisdiction to review the related Appeal and its Answer.

VI. ADMISSIBILITY

151. Article R49 of the Code provides as follows:

“In the absence of a time limit set in the statutes or regulations of the federation, association or sports-related body concerned, or of a previous agreement, the time limit for appeal shall be twenty-one days from the receipt of the decision appealed against. After having consulted the parties, the Division President may refuse to entertain an appeal if it is manifestly late.”

152. The latest date by which the ICF could have appealed the Appealed Decision was 13 June 2025. As a result, pursuant to Article 13.6.1 of the ICF ADR, WADA’s deadline to file its Statement of Appeal was 4 July 2025, i.e. 21 days from the day on which any of the other parties entitled to do so may have appealed.

153. On 3 July 2025, WADA filed its Statement of Appeal.

154. In accordance with Article R51 CAS Code, an appeal brief shall be filed within “ten days following the expiry of the time limit for the appeal”.

155. On 7 July 2025, WADA wrote to the CAS requesting a twenty-day extension to the deadline for filing its Appeal Brief.

156. On 8 July 2025, the CAS confirmed that WADA was granted a ten-day extension and requested that the Respondents confirm by 14 July 2025 whether they had any objection to the further ten-day extension sought by WADA.

157. On 16 July 2025, the CAS wrote to the Parties confirming that, in light of the First Respondent having consented and in the absence of any objection from the Second Respondent, WADA’s deadline for filing its Appeal Brief was extended by a further ten- days.

158. On 31 July 2025, WADA wrote to the CAS requesting a further ten-day extension to the deadline for filing its Appeal Brief.

159. On the same date, the CAS Court Office requested that the Respondents confirm by 4 August 2025 whether they had any objection to a further ten-day extension, indicating that silence would be deemed acceptance and suspending WADA’s time limit in the meantime.

160. In the absence of an objection by the Respondents, WADA’s deadline for filing its Appeal Brief was extended by a further ten days.

161. Consequently, the original deadline for filing the Appeal Brief, which was originally 14 July 2025, was extended by twenty days, until 3 August 2025, and following a four-day suspension of the time limit and a further ten-day extension, until 17 August 2025

162. On 14 August 2025, WADA filed its Appeal Brief, within the relevant time limit.

163. The ICF filed a Cross-Appeal against the Appealed Decision. Pursuant to Article 13.2.4 of the ICF ADR and of the WADC and Article R39 of the Code, cross appeals by any respondent named in cases brought to CAS under the Code are specifically permitted and may be filed with the party's answer, at the latest.
164. The Athlete submits that the Cross-Appeal is inadmissible because it was not filed within the applicable time limit and because it could be only directed at WADA and not at the Athlete.
165. On 26 November 2025, the ICF filed a response to the Athlete's inadmissibility objections. The ICF notes that Article 13.2.4 of the ICF ADR provides for the possibility of cross-appeals by any respondent named in CAS appeals to be filed at the latest with the party's answer. The ICF adds that it is among the parties with a right to appeal pursuant to Article 13.2.3.1 of the ICF ADR, and that neither Article 13.2.4 of the ICF ADR nor its commentary limits cross-appeals or subsequent appeals to the initial appellant.
166. The Panel finds that the ICF's Cross-Appeal was filed on time, as it was incorporated with the ICF's Answer, and was therefore filed with the ICF's Answer, in compliance with Article 13.2.4 of the ICF ADR.
167. The Panel also rejects the Athlete's objections concerning the addressees of the ICF's Cross-Appeal. Article 13.2.4 of the ICF ADR does not limit cross-appeals to the initial appellant. Furthermore, the Cross-Appeal challenges the Appealed Decision, and does so on the same grounds as WADA. Directing the Cross-Appeal against an entity with which the ICF agrees would be absurd. Furthermore, the Cross-Appeal and the ICF's Answer are one and the same submission, which merely sets forth the Parties in the proceedings references under *CAS 2025/A/11569* at the beginning of the document, and does not specify against whom it is directed, but only that it challenges the Appealed Decision. The CAS Court Office registered the Cross-Appeal under *CAS 2025/A/11812*.
168. The ICF's Cross-Appeal is thus also admissible.

VII. APPLICABLE LAW

169. Article R58 of the Code provides as follows:

“The Panel shall decide the dispute according to the applicable regulations and the rules of law chosen by the parties or, in the absence of such a choice, according to the law of the country in which the federation, association or sports-related body which has issued the challenged decision is domiciled or according to the rules of law, the application of which the Panel deems appropriate. In the latter case, the Panel shall give reasons for its decision.”

170. The Appealed Decision was rendered under the ICF ADR. It follows that the ICF ADR is applicable to the present proceedings. The 1 January 2021 version of the ICF ADR applies because the facts giving rise to the ADRVs occurred on 15 December 2023.

171. No Party objected to the application of the ICF ADR while all Parties explicitly refer to these regulations, along with various CAS jurisprudence interpreting them.
172. Accordingly, the Panel concludes that the “*applicable regulations*” for the purposes of Article R58 of the Code are those of the ICF, in conjunction with the WADC and International Standards (as provided for in Article 24.3 of the ICF ADR).
173. Additionally, Swiss law is to be applied subsidiarily, it being the country in which ICF is domiciled.

VIII. MERITS

A. Relevant provisions

174. Article 2.3 of the ICF ADR provides that an ADRV is committed as a result of “*Evading Sample collection; or refusing or failing to submit to Sample collection without compelling justification after notification by a duly authorized Person.*”
175. The explanatory footnote to Article 2.3 explains that “*For example, it would be an anti-doping rule violation of “evading Sample collection” if it were established that an Athlete was deliberately avoiding a Doping Control official to evade notification or Testing. A violation of “failing to submit to Sample collection” may be based on either intentional or negligent conduct of the Athlete, while “evading” or “refusing” Sample collection contemplates intentional conduct by the Athlete.*”
176. Article 2.5 of the ICF ADR provides that an ADRV is committed as a result of “*Tampering or Attempted Tampering with any Part of Doping Control by an Athlete or Other Person*”. The definition of tampering in the ICF ADR includes “*preventing the collection of a Sample*” and “*procuring false testimony from witnesses*”.
177. Article 10.3.1 of the ICF ADR sets out the period of ineligibility for violations of Articles 2.3 and 2.5 of the ICF ADR and provides that “*The period of Ineligibility for anti-doping rule violations other than as provided in Article 10.2 shall be as follows, unless Article 10.6 or 10.7 are applicable: 10.3.1 For violations of Article 2.3 or 2.5, the period of Ineligibility shall be four (4) years except: (i) in the case of failing to submit to Sample collection, if the Athlete can establish that the commission of the anti-doping rule violation was not intentional, the period of Ineligibility shall be two (2) years; (ii) in all other cases, if the Athlete or other Person can establish exceptional circumstances that justify a reduction of the period of Ineligibility, the period of Ineligibility shall be in a range from two (2) years to four (4) years depending on the Athlete or other Person’s degree of Fault; or (iii) in a case involving a Protected Person or Recreational Athlete, the period of Ineligibility shall be in a range between a maximum of two (2) years and, at a minimum, a reprimand and no period of Ineligibility, depending on the Protected Person or Recreational Athlete’s degree of Fault.*”
178. Article 10.4 of the ICF ADR provides that in certain “aggravating” circumstances, an athlete’s period of ineligibility can be increased by up to two years. Article 10.4 provides that “*If the ICF establishes in an individual case involving an anti-doping rule violation*

other than violations under Article 2.7 (Trafficking or Attempted Trafficking), 2.8 (Administration or Attempted Administration), 2.9 (Complicity or Attempted Complicity) or 2.11 (Acts by an Athlete or Other Person to Discourage or Retaliate Against Reporting) that Aggravating Circumstances are present which justify the imposition of a period of Ineligibility greater than the standard sanction, then the period of Ineligibility otherwise applicable shall be increased by an additional period of Ineligibility of up to two (2) years depending on the seriousness of the violation and the nature of the Aggravating Circumstances, unless the Athlete or other Person can establish that he or she did not knowingly commit the anti-doping rule violation.”

179. *“Aggravating Circumstances” is defined as “Circumstances involving, or actions by, an Athlete or other Person which may justify the imposition of a period of Ineligibility greater than the standard sanction. Such circumstances and actions shall include, but are not limited to: the Athlete or other Person Used or Possessed multiple Prohibited Substances or Prohibited Methods, Used or Possessed a Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method on multiple occasions or committed multiple other anti-doping rule violations; a normal individual would be likely to enjoy the performance-enhancing effects of the anti-doping rule violation(s) beyond the otherwise applicable period of Ineligibility; the Athlete or Person engaged in deceptive or obstructive conduct to avoid the detection or adjudication of an anti-doping rule violation; or the Athlete or other Person engaged in Tampering during Results Management. For the avoidance of doubt, the examples of circumstances and conduct described herein are not exclusive and other similar circumstances or conduct may also justify the imposition of a longer period of Ineligibility.”*
180. Article 10.9.3.1 of the ICF ADR provides that the Athlete’s ADRVs *“shall be considered together as one single first violation, and the sanction imposed shall be based on the violation that carries the more severe sanction, including the application of Aggravating Circumstances”*.
181. Article 10.10 of the ICF ADR provides that *“In addition to the automatic Disqualification of the results in the Competition which produced the positive Sample under Article 9, all other competitive results of the Athlete obtained from the date a positive Sample was collected (whether In-Competition or Out-of-Competition), or other antidoping rule violation occurred, through the commencement of any Provisional Suspension or Ineligibility period, shall, unless fairness requires otherwise, be Disqualified with all of the resulting Consequences including forfeiture of any medals, points and prizes.”*

B. Evaluation of the evidence

a. Burden and standard of proof

182. Article 3.1 of the ICF ADR provides that *“The ICF shall have the burden of establishing that an anti-doping rule violation has occurred. The standard of proof shall be whether the ICF has established an anti-doping rule violation to the comfortable satisfaction of the hearing panel bearing in mind the seriousness of the allegation which is made. This standard of proof in all cases is greater than a mere balance of probability but less than*

proof beyond a reasonable doubt. Where these Anti-Doping Rules place the burden of proof upon the Athlete or other Person alleged to have committed an anti-doping rule violation to rebut a presumption or establish specified facts or circumstances, except as provided in Articles 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, the standard of proof shall be by a balance of probability.”

b. Admissible means of evidence

183. Article 3.2 of the ICF ADR provides that “[f]acts related to anti-doping rule violations may be established by any reliable means, including admissions”. The Comment to Article 3.2 adds that “For example, the ICF may establish an anti-doping rule violation under Article 2.2 based on [...] the credible testimony of third Persons, reliable documentary evidence, [...]”.
184. Therefore, the means of evidence relied upon by the Parties in this arbitration, in particular oral and written witness testimony, are admissible means of evidence. That said, if a witness is not called to appear at the hearing, this may affect the evidentiary value of the witness testimony (see NOTH/HAAS, in ARROYO, M.: *Arbitration in Switzerland – The Practitioner’s Guide*, 2nd ed, Article R44, para. 41; cf. also Swiss Federal Tribunal, judgment of 31 May 2012, 4A_682/2011, paras. 4.1 *et seq.*). This holds true, in particular, if the counterparty challenges the contents of the written witness statement or has indicated that it seeks to cross-examine that witness.

c. Principles for the assessment of evidence

185. As highlighted by the Swiss Federal Tribunal (decision of 17 January 2013, 4A_538/2012, para. 5.1), the free assessment of evidence is a pillar of international arbitration. However, the Panel wishes to highlight the following evidentiary principles by which it will be guided in its assessment of the evidence.
186. Firstly, detailed, consistent and credible witness evidence may constitute sufficient evidence to establish an ADRV.
187. Secondly, multiple pieces of evidence can have a cumulative effect (CAS 2013/A/3124, para. 12.3; CAS 2017/A/4937, para. 51; CAS 2022/A/8653, para. 195 with further references). This is sometimes described by a “*strands in a cable*” metaphor; while each strand of evidence by itself may not be strong enough to meet the burden of proof, the cable created by all strands together may be sufficient to prove the relevant fact (CAS 2015/A/4059, paras. 120, 139, 141; CAS 2017/A/5434, para. 212).
188. Thirdly, the Panel must assess the evidence as a whole. There is no reason why the Panel should disregard all other pieces of evidence if one piece of evidence (whether direct or circumstantial) proves unreliable. Whether those other pieces of evidence are sufficient to prove the allegation is a different question.
189. Fourthly, in respect of witness testimony specifically, the position under Swiss law is as follows according to the Swiss Federal Tribunal (decision of 1 September 2020, 5A_550/2019, para. 9.1.3.1.):

“The focus here is not on credibility as a personal characteristic, but rather on the credibility of the specific statement [references omitted]. Although this principle was developed by the Swiss Federal Tribunal for criminal proceedings [...], it also applies to civil proceedings, as the concept of ‘general credibility’ is considered to be of little use in the psychology of testimony [references omitted]. The specific statement should be examined by methodical analysis of its content (presence of reality criteria, absence of fantasy signals) to determine whether the information relating to a specific event stems from the actual experience of the person being questioned [reference omitted].” (translation from the German original).

190. According to Swiss case law, examples of indications of truthfulness of witness statements include logical consistency, a high level of detail, a disorganised account of the events witnessed, spatial-temporal connections, descriptions of interactions, the reproduction of conversations or the description of unusual details and trivialities, of the witness’ own psychological processes and of those of the person with which the witness interacted (see, e.g., Zurich Court of Appeal, decision of 15 September 2021, SB190206, para. 2.1.3; decision of 21 February 2012, SB110639, para. 3.3). The more of those indications of truthfulness are present, the more likely it is that the witness is giving a truthful account of its perception/recollection of the relevant events.
191. Moreover, potential motivations for a witness to lie may be of relevance when determining the likelihood of a witness intentionally making untrue statements (see CAS 2018/A/5906, para. 91 et seq.; CAS 2018/A/5920, para. 102; CAS 2020/A/7526 & 7559, para. 136). In this regard, CAS panels have consistently recognised that, all things being equal, doping control officers have no reason to lie or to fabricate events. The same holds true for proven instances of the same witness lying before on a matter of relevance to the testimony in question (see, for example, CAS 2019/A/6319, para. 86).
192. That said, the Panel is very conscious of the fact that witness testimony may be subjectively true, and therefore show many of the foregoing indications of truthfulness, but may still be objectively untrue because the witnesses’ good faith perception or recollection of the witnessed events may not accord with reality (cf., for example, CAS 2012/A/2699, para. 94).

C. Assessment

193. As to the law, unlike the Single Judge in the first instance, the Panel considers that the absence of a requirement of formal notification by a duly authorised person in a case of evasion follows from a textual and purposive interpretation of Article 2.3 of the ICF ADR.
194. Concerning the wording of Article 2.3 of the ICF ADR, the three words, which begin the text of this provision, “*Evading Sample collection*”, are separated by a semicolon from the rest of the provision concerning the refusal or failure to submit to sample collection without compelling justification after notification by a duly authorized Person. The semicolon makes it grammatically clear that the requirement of notification

is relevant only to the violation of refusing or failing to submit to sample collection, but not to evading it.

195. The textual interpretation of Article 2.3 of the ICF ADR that a notification requirement cannot apply to evasion is supported by logic and common sense because requiring formal notification of an athlete evading a sample collection would most benefit the athlete, who is best able to evade the sample collection. Putting it in simple terms, the quicker and more effective an athlete is at escaping from the testing personnel, the less likely it is that that athlete could be formally notified, and therefore the likelier it is that the athlete could escape the charge of evading sample collection.
196. A similar reasoning applies to chaperoning the athlete in these circumstances. Again, the faster and more effective an athlete is at evading, the less likely it is that that athlete can be chaperoned. Once an athlete is actively evading, the failure of the DCO or BCO to maintain continuous physical proximity is a consequence of the evasion itself, not an independent procedural failure that undermines the case against the athlete. For example, in this case, the BCO's evidence is that, after having been told that she and the DCO were there to carry out a sample collection and having confirmed that she was Yoana Georgieva, the Athlete said she wanted to discuss the test with her Coach and went down the stairs of Building 3, followed by the BCO and the DCO, and then "*when she got to the bottom of the stairs she took a large step like a jump, started walking faster [...]*". The BCO was carrying a cool box and the DCO a large suitcase with the testing kit, which the Panel and Parties witnessed in the last instance in a video shown at the hearing. Clearly, they fell behind, but the BCO still arrived on time to see the Athlete walk into Building X, where the Coach's living quarters were located. Requiring the DCO and BCO to remain next to the Athlete at all times in such circumstances is simply unrealistic, unreasonable, and contrary to common sense.
197. As a result, the Panel rejects the Athlete's claims, which were erroneously accepted by the Single Judge, that the DCO and BCO violated any ISTI requirements relating to proper notification and chaperoning of the Athlete.
198. Concerning the facts, the Panel notes that the proceedings before the CAS ADD were expedited because of the onset of the Paris Games and the objective of obtaining a decision before their start. The time since the Appealed Decision has allowed more evidence to be brought to the proceedings and a better opportunity to engage in a forensic assessment of the alleged facts, including at the hearing, which is set forth below.
199. Turning to the witness statements, the Panel observes - regarding the conduct of the athlete in the present proceedings, as the sole fact to be assessed - first that it cannot ascribe any material probative value to the evidence of Ms. Olimpiya, Ms. Ogniana Dusheva, and the first Confidential Witness, whether contained in their written statements or in their oral testimony at the hearing. Their accounts are based entirely on conversations with an unnamed third party who was allegedly present at the Training Camp and therefore constitute pure hearsay. Accordingly, the Panel will not rely on this evidence in determining the facts in dispute. Furthermore, the second and third Confidential Witnesses, who did not testify at the hearing, addressed in their witness

statements broader issues, such as alleged efforts to provide athletes with advance notice of doping control officers' visits to the Training Camp and the purported use of "doubles" with false identity documents. While such allegations, if substantiated, could warrant further investigation by the anti-doping authorities of the broader context that emerges from the evidence as a whole, they cannot be determinative in these proceedings with respect to the decision on the allegations against the Athlete.

200. As regards the evidence of witnesses who were, or claim to have been, present at the Training Camp on the evening of 15 December 2023, the Panel aligns with CAS jurisprudence holding that the testimony of DCOs and BCOs should, in principle, be regarded as reliable in the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary, on the basis that such officials are presumed to be free from conflicts of interest or other factors liable to undermine their credibility (e.g., CAS 2016/A/4700). Moreover, the Panel notes that the DCO, Mr. Kostadinov, had been a DCO for Clearidium, a worldwide leading Sample Collection Authority, for the past four years and conducted over 80 sample collections. Ms. Florova had been a BCO and Doping Control Chaperone for Clearidium for the past two years and conducted over 10 sample collections. Both the DCO and the BCO speak Bulgarian.
201. In the present case, the Athlete argued that the DCO and BCO may have had an incentive to conceal alleged deficiencies in the notification and chaperoning process. In any event, as explained above, the notification and chaperoning requirements relied upon by the Athlete are irrelevant to a finding of evasion.
202. The Athlete also pointed to a difference between the DCO's initial Supplementary Report (in which he wrote "*She opened and I asked her if she is Yoana Georgieva*") and his amended report (in which he wrote "*a woman opened and in that moment I asked for Yoana Georgieva*"). The Panel does not consider this difference material. Both versions are consistent with the DCO having asked for Yoana Georgieva by name. Any minor variation in wording between a contemporary report and a later witness statement does not undermine the overall reliability of the DCO's account, which is corroborated in all material respects by the BCO's independent evidence.
203. Against this background, the Panel considers the chain of events on the evening of 15 December 2023. The DCO and BCO arrived, saw the lights on in Apartment A on the second floor of Building 3 and went there. Unlike the assessment made by the Single Judge, the video and photographs viewed by the Panel and the Parties at the hearing and the pictures taken by the BCO show a very well-lit environment, including on the porch of Apartment A on the second floor, and a wet ground. The Panel is comfortably satisfied that, after knocking on the door and Ms. Ivanova opening it, the DCO and BCO told Ms. Ivanova that they were there to test "*Yoana Georgieva*", as testified by the DCO and BCO, and not just "*Yoana*". Indeed, it defies credulity that the DCO and BCO would have mentioned just the first name of the Athlete they were meant to test, in circumstances where they had been specifically mandated to test Ms. Georgieva and not a different athlete.
204. Ms. Ivanova may then have called out "*Yo*", but the Panel is comfortably satisfied that the woman who emerged from the room to the right of the entrance, accompanied by a

dog named Gema, was the Athlete. This conclusion is supported by the fact that, when confronted by the DCO and the BCO at approximately 19:36 and informed that they were present to conduct a doping control, the individual in question identified herself as the Athlete. By that time, Ms. Bachvarova had, on her own evidence, already left for the town at around 19:30 to have coffee after dinner. The presence of the dog Gema is likewise established. Mr. Stoyanov initially testified that there was no dog, but subsequently acknowledged at the hearing that Gema was present and that it belonged to the Athlete, before offering an unconvincing retraction when confronted with the inconsistency in his evidence. The Panel further notes that considerable emphasis was placed by the Athlete's legal team on the contention that the DCO and BCO remained outside the entrance door, in contrast to the DCO's evidence that he stepped inside while the BCO remained at the threshold. In the Panel's view, however, little turns on this distinction. Contrary to the Single Judge's understanding, the contemporaneous photographs of the premises demonstrate that the area was well lit, irrespective of whether the individuals were positioned just inside or immediately outside the apartment. Against that background, the Athlete's suggestion that the DCO and BCO could not have recognised the woman notified of the test - on the basis that it was dark, that the Athlete was in Plovdiv, and that they had in fact encountered Ms. Bachvarova - must be rejected. In a well-lit environment such as this, if not in any other environment, the physiognomy of the two cannot be confused by any reasonable onlooker:



205. The Panel is comfortably satisfied that the Athlete may have become nervous upon realising that the DCO and BCO were present to test her, and informed them that she wished to speak with her Coach before proceeding. It is further established that the woman whom the DCO and BCO sought to test descended the stairs, followed first by the BCO and then by the DCO, and walked rapidly the short distance to the entrance of Building X where the Coach resided and entered that building. Between the Athlete's case that the woman remained at the doorway, as opposed to the BCO's account that she entered Building X, the Panel must favour the BCO's impartial evidence. This conclusion is also supported by the surrounding circumstances that it was mid-December and cold, the Athlete was wearing sliders and sports shorts (albeit with a hoodie), and the Coach subsequently emerged from Building X. Had the Athlete remained outside, it is reasonable to expect that she would have been visible to the DCO and BCO, or would have accompanied the Coach when he exited Building X, followed a little later by the Manager (who denied ever entering the same building at the hearing).

206. The Panel is likewise comfortably satisfied that the BCO and DCO spoke with the Coach and the Manager near the bottom of the stairs to the entrance of Building X, where the Coach was residing and the Athlete hiding, as against the Coach's evidence that they went to the far corner of Building X, facing Building 3, out of sight of the entrance of the Coach's living quarters. Contrary to the Single Judge's understanding, the BCO's evidence on this point has been clear and consistent. It is also more plausible that the interaction took place in the immediate vicinity of the entrance, where the woman the DCO and BCO sought to test had just entered and from which the Coach emerged, and close to the restaurant entrance to which the Coach and the Manager directed the DCO and BCO for a period of time.
207. However, even if (*quod non*) the Coach was right, he confirmed unequivocally at the hearing, despite the Athlete's evidence to the contrary, that there was no other way of entering or exiting Building X (contrary to what the Single Judge had understood and accepted at face value). Moreover, the bottom of the stairs leading to the entrance of Building X was also in clear view of anyone entering or exiting the Building X. The Panel is therefore comfortably satisfied that no one entered or exited Building X during the conversation between the DCO, BCO, the Coach and the Manager. The Coach then proceeded to Apartment A on the second floor of Building 3, where the DCO and BCO had earlier checked for the Athlete, but returned stating that she was not at the Training Camp and that the officials had instead encountered Ms. Bachvarova. The BCO further noted in her witness statement that, at that time, the lights in and outside the bungalow were switched off.
208. The Panel notes that the Athlete spent significant time during the hearing denying that she lived in Apartment A on the second floor of Building 3. However, on his own admission, which was confirmed at the hearing, the Coach went to Apartment A on the second floor of Building 3 of his own initiative to check for the Athlete and confirmed three times during the hearing that she lived there, an important fact that was not noted before the CAS ADD. In addition, the Panel was shown video evidence from February 2024, produced by WADA, depicting the Athlete coming out of the very same room as the DCO and BCO had observed her emerge on 15 December 2023. The Panel is therefore comfortably satisfied that the Athlete resided in Apartment A.
209. With this, the Panel notes that the Coach called Ms. Bachvarova at approximately 20:00 to inquire about her whereabouts and instructed her to present herself to the DCO and BCO, who were positioned within sight of the entrance to Building X. She answered that she was having coffee in town, and the Coach asked her to return, visibly irritated that she was not at the Training Camp. In the meantime, the DCO and BCO entered the restaurant opposite the entrance to the Coach's building. As the BCO was waiting in the restaurant, she saw a person dressed like the one she and the DCO had earlier followed to Building X, exit Building X and proceed to Apartment A. The BCO had time to follow that woman until the bottom of Building 3, and to return to the restaurant before Ms. Bachvarova arrived at the restaurant. The Panel is comfortably satisfied that this person could not have been Ms. Bachvarova for the following reasons, which had not been addressed before the CAS ADD. First, according to the DCO's evidence, Ms. Bachvarova only arrived later, at 20:47, by which time the BCO had already returned to the restaurant. Second, Ms. Bachvarova was dressed in city clothing and

footwear, in contrast to the person previously observed and followed to Building X. Third, Ms. Bachvarova's facial features were also different from those of the person the DCO and BCO had seen a little more than one hour previously and followed to the Coach's building. Finally, upon returning from downtown Kardzhali, Ms. Bachvarova went directly to the restaurant, which lies in the opposite direction from Apartment A in Building 3.

210. Furthermore, the Panel questions how the individual seen entering Building X (whom the Athlete claims was Ms. Bachvarova, allegedly informed of the doping test at 19:36) could have reached downtown Kardzhali by 20:00 for coffee, dressed in the same city attire worn upon her later return. The Athlete suggested that an alternative exit from the Building X led to a car park, where Ms. Bachvarova met her then-boyfriend before going into town. However, this account fails to explain when and where the individual, initially seen wearing pink sliders and sports shorts, changed into the city clothing later worn by Ms. Bachvarova. Moreover, as stated, the Coach himself confirmed at the hearing that there was no alternative exit from his building, and that any person leaving would necessarily have passed along the path where the DCO, BCO, and the Coach were standing when discussing whether Ms. Georgieva was at the Training Camp. Yet, neither the DCO nor the BCO observed anyone leaving Building X, except for the individual later seen by the BCO making her way toward Apartment A on the second floor of Building 3. Although the BCO followed this person, it was apparent at the hearing that the individual had already reached the second floor by the time the BCO arrived at the staircase. The lights had been turned off following the Coach's earlier check for the Athlete. In these circumstances, it is understandable that the BCO did not recognise the individual who briefly greeted her upon noticing she was being followed. Accordingly, the Panel is comfortably satisfied that the individual who left Building X and made her way to Apartment A in Building 3 was the Athlete, and not Ms. Bachvarova or any unidentified third party.
211. Turning now to the Athlete's claim that she was in Plovdiv at the relevant time, she submits that she travelled there in the morning, met her university teacher in the afternoon (although the original meeting time was at 9:30) and then stayed overnight with her sister after having dined on a pizza. At the hearing, the Athlete repeated that she is not a good driver. She also acknowledged that orange weather warnings were in force, with public advice discouraging travel. Nevertheless, she maintained at the hearing that weather conditions were better in the morning and that she departed for Plovdiv at around 8:00. The Coach testified at the hearing that, under good conditions and using the highway, the journey to Plovdiv would take approximately two hours. However, the Athlete testified that the road to Plovdiv has many turns, suggesting she allegedly took the normal road and not the highway, which means she would have taken longer to arrive at Plovdiv. Furthermore, an article from the Sofia Globe of 14 December 2023 confirms that "*Code Orange*" warnings of hazardous weather had been issued for 15 December 2023 for various districts, including Plovdiv and Kurdzhali, with weather worsening throughout the day. Despite these warnings, the Athlete claims she took the windy road to Plovdiv, and did not return in the evening because of bad weather conditions. Further, a departure at approximately 8:00 in the morning would have made it unlikely for her to attend the originally scheduled 9:30 meeting, for which no supporting evidence was provided. According to her own account at the hearing, she

did not notify her teacher prior to departure but instead called *en route* to postpone the meeting to the afternoon. Her evidence at the hearing regarding that call was unclear. She initially stated that she did not stop during the journey, then claimed she made the call while stationary at a red light, before ultimately suggesting that she spoke while driving, despite acknowledging her lack of confidence as a driver, having obtained her driving licence in January 2023.

212. The Panel notes there is no evidence of this journey or of any other alleged events in Plovdiv that day, which were accepted at face value by the Single Judge, despite the time available to the Athlete to produce any such evidence. Her university teacher, A., was not called to testify and merely provided a written statement asserting that the Athlete had been present. The Athlete claimed that A. feared reprisals from the university if she testified in person. However, this assertion was unsupported by any evidence. The only documentary evidence produced to support the Athlete's account, which was not available to the Single Judge, was a bank statement belonging to her sister, with whom the Athlete claims to have spent the evening and night. But even that piece of evidence merely undermined the Athlete's case. The statement purportedly reflected a purchase at "BBQ Brothers", said to correspond to a takeaway pizza consumed by the Athlete and her sister. However, the statement shows multiple transactions at "BBQ Brothers", each time with an expenditure of some 6-7 EUR. However, when confronted at the hearing with the establishment's menu, which lists only hamburgers costing 6-7 EUR but no pizzas at all, the Athlete was unable to provide an explanation. The Athlete's attorney apologised at the hearing, saying it was his mistake. In these circumstances, the Panel concludes that no evidence supports the Athlete's assertions, and no witnesses were brought to the hearing for cross-examination, whether her university teacher or her sister. To the contrary, the only new piece of evidence brought to the proceedings undermined the Athlete's case, and went so far as to elicit an apology from the Athlete's attorney.
213. The Athlete further claims that she returned to the Training Camp the following day, a journey of at least two to three hours, and the evidence shows that she changed her whereabouts filings for Saturday and Sunday from the Training Camp to Plovdiv, notwithstanding that the training programme was ongoing and only concluded on 17 or 18 December. On her account, she therefore drove back to the Training Camp only to return again to Plovdiv the same day, prior to the formal conclusion of the programme. To the question of why the Athlete did not visit her university teacher on Monday 18 December since she was in Plovdiv, she answered, unsupported by any evidence, that she had an awards ceremony. To the question why she did not stop off in Plovdiv when she returned from Sofia on December 14, knowing also that Code Orange warnings for hazardous weather were in force for December 15, having acknowledged that Plovdiv was on the way between Sofia and the Training Camp, she answered that she had things to get before driving to Plovdiv on 15 December. Without specification as to which things were so important to get before meeting her university professor to justify a round trip from the Training Camp to Plovdiv of at least four hours in total, the Panel finds the Athlete's explanation unconvincing.
214. As a result, the Panel concludes that the Athlete's claims that she was in Plovdiv on 15 December 2023 remained entirely unsubstantiated. The limited evidence that was

proffered, namely the bank statements, contradicted her claim that she ate a pizza with her sister, and in any event stand in clear contrast to the DCO's and BCO's unbiased evidence that she was the person they notified of the intended sample collection at the Training Camp on 15 December 2023. The Panel is comfortably satisfied that the Athlete evaded sample collection, contrary to Article 2.3 of the ICF ADR. The Panel is comfortably satisfied that the Athlete tampered, and then lied about what she had done, and procured that others lie on her behalf, thereby violating Article 2.5 of the ICF ADR, which prohibits tampering. Indeed, the four constituent elements of tampering are all met: (i) the Athlete's conduct was plainly intentional; (ii) it subverted the doping control process by preventing the collection of a sample and by generating a false narrative, including through the presentation of Ms. Bachvarova as the person who had interacted with the DCO and BCO; (iii) it formed part of the doping control process broadly defined, which encompasses all steps from test distribution planning through to ultimate disposition of any appeal; and (iv) the conduct does not fall within the definition of a prohibited method. In particular, by knowingly allowing others to falsely represent that Ms. Bachvarova was the person who had been notified, and by procuring witness statements that the Panel has found to be false, the Athlete procured false testimony from witnesses within the meaning of the definition of tampering in the ICF ADR.

215. In light of the Panel's findings of evasion under Article 2.3 and tampering under Article 2.5, it is not necessary to consider WADA's alternative submission that the Athlete committed a refusal or failure to submit to sample collection.

IX. SANCTIONS

216. Article 10.9.3.1 of the ICF ADR provides that the Athlete's two ADRVs must be considered as one single first violation, and Article 10.3.1 of the ICF ADR provides that the period of ineligibility for violations of Articles 2.3 and 2.5 of the ICF ADR is four years. The Panel's finding of evasion and tampering are both plainly intentional in nature. Hence, neither the two-year reduction for non-intentional conduct under Article 10.3.1(i) nor any reduction for exceptional circumstances under Article 10.3.1(ii) apply in this case. Moreover, the Athlete has not otherwise argued that any exceptions to this sanction apply in this case. The full four-year sanction thus applies in this case beginning on the date of this Award.
217. Moreover, Article 10.4 of the ICF ADR provides for an increase of up to two years in cases where aggravating circumstances are present, including *inter alia* lying and procuring others to lie about the relevant circumstances. In this case, the Panel is comfortably satisfied that aggravating circumstances are present within the meaning of the definition set out in the ICF ADR: the Athlete engaged in deceptive conduct to avoid the adjudication of an ADRV, and engaged in tampering during results management. The evidence before the Panel shows that the Athlete maintained a false account of her whereabouts across multiple sets of proceedings, and that a number of witnesses provided testimony that the Panel has found to be untrue.
218. However, in exercising its discretion on the quantum of the increase, the Panel does not lose sight of the broader context that emerges from the evidence as a whole. The

confidential witness statements and the surrounding evidence paint a picture of a systemic culture within the Bulgarian national canoe-kayak structure in which athletes are placed in situations not entirely of their own making: federation officials, coaching staff and others appear to have facilitated and, in some instances, orchestrated the evasion of doping control. When that system fails or is exposed, it is invariably the athlete, the most visible and most vulnerable participant, who bears the legal consequences alone, while those who organised or enabled the conduct face none. The Panel is not indifferent to that reality. It notes, in particular, that the Athlete is a young woman who has competed at the highest level and that she has been subject to 32 sample collections since the events in question and has never returned any positive result. The Panel recognises that the pressure to maintain a false account, once initiated, may have been considerable, and that the Athlete may not have acted entirely freely.

219. That said, the Panel cannot disregard the aggravating circumstances it has found to exist. Anti-doping rules exist not only to protect the integrity of sport in the abstract, but above all to protect the athletes who compete cleanly and who are directly disadvantaged when their competitors are not tested. Those athletes are entitled to the full and faithful application of the rules. The Panel therefore concludes that the maximum period of two years must be added to the four years ineligibility set forth in Article 10.3.1. The total period of ineligibility is accordingly six years, beginning on the date of this Award.
220. Pursuant to Article 10.13.2 of the ICF ADR, the Athlete is entitled to receive credit for the provisional suspension she served from 10 June 2024 until 15 July 2024.
221. Article 10.10 of the ICF ADR provides that all competitive results from the date of the attempted sample collection to the date of this Award must be disqualified. The Athlete has not argued that fairness should require otherwise, and the Panel sees no other factors that should lead to a different result.

X. COSTS

(...)

ON THESE GROUNDS

The Court of Arbitration for Sport rules that:

1. The appeal filed by the World Anti-Doping Agency on 3 July 2025 and the Cross-Appeal filed by the International Canoe Federation on 3 October 2025 are upheld.
2. The decision by the Court of Arbitration for Sport Anti-Doping Division, whose operative part was rendered on 15 July 2024 and reasoned part on 23 May 2025, is set aside.
3. Ms. Yoana Georgieva is found to have committed anti-doping rule violations under Articles 2.3 and 2.5 of the International Canoe Federation Anti-Doping Rules.
4. Ms. Yoana Georgieva is sanctioned with a period of ineligibility of six years, in accordance with Articles 10.3.1 and 10.4 of the International Canoe Federation Anti-Doping Rules, starting on the date on which this Award enters into force, with credit being given for the period of provisional suspension she served from 10 June 2024 until 15 July 2024, pursuant to Article 10.13.2 of the International Canoe Federation Anti-Doping Rules.
5. All competitive results obtained by Ms. Yoana Georgieva from and including 15 December 2023 are disqualified, with all resulting consequences (including forfeiture of medals, points and prizes).
6. (...).
7. (...).
8. All other motions or prayers for relief are dismissed.

Seat of arbitration: Lausanne, Switzerland

Date: 3 August 2026

THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

Romano Subiotto KC
President of the Panel

Marianne Saroli
Arbitrator

Patrick Lafranchi
Arbitrator