
Decision of the Athletics Integrity Unit in the Case of Ms Dimitriana Bezede

Introduction

1. World Athletics has established the Athletics Integrity Unit ("**AIU**") whose role is to protect the integrity of the sport of Athletics, including fulfilling World Athletics' obligations as a Signatory to the World Anti-Doping Code (the "**Code**"). World Athletics has delegated implementation of the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules ("**ADR**") to the AIU, including but not limited to the following activities in relation to International-Level Athletes: Testing, Investigations, Results Management, Hearings, Sanctions and Appeals.
2. Ms Dimitriana Bezede ("the **Athlete**") is a 31-year-old from Moldova that specialises in the shot put¹.
3. This decision is issued by the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR, which provides as follows:

"8.5.6 In the event that the Athlete or other Person either (i) admits the violation and accepts the proposed Consequences or (ii) is deemed to have admitted the violation and accepted the Consequences as per Rule 8.5.2(f), the Integrity Unit will promptly:

- (a) issue a decision confirming the commission of the violation(s) and the imposition of the specified Consequences (including, if applicable, a justification for why the maximum potential sanction was not imposed);*
- (b) Publicly Report that decision in accordance with Rule 14;*
- (c) send a copy of the decision to the Athlete or other Person and to any other party that has a right, further to Rule 13, to appeal the decision (and any such party may, within 15 days of receipt, request a copy of the full case file pertaining to the decision)."*

The Athlete's Commission of Anti-Doping Rule Violations

4. Rule 2 ADR sets out that the following shall constitute an Anti-Doping Rule Violation:

¹ [Dimitriana BEZEDE | Profile | World Athletics](#)

“2.1 Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete’s Sample

[...]

2.2 Use or Attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method”

5. On 8 March 2025, the Athlete provided a urine Sample In-Competition at the European Athletics Indoor Championships in Apeldoorn, Netherlands, which was given code 10301026169 (the “**Sample**”).
6. Analysis of the Sample by the World Anti-Doping Agency (“**WADA**”) accredited laboratory in Kreischa, Germany (the “**Laboratory**”) revealed the presence of a Metabolite of letrozole (the “**Adverse Analytical Finding**”).
7. Letrozole is a Prohibited Substance under the WADA 2025 Prohibited List under the category S4.1 Aromatase Inhibitors. It is a Specified Substance prohibited at all times.
8. The AIU reviewed the Adverse Analytical Finding in accordance with Article 5 of the International Standard for Results Management (“**ISRM**”) and determined that:
 - 8.1.1. The Athlete did not have a Therapeutic Use Exemption (“**TUE**”) that had been granted (or would have been granted) for the letrozole found in the Sample; and
 - 8.1.2. there was no apparent departure from the International Standard for Testing and Investigations (“**ISTI**”) or from the International Standard for Laboratories (“**ISL**”) that could reasonably have caused the Adverse Analytical Finding.
9. Therefore, in accordance with Article 5.1.2.1 ISRM, the AIU issued the Athlete with a Notice of Allegation of Anti-Doping Rule Violations on 7 April 2025 and invited the Athlete to provide an explanation for the presence of the letrozole Metabolite in her Sample.
10. On 14 April 2025, the Athlete provided her response to the Notice of Allegation, admitting the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and explaining that she had been prescribed letrozole in December 2024 in the context of legitimate medical treatment.
11. On 21 May 2025, the AIU received an opinion from an independent scientific expert, Professor Martial Saugy, that the Athlete’s explanation of her use of letrozole was consistent with the Adverse Analytical Finding.
12. The AIU noted that the circumstances of the Athlete’s explanation did not provide justification for the grant of a retroactive Therapeutic Use Exemption (“**r-TUE**”) pursuant to Article 4.2 of the WADA International Standard for Therapeutic Use Exemptions (“**ISTUE**”). However, the AIU considered that the Athlete may (with WADA’s approval) potentially be granted a r-TUE pursuant to Article 4.3 of the ISTUE, which provides that a r-TUE may be granted if, considering the purpose of the Code, it would be manifestly unfair not to do so.
13. On 28 August 2025, at the invitation of the AIU, the Athlete applied for a r-TUE.

14. On 22 September 2025, the World Athletics Therapeutic Use Exemption Committee (“**WATUEC**”) confirmed that the criteria of Article 4.2 ISTUE were satisfied.
15. On 10 December 2025, the AIU applied to WADA for its approval to grant a r-TUE to the Athlete under Article 4.3 ISTUE.
16. On 23 December 2025, WADA rejected the AIU’s application and refused permission to grant a r-TUE to the Athlete under Article 4.3 ISTUE.
17. On 17 February 2026, the AIU wrote to the Athlete to inform her that WADA had refused the AIU’s application to grant her r-TUE under Article 4.3 ISTUE and that, consequently, the AIU must necessarily proceed with Results Management in relation to the Adverse Analytical Finding.
18. The AIU confirmed that it would assess the circumstances of the Athlete’s case to determine the appropriate Consequences to be imposed for Anti-Doping Rule Violations pursuant to Rule 2.1 ADR and Rule 2.2 ADR and inform the Athlete accordingly.
19. On 5 March 2026, the AIU wrote to the Athlete, proposing a twelve (12) month period of Ineligibility based on her level of Fault for the Anti-Doping Rule Violations backdated to 1 July 2025 in accordance with Rule 10.13.1 ADR.
20. On 10 March 2026, the AIU received an Admission of Anti-Doping Rule Violations and Acceptance of Consequences Form signed by the Athlete.

Consequences

21. This is the Athlete’s first Anti-Doping Rule Violation.
22. Rule 10.2 ADR specifies that the period of Ineligibility for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.1 ADR or Rule 2.2 ADR shall be as follows:
 - “10.2.1 Save where Rule 10.2.4 applies, the period of Ineligibility will be four years where:
 - (a) The anti-doping rule violation does not involve a Specified Substance or a Specified Method, unless the Athlete or other Person can establish that the anti-doping rule violation was not intentional.
 - (b) The anti-doping rule violation involves a Specified Substance or a Specified Method and the Integrity Unit can establish that the anti-doping rule violation was intentional.*
 - 10.2.2 If Rule 10.2.1 does not apply, then (subject to Rule 10.2.4(a)) the period of Ineligibility will be two years.”*
23. Letrozole is a Prohibited Substance under the WADA 2025 Prohibited List under the category S4.1 Aromatase Inhibitors. It is a Specified Substance prohibited at all times.

24. The period of Ineligibility to be imposed is therefore a period of two (2) years, unless the AIU demonstrates that the Anti-Doping Rule Violations were intentional.
25. The AIU accepts that the violations were not intentional and the mandatory period of Ineligibility to be imposed is therefore a period of two (2) years.

A. The Athlete's Level of Fault

26. Rule 10.6.1(a) provides for potential reduction of the period of Ineligibility down to a reprimand and no period of Ineligibility if the Athlete can establish No Significant Fault or Negligence.
27. The AIU accepts that the Athlete has satisfied the threshold requirement for No Significant Fault or Negligence to demonstrate (on the balance of probabilities) the source of the letrozole Metabolite in her Sample, that being the the letrozole medication that was prescribed to her in December 2024 last used on 21 February 2025².
28. As to the analysis of the Athlete's level of Fault, the AIU considers the cases concerning Tennis players Marin Cilic (CAS 2013/A/3327 & CAS 2013/A/3335) and Sara Errani (CAS 2017/A/5301) to be instructive.
29. The CAS Panel's decision in *Cilic v ITF*, CAS 2013/A/3327, paras 69 et seq, provides helpful guidance on assessing where Fault lies within a stated range. It was a case under Art 10.4 of the 2009 Code, where a reduction below two years was permitted if there was no intent to enhance performance, even if there was significant fault or negligence, and it established the following three categories: (a) a '*[s]ignificant degree of or considerable fault: 16 - 24 months, with a "standard" significant fault leading to a suspension of 20 months*'; (b) a '*[n]ormal degree of fault: 8 - 16 months, with a "standard" normal degree of fault leading to a suspension of 12 months*'; and (c) a '*[l]ight degree of fault: 0 - 8 months, with a "standard" light degree of fault leading to a suspension of 4 months*'
30. Since under the 2015 Code (and the 2021 Code) there is only discretion to reduce below two years if there is No Significant Fault or Negligence, CAS panels have adapted the *Cilic* framework accordingly, in particular, in *Errani v ITF*, CAS 2017/A/5301: '*The time span of 24 months which is still available [under the 2015 WADA Code] now covers only two instead of three categories of fault: normal degree of fault (over 12 months and up to 24 months with a standard normal degree leading to an 18-month period of ineligibility); and light degree of fault (0-12 months with a standard light degree leading to a 6-month period of ineligibility). The other guiding principles identified in Cilic in order to determine the degree of fault in an individual case continue to be applicable*'
31. The CAS Panel in *Cilic* set out the relevant factors for consideration of the "objective" and "subjective" assessment. In considering the objective elements, the CAS Panel in *Cilic* noted

² The Athlete's claim was supported by detailed evidence by way of the Athlete's medical file which corroborated her medical condition and her prescribed treatment with letrozole. The AIU also obtained an independent expert scientific opinion confirming that the estimated concentration of the letrozole Metabolite detected in the Sample (14ng/mL) is consistent with the Athlete's last ingestion on 21 February 2025.

that almost all violations related to the ingestion of a product containing a prohibited substance could be avoided because the athlete could always: (i) read the label of the product used (or otherwise ascertain the ingredients), (ii) cross-check all the ingredients on the label with the list of prohibited substances, (iii) make an internet search of the product, (iv) ensure the product is reliably sourced, and (v) consult appropriate experts in such matters and instruct them diligently before consuming the product. Noting that the above steps may not be appropriate in all circumstances, the CAS Panel confirmed that, for substances that are prohibited at all times, these steps were appropriate and required particular diligence from an athlete. Accordingly, the CAS Panel confirmed that the full scale of duty of care designed to prevent the athlete ingesting a prohibited substance is applicable.

32. For the subjective assessment of Fault, the CAS determined that factors including youth/inexperience, language or environmental problems, level of education and other personal impairments should be considered.
33. In assessing the Athlete's Fault pursuant to the foregoing, the AIU notes that the letrozole medication was reliably sourced by the Athlete pursuant to a prescription and that the Athlete was assured by her prescribing physician that the medication was generally 'safe' and 'not prohibited'.
34. However, the AIU also notes that the Athlete was a member of the International Registered Testing Pool from 2017 to 2018, and in 2020, and a member of the National Registered Testing Pool in 2021, 2023 and 2024). The Athlete also accepts that she has received anti-doping education by way of an annual seminar provided by the Moldovan National Anti-Doping Agency.
35. Notwithstanding the Athlete's inclusion in Registered Testing Pools and the anti-doping education that she received, the Athlete failed to request a TUE in advance in ignorance of the Rules that applied to her. Her conduct in not knowing the Rules and failing to conduct even the most rudimentary of checks of the medication that she was prescribed before it was ingested weighs against the Athlete in determining her level of Fault for the Anti-Doping Rule Violations in this matter.
36. Nevertheless, the AIU notes that the WATUEC confirmed that the Athlete's medical file meets all of the requirements of Article 4.2 of the ISTUE for a TUE to be granted and the AIU accepts that the Athlete has acted in good faith at all times and has fully cooperated with the AIU in relation to its investigation of this matter.
37. The AIU accepts that the Athlete's focus was on treating her medical condition and that her level of awareness (to apply for a TUE in advance of taking the letrozole she had been prescribed) was therefore reduced by a careless but understandable mistake.

38. In all the circumstances, the AIU considers that the Athlete's level of Fault is at the lowest end of the normal range and that a twelve (12) month period of Ineligibility is appropriate, commencing on 1 July 2025³.
39. On the basis that the Athlete has admitted to committing Anti-Doping Rule Violations under Rule 2.1 ADR and Rule 2.2 ADR, and accepted the period of Ineligibility of twelve (12) months, the AIU confirms by its decision the following consequences for a first Anti-Doping Rule Violation:
- 39.1. a period of Ineligibility of twelve (12) months commencing on 1 July 2025 and expiring on 30 June 2026; and
- 39.2. disqualification of the Athlete's results at the 2025 European Athletics Indoor Championships⁴ and from 8 March 2025 until the date of this Decision⁵, with all resulting consequences including the forfeiture of any titles, awards, medals, points and prize and appearance money.
40. Pursuant to Rule 8.5.6(b) ADR, the AIU shall publicly report this decision on the AIU's website.

Rights of Appeal

41. This decision constitutes the final decision of the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR.
42. Further to Rule 13.2.3 ADR, the Athlete, WADA and the Government of Republic of Moldova National Anti-Doping Agency have a right of appeal against this decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland, in accordance with the procedure set out at Rule 13.6.1 ADR.
43. If an appeal is filed against this decision by WADA or the Government of Republic of Moldova National Anti-Doping Agency, the Athlete will be entitled to exercise her right of cross-appeal in accordance with Rule 13.2.4 ADR.

Monaco, 25 March 2026

³ In accordance with Rule 10.13.1 ADR. This case was delayed due to the Athlete's application (at the AIU's invitation) for a r-TUE which required a first referral to the WATUEC and then a further referral to WADA. These delays were not attributable to the Athlete and the AIU has agreed to backdate the start of her period of Ineligibility in the circumstances to 1 July 2025.

⁴ In accordance with Rule 9 ADR.

⁵ In accordance with Rule 10.10 ADR.