

## **An Open Letter to European Athletics regarding sponsorship of the European Indoor Championships by Shell**

To:

Dobromir Karamarinov, President

Christian Milz, CEO

Cc: Cherry Alexander, Jean Gracia, Libor Varhanik, Vice Presidents

Cc: Charles Braun, Head of Marketing

Biljana Danicic, Head of Communications

European Athletics

Avenue Louis-Ruchonnet 16

1003, Lausanne

Switzerland

We are writing to you as individuals and organisations passionately committed to the sport of athletics and the benefits it brings, but equally concerned about preserving the climate and environment that the sport depends upon. We believe that all sports, including athletics, have a vital role to play in both exemplifying the changes needed to prevent climate breakdown, preserve the air that we breathe and the environment, and in using their unique platform to carry its audience with it on the necessary journey to a low carbon future.

In this regard, it is widely understood that fossil fuels represent the past. In recent months voices as varied as the Secretary General of the United Nations, director of the World Health Organisation and the Executive Director of the International Energy Agency have said unambiguously that there should be no further expansion of, and investment into, the global fossil fuel industries.

For that reason we were both surprised and disappointed to see the very high profile sponsorship by Shell, the biggest European oil and gas producer and one of the 10 most climate polluting companies in the world,<sup>1</sup> of the recent European Indoor Athletics Championships in Istanbul. We are writing to ask you to discontinue any commercial relationship with Shell, whether through advertising or sponsorship, in light of its past and current track record as a major polluter, and its failure to align with international climate targets.

The climate crisis puts the future of athletics, athletes and the world at stake. The actions we take now, and in the next few years, will determine our futures. We note that tobacco sponsorship was once widespread in sport but was ended because of the toxic nature of the product and its incompatibility with the ideals of sport. Already, more people today die as a result of pollution from the burning of fossil fuels than from tobacco, and we are in danger of triggering irreversible environmental change without the rapid phase out of fossil fuels. Allowing athletes to be used as a billboard to promote a company like Shell, normalises a major polluter and gives them a social licence to operate.

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<sup>1</sup> [The 20 firms behind a third of all carbon emissions](#)

Shell is accelerating the climate crisis through expanding its oil and gas operations against the advice of the International Energy Agency<sup>23</sup>, scientists worldwide and the United Nations.<sup>4</sup> Despite being a part of an industry that has known about the harm caused by fossil fuels since at least the 1980s, Shell has wilfully resisted taking action to mitigate the climate crisis and, indeed, been party to lobbying against action.<sup>5</sup> It has also repeatedly misled the public with false environmental claims in its advertising.<sup>6</sup>

As has been pointed out elsewhere, when comparing Shell's own Net Zero Strategy with the International Energy Agency's Net Zero 1.5°C scenario, Shell will emit 40.9% more greenhouse gas emissions than what would be authorised under a 1.5°C trajectory - even if they were to meet their own targets.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the same analysis concludes that Shell will overshoot its carbon budget to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C by as early as 2034.<sup>8</sup> At best, Shell's proclaimed ambition to become a "net-zero emissions energy business by 2050" does not hold up to scrutiny; at worst, it is deeply misleading.

Shell is actively undermining the future of a habitable planet. Athletics training and competition is already threatened by increasing global temperatures, more extreme weather events, such as flooding and drought, and toxic air pollution; all of which are being exacerbated by the actions of Shell and the wider fossil fuel industry.

Athletes' health and ability to practise the sport they love is being put at risk by the very company that you have chosen to partner with. The futures of our young athletes are uncertain because of their actions. We ask you to take a stand against major polluters, and show that you care about the future of athletics, and the planet.

We ask that any current associations between European Athletics and major polluters like Shell are ended, and that you introduce screening criteria for future partnerships, which exclude companies not aligned with the phasing out of fossil fuels, or involved in other ecologically harmful activities.

We look forward to your considered response and would be happy to meet with you to discuss these issues further,

Yours,

Jasmin Paris - National Champion Fell, and Ultramarathon runner

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<sup>2</sup> [IEA chief economist calls for no new investment in fossil fuels](#)

<sup>3</sup> As of 2022, Shell has over four billion barrels of oil under development or field assessment. This includes unconventional sources that are of especially high risk to ecosystems and human rights, such as ultra-deep offshore drilling and tar sands development. Source: Rystad Energy via <https://qogel.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/06/1120372>

<sup>5</sup> [InfluenceMap Shell's 'net zero' Plan Ignores Company's Anti-Climate Links](#)

<sup>6</sup> [The Greenwashing Files - Shell | ClientEarth](#); and [InfluenceMap Big Oil's Real Agenda on Climate Change 2022](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Is Shell On Track For 1.5°C?](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Is Shell On Track For 1.5°C?](#)

Ellen Donald - U20 England Athlete

Damian Hall - GB Ultramarathon runner & co-founder The Green Runners

Etienne Stott MBE - London 2012 Olympic Champion, White-water Slalom

Laura Baldwin - OLY (World Olympians Association), Champions For Earth

Jacqueline Lachmann - OLY, medallist, Beijing 2008

Dr Clare Halsted - OLY

Laurence Halsted - GB Olympian, London 2012 & Rio 2016

Anna Turney - GB Paralympian

Jim Walker - GB Olympic Athlete, Rowing, 1992 & 1996

Rhydian Cowley - Australian Olympian

Andy Symonds - International trail runner

Nikki Sturzaker - GB Masters 800m, 1500m, 3000m champion

Dan Tipney - former Team GB rower

Ben Tipney - former Team GB rower

Katie Rood - New Zealand Footballer, Champions for Earth

David Wheeler - Professional Footballer

Michael Doughty - Former Professional Footballer

Emil Johansson Kringstad – Professional cross country skier

Erchana Murray-Bartlett - World Record 155 marathons in 155 days, Australian Track and Road Athlete

Rob Pope - Ultra Runner, first man to recreate the “Forrest Gump” run across America

Andrew Simms - Co-director, New Weather Institute

Dr Martin Rice - Research Director, The Climate Council

Bill McGuire - Professor Emeritus of Geophysical & Climate Hazards, UCL

Dr Stuart Parkinson - Executive Director, Scientists for Global Responsibility

Caroline Lucas MP

David Starley - Co-founder The Green Runners

Dr Madeleine Orr - Co-Director, The Sport Ecology Group

Chris Whitaker, CEO Cricket Leaders CIC

Prof Peter Newell - University of Sussex

Dr Mark Doidge – University of Brighton

Dave Hampton - Co-founder of Champions for Earth

Richard Hamilton - Director Spirit of Football

Simon Messenger - Director, FAST5000

Frank Huisingsh - Fossil Free Football

Freddie Daley – Cool Down: sport for climate action network

Anna Jonsson - co-founder, New Weather Sweden

Leonhard Rabensteiner - Werbefrei Austria

Leo Murray - Director of innovation & engagement, Possible

Chris Garrard - Co-director, Culture Unstained

Amanda Curtis - Director, AC Sustainable Futures

Femke Slegers - Reclame Fossielvrij (Fossil Free Advertising NL)

Nicky Saunter - Rapid Transition Alliance

Jenny Amann - Doctoral Researcher

Emilie Tricarico – SEEkonomics

David Boyle - Author

Dr Philip Webber – Scientists for Global Responsibility

Transition Edinburgh

Fossil Free London

Darren Evans - Co-founder The Green Runners

Russell Bentley - The Green Runners, coach & current Paddy Buckley Winter Round Record Holder

Jeevendra Singh - Ultra Runner, The Green Runners

Ellie Wardell - The Green Runners

Nina Davies - The Green Runners

James Williams - The Green Runners

Caroline Staudt – Runner, The Green Runners

Neil Ibata - Cambridge University Hare & Hounds

Julia Wedmore - Herne Hill Harriers, club athlete

Mr Ronan Tanguy - CEng, MIMechE, MNucl, Herne Hill Harriers

Seve Loudon - Herne Hill Harriers

Suzanne Swaine - Athlete, Herne Hill Harriers

Paul Enright - Herne Hill Harriers

Katie Kedward - Herne Hill Harriers

Alex Hobley – Herne Hill Harriers

Glen Keegan – Herne Hill Harriers

Tom Armstrong – Herne Hill Harriers

Inga Bellahn – Herne Hill Harriers

Alex Evers - Highate Harriers

Joseph Hayes - Highgate Harriers

George Ogden - South London Harriers/Cambridge Uni

Hamish Rogers - UCL Running Club

Chris Busaileh - Kent AC

Dr Jan Maskell

Alex Burns

Milly Dickinson

James Edgerton

Stuart Davies

Thomas Chadwick

Mia Parry

George Butler

Clive Ashworth

Paul Marchant

Rah Cattell

Radmila Mileusnic

Jim Jayes

Raphael Jolly

James Wallace

Michael Weller

Clare Hamon

Harvey Russell

Dr Eva Novotny

Nick Farley

Imogen Davies

Alan Cottey

Bruce Wates

Holly Patrick

Andrew Jenkins - Jenkins Associates

Ms Fiona McOwan - Scottish Green Party

Michelle Tylicki - Climate Activist

Anthony Goodchild - Climate campaigner