

## PRESS RELEASE

### Elective Congress Results: The Start of Something Bigger

Pau, France - April 21, 2026

The new chapter for the rafting community began today in Pau, in the French Pyrenees, where the first **Elective Congress of United Rafting** officially took place.

The Congress marked the formal unification of the **World Rafting Federation (WRF)** and the **International Rafting Federation (IRF)** into a single governing body for the sport. With this step, United Rafting aims to strengthen governance, improve coordination, and build a more sustainable and inclusive future for the worldwide rafting community.

Following the opening remarks from **WRF President Danilo Barmaz** and **IRF President Joseph Willis Jones**, a message from **ICF President Thomas Konietzko** was shared highlighting the importance of unity within the wider paddlesport family and expressing a strong willingness to collaborate moving forward. A total of **56 National Federations were entitled to vote at the Congress**.

The Congress elected the following officials, who together form the General Board of United Rafting:

- **President:** Danilo Barmaz (Italy)
- **Treasurer:** Blerina Ago (Albania)
- **Board Member:** William Kariuki Mwangi (Kenya)
- **Board Member:** Hadi Seyed Ghaziasgar (Iran)
- **Board Member:** Gurkan Kose (Turkey)
- **Board Member:** Boris Purjakov (Serbia)

The following representatives were also elected to the Continental Councils:

#### Asian Continental Council

- Shigeto Asano (Japan)
- Gautam Raj Sudip (Nepal)
- Yaser Alkatheeri (United Arab Emirates)

#### European Continental Council

- Anne-Lise Bardet (France)
- Zdenka Fingrova (Czech Republic)
- Emilia Kirilova Peneva (Bulgaria)

#### American Continental Council

- Alba Luz Salazar Galan (Colombia)
- Aaron Tippett (United States of America)

**African Continental Council**

- Mohamuud Said Mohane (Somalia)
- Mohsen Takrouni (Tunisia)

The newly elected **General Board** will convene shortly for its first official meeting, where initial strategic priorities and organizational steps will be defined.

This newly formed body looks forward to building a inclusive, transparent, and forward-looking federation that supports athletes, national federations, and stakeholders across all continents.