

Dear colleagues,

After more than twenty years of commitment within AIPS—whether as an athletics delegate, commission president, or member of the AIPS Europe and AIPS World Executive Committees—I am seeking your support for the presidency of AIPS Europe.

A journalist at *L'Équipe* for more than 35 years, I have covered every Summer Olympic Games from Seoul to Paris, and for over ten years I reported on the International Olympic Committee, which has given me strong connections in Lausanne and across many international federations. Recently retired, I will be a president fully available to serve our association.

This candidacy is not mine alone; it is the result of several months of work by journalists from all over Europe who wish to energize AIPS Europe and refocus it on its core objectives. We have refined this project with you during several video conferences, and we hope you will place your trust in us to carry it forward.

Marc Ventouillac

marcventouillac@aol.com / +33 6 83 94 96 29

MAIN OBJECTIVES

We propose the following main objectives for AIPS Europe, with possible expansion to include colleagues from other continents, and to engage with CAF and CONMEBOL, among others. These objectives concern all types of journalists, including photographers and camera operators:

- **Strengthen support and access for AIPS members.** Fight for journalists' access beyond the barriers imposed by PR and media departments of clubs, federations or athletes. Lobby for uniform media access standards across international sports federations and events.
- **Enhance institutional influence and relevance.** In support and full collaboration of AIPS and its sport delegates, we want to be involved in discussions with various international (FIFA, UCI, IOC, etc.) and continental (UEFA, EOC, EA, etc.) sports organizations, following the model of the football working group created at the initiative of several of us three years ago in Korea. Our main goals are to defend your interests and to secure AIPS representation at our level in decision-making processes regarding media policies.
- **Defend press freedom and the independence of sports media.** Monitor, report and fight against violations of journalists' rights.

PROGRAM

In line with our main objectives, we must develop a strategic plan based on the following elements:

Creation of working groups with major federations

The AIPS football working group has been negotiating with UEFA and FIFA for some time. Other working groups could be established to follow this model, negotiating with major sports federations in support of World AIPS and our delegates, and more directly with European organizations (European Olympic Committees, European Athletics, European Aquatics, FIBA Europe, and others). These groups should align with the sports delegates already doing valuable work within AIPS.

The goal is to work together to protect the rights and working conditions of sports journalists and photographers. In addition to working conditions, we must focus on defending press freedom. We need to react more quickly and show solidarity when our profession faces challenges.

Accreditation issues are also essential. AIPS Europe must contact continental sports federations to introduce itself and explore ways of improving working conditions. This would include sending a formal statement reaffirming our role and values. Working groups must become a powerful tool to protect our profession.

Creation of working groups on future challenges

A working group on content creators has already been established within AIPS, resulting in a recently published working paper. AIPS Europe can organize its own group on this topic to provide feedback to the international group. For now, we should focus on implementing and promoting across Europe the text developed by Joze Zidar's group.

Another thematic working group could address the challenges and issues posed by artificial intelligence in our field. Suggestions for additional topics are most welcome.

Working group on the role of women in the media

A working group on the role of women in sports media must be a priority. Its mission should be to improve working conditions for female sports journalists and support them in addressing the challenges they face.

This group should develop a clear vision, identify the main concerns of female journalists, and propose solutions. Since challenges may differ across continents, each continent could create its own working group to map out specific issues. A global working group could then compare findings, distinguish between global and local challenges, and work toward concrete solutions.

Full transparency and improved communication

To build a strong AIPS Europe, we must develop one voice, one goal and one direction. Full transparency is essential, both regarding activities and finances.

We must improve two-way communication between the AIPS Europe Board and national associations. At least once a year (in addition to the meeting during the AIPS Congress), we should organize a formal or informal congress via Zoom to exchange ideas and share initiatives. Every quarter (or at least every six months), a summary of the Board's and working groups' activities should be circulated. Quarterly reports from the future treasurer could be published on the website and a most detailed report presented to the congress.

The website could be used to inform on problems of national associations, which could be solved by the way other associations handle the same problems; The website should in general be a better tool on communication: someone in the newly chosen EC of AIPS Europe should be designated to occupy on the website, with the help of other members..

All working groups will be open to everyone and assigned clearly defined missions.

In light of the recent crisis during which members of the board of Executive Committee delayed the convening of the electoral congress, we identified shortcomings in the statutes. A working group will therefore be established to revise and improve the statutes, ensuring greater clarity and stronger democratic guarantees.

Seeking financial resources

The financial position of AIPS Europe is good. That allows us to consider using funds for the benefit of aiding national associations that possess limited funds and other initiatives that can help members across the continent as outlined in your document.

But to properly implement all these initiatives and to support countries in need, we should explore potential partnerships to secure financial backing. The European Union could be approached as a partner, and the Council of Europe might also be contacted to support specific initiatives.

Increasing the visibility of AIPS Europe

We could adapt the AIPS Awards to continental events (for example, best article written during a European championship), in partnership with continental federations. A “European Champion of the Year” award could also be considered.

Solidarity

We must continue to show solidarity with our Ukrainian colleagues and reflect on how we can support them once the war is over, even if that day unfortunately still seems far away. A working group will be created to closely monitor the situation in Ukraine and determine the best ways to support our colleagues. If journalists in other countries are in need, AIPS Europe must stand by them.

Strengthening membership

Some ask: why join AIPS? We should recover the database of former members who have not renewed their cards and reach out to them. We also need to promote AIPS in major newsrooms and in countries with limited engagement. We must demonstrate that AIPS Europe is useful. It is up to us to prove it.

Consultation with the AIPS President and continental presidents

We will need discussions with the AIPS President to clarify the division of responsibilities, avoid overlaps, and ensure that global AIPS does not absorb initiatives that should fall within Europe’s remit. We must also clarify what logistical support headquarters can provide.

We also intend to organize an exchange of experiences with continental section presidents, whether in Lausanne, via videoconference, or alongside an AIPS Executive Committee meeting.