



GUIDANCE ON THE PRINCIPLE OF NEUTRALITY (Article 12.2.1.o of the ISC)

For over half a century (since 8 May 1970 – Article 2 of the FIA Statutes), the FIA has maintained the principle of neutrality as one of its guiding values. Like the International Olympic Committee and many other sport governing bodies, this principle is reflected in its core rules (Article 1.2 of the FIA Statutes), which sets out the FIA's commitment not to discriminate on account of race, skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or social origin, language, religion, philosophical or political opinion, family situation, or disability.

Article 12.2.1.o has been included in the [FIA International Sporting Code](#) (ISC) on 1 January 2023 to cement the FIA's longstanding commitment to protecting motor sport's neutrality. This provision makes the following a breach of the rule:

*“The general making and display of **political, religious and personal statements or comments** notably in **violation of the general principle of neutrality** promoted by the FIA under its Statutes, unless previously approved in writing by the FIA for International Competitions, or by the relevant ASN for National Competitions within their jurisdiction. Appendix B contains the Penalty Guidelines.” [emphasis added].*

This note is intended to provide guidance to drivers and other participants (officials, teams, competitors, etc.) on the implementation of this principle during International Competitions.

Why does this principle exist and what does it aim to achieve?

The participants in International Competitions are part of a global community with different views, lifestyles and values. To ensure respect for this diversity, it is fundamental that motor sport remains neutral and thus separate from and free of political, religious, or personal interference.

The focus at any International Competition must remain on motor sport and on the performances of teams and drivers. It should not be used as a platform for individual advocacy.

This principle also aims to prevent participants from being placed in a position where they may be forced to take a public position on a particular domestic or international issue when they would prefer not to do so.

Can participants express their own views?

Yes. Participants can express their views on any political, religious or personal matter before, during and after the International Competition, in their own space, and outside the scope of the International Competition, for example:

- through their social media; or
- during interviews with accredited media (such as any TV or print media interviews),
- during the FIA press conference, only in response to direct questions from accredited journalists.

In addition, as explained below, on an exceptional and case-by-case basis, the FIA may authorise a participant to make a statement at an International Competition that would otherwise be prohibited by Article 12.2.1.o.



When expressing their views, participants are expected to respect applicable laws, the FIA's values, and all other participants. Any behaviour and/or expression that constitutes or signals discrimination, hatred, hostility, or the potential for violence is contrary to the FIA's values and will not be tolerated.

When does Article 12.2.1.o apply?

Participants are not permitted to make political, religious and/or personal statements in violation of the general principle of neutrality during:

- FIA press conferences (except in response to direct questions from accredited journalists);
- activities on the track (Course) area or equivalent (e.g., during the Drivers Parade and the national anthem); or
- pre-race / post-race procedures or equivalent (e.g., the podium ceremony, in the cool down room, or at the start- and end-of-season group photos).

What constitutes "political", "religious" or "personal"?

It is the responsibility of the Stewards to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a statement or comment – whether in the form of an image, symbol, gesture, words, or actions – is in breach of Article 12.2.1.o of the ISC. To aid the Stewards in making such determinations, the FIA has prepared a non-exhaustive list of potential scenarios that could be prohibited under Article 12.2.1.o. However, this list is intended to be illustrative only, and Stewards will carefully assess the specific circumstances of each potential contravention when determining whether a breach of the rules has occurred.

Illustrative examples

It is likely that a participant has breached the ISC under Article 12.2.1.o if they make any unapproved statements or comments – whether in the form of an image, symbol, gesture, words, or actions – related to the following:

➤ **Political:**

- Any politically-associated or politically-sensitive person(s) living or dead (unless part of the official competition name).
- Any local, regional, national, or international political party/ organisation/group.
- Any local, regional, or national government or any of its departments, offices or functions.
- Any function or branch of government (e.g., any statement or comment regarding the police or military).
- Any reference (whether express or implied) to separatist movements (e.g., the display of a flag or symbol associated with an independence movement).
- Any organisation whose aims or actions: (i) conflict with the FIA's values or Diversity and Inclusion mission; and/or (ii) include hostility, prejudice, or unlawful discrimination on the grounds set out in Article 1.2 of the FIA Statutes.
- Any reference to any totalitarian regime that justified mass killing (e.g., pro-Nazi chants).
- Any specific political act/ event.
- Any military conflict or political dispute between nations, regions, religions, or communities.
- Any specific ethnic or indigenous communities, or perceived discrimination by one community against another.

➤ **Religious:**

- A religion, spiritual practice, or related significant figure, except as indicated below.
- Anything critical of or hostile to others' religious or spiritual beliefs.

N.B.:

- Private, non-proselytising religious gestures, such as pointing to the sky or crossing oneself, shall not be considered prohibited religious statements.



- Article 12.2.1.o will not be used to sanction individuals who display religious symbols or wear prescribed religious clothing/ornaments, unless they include prohibited statements or comments of the kind mentioned above.
- **Personal:**
 - Any circumstance personal to the participant. Competitors must not use events as a platform to share personal statements of any kind in violation of the general principle of neutrality.

Seeking approval under Article 12.2.1.o of the ISC

- On an exceptional and case-by-case basis, the FIA may authorise a participant to make a statement at an International Competition that would otherwise be prohibited by Article 12.2.1.o.
- Anyone seeking the permission of the FIA as per Article 12.2.1.o of the ISC must submit a written request to the FIA, providing reason(s) why such permission should be granted.
- Such request must be received **at least four weeks before the event concerned**. Late requests will only be considered by the FIA on an exceptional basis.
- Please be advised that:
 - approval, if granted, shall only last for the duration of a specified race/event, after which it will automatically expire; and
 - there shall be no right of appeal against the FIA's decision to approve or reject an Article 12.2.1.o request.
- If the participant wants to make the statement or comment at a National Competition, they should seek the permission of the relevant ASN.

What happens if a participant does not comply with Article 12.2.1.o?

Anyone who is aware of a potential breach of Article 12.2.1.o should notify the Race Director (if appointed) or otherwise the Clerk of the Course. They in turn may report the matter to the Stewards. Where breach of Article 12.2.1.o is established, the Stewards may impose any of the penalties listed under Article 12.4.1 of the ISC.

Alleged violations of the ethical principles contained in the FIA regulations (e.g., Article 3.1 of the FIA Code of Ethics, which provides that *"the FIA Parties and Third Parties shall work to maintain harmonious relations with national authorities, in accordance with the principle of universality and of political neutrality of the FIA"*) may also be reported through the FIA Ethics and Compliance Hotline (available at <http://www.fia-ethicsline.com/>). All reports will be duly assessed, and any wrongdoing will be addressed in accordance with FIA regulations.