

Building the Shared Future of Humanity Through Sports: Towards the 2022 Winter Olympics



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THE 2022 WINTER OLYMPICS WILL BE HELD in Beijing from February 4-20. The Olympics, which is generally considered one of the “fairest” sports platforms in the world, and where every country can send its athletes under equal conditions, continues in all its glory even under pandemic conditions. The contest keeps our hopes alive for a more equal, just and peaceful world. However, hegemonic approaches, led by the USA, to regulate developing countries via a “human rights” policy, endanger the egalitarian nature of the Olympics, which values all nations equally. The United States considering the possibility of boycotting the Beijing Winter Olympics points to the seriousness of this threat. Although there is no final boycott decision as yet, the widespread co-

verage of some of the protests in Western media outlets make it necessary to revisit the Olympics and its misuses in international politics. Within this framework, the “**Building the Shared Future of Humanity Through Sports: Towards the 2022 Winter Olympics**” forum was held on 20 November 2021 at Istinye University Valley Campus and via Zoom, under the leadership of the Turkish Student Union in China, Belt and Road Initiative Quarterly (BRIQ), and The Istinye University Center for Belt and Road Studies. The forum served as an open platform for debate around the questions below:

- What methods do Western states use to intervene in developing countries through the Olympics?

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COMMEMORATING THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND CHINA

BUILDING THE SHARED FUTURE OF HUMANITY THROUGH SPORTS: Towards the 2022 Winter Olympics



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(in Turkish and English)

ORGANIZERS

Belt and Road Initiative Quarterly (BRIQ)
The Istinye University Center for Belt and Road Studies (CBRS)
Turkish Student Union in China (TÖB)



- How can we save the Olympics, which is the people's sports holiday, from the intervention of Western states?
- How can we ensure that the Olympics fulfill its promise as the symbol of nations competing in sports on equal terms, peacefully and for cohesion?
- What are the roles played by the Olympics in building the shared future of humanity?

The opening speakers of the forum were Adnan Akfırat (President of the China Business Development Friendship Association and Chairman of the BRIQ), Suat Çelen (President of the Turkish Gymnastics Federation), Erdem Doğan, Sports Director of the Turkish National Olympic Committee, and Liu Shaobin (Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Ankara).

In the opening speeches of the forum, the speakers emphasized that the Beijing Winter Olympics will be a shining example of the rising Asian Civilization, that any behavior to

overshadow the role of the Olympics in building the shared future of humanity together is detrimental, and that Turkey is also carrying out its Olympic preparations in accordance with this mission. Speaking on behalf of the organizing committee, Adnan Akfırat stated that US President Biden's "diplomatic boycott" statement is not only displaying an arrogance towards the host country, but also against all humanity and therefore should be condemned.

Adnan Akfırat conveyed the mission statements of the Beijing Winter Olympics:

- Let's instill the Olympic spirit in the youth of the world!
- Let's encourage millions to embrace winter sports!
- Let's promote social progress through the winter games!
- Let's create a world of harmony for all humanity by developing mutual understanding!

The opening speeches were followed by the first session of the forum, entitled **“The Role of Sport in Creating the Shared Future of Humanity”**. This session was moderated by the President of the Republican Woman’s Association and former Vice Rector of Gazi University, Professor Tülin Oygür. The contributors included Cevad Prekazi (Albanian origin –former Yugoslavian football player), Sümeyye Boyacı (National Paralympic swimmer), Hakan Reçber (National taekwondo athlete), and Ljubodrag Simonović (philosopher, writer and retired Yugoslavian basketball player).

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The speakers expressed their views regarding the impact of sports on life and personal development, the significance of state planning and social policies for the development of sports, the role of sports in cultural interactions, and the contribution of sports to world peace. The statements expressed by the speakers, including world-famous and medal-winning, about the impact of the Olympics on social and individual progress, once again revealed the importance of this forum. In the closing speech of the first session, the moderator, Professor Tülin Oygür, underlined that the Olympics are an important step towards building the shared future of humanity together, and emphasized the importance of sports in the fight against drugs, which is one of the biggest threats to the future of humanity. At this point, Tülin Oygür called for support and cooperation with the Mothers Movement, which was initiated by the Republican Women’s Association, against drugs.

The second session of the forum, **“Western Politics of Human Rights and Olympics”** was moderated by Assistant Professor Suat Eren Özyiğit, head of

the Department of International Relations at İstinye University. The contributors included Assoc. Prof. Fahri Erenel (Director of the İstinye University Social Sciences Institute), Assoc. Prof. Umut Başoğlu (President of General Gymnastics Movement Training Technical Committee) and Deputy Chairman of Turkish Orienteering Federation), and Hüseyin Cem Zeren (Columnist and risk expert).

While Umut Başoğlu explained his views on how the deficiencies in physical literacy lead our society towards obesity and harmful habits, Fahri Erenel and Hüseyin Cem Zeren shared their view that the US accuses China of human rights violations, regardless of its own actions, because the US has fallen behind in economic terms and has lost its claim to dominate the world. In addition to these opinions, the speakers stated that peace and sports are part of the innate human rights and that the US is preventing this with its current attitude. In parallel with this, Fahri Erenel emphasized that the word ‘boycott’ is the most dangerous word for the Olympics as well as for humanity. He went on to call for the world’s citizens to reject such harmful attitudes. In the closing of the session, Suat Eren Özyiğit thanked the speakers and asked Professor Osman Ünver to deliver the closing speech.

In his speech, Professor Osman Ünver, stated that, if the essence of the Olympics can be preserved, there is still an important opportunity for world peace and that all humanity should take a stand against discussing a boycott in order to establish the common future of humanity through the medium of sport. On behalf of the organizing committee, which consists of Arda Tunçel (Member of the Board of the Turkish Student Union in China), Anil Solmaz (Shanghai representative of the Turkish Student Union in China, Adnan Akfırat (Chairman of the Board of BRIQ journal), Assoc. Prof. Efe Can Gürcan (Director of the İstinye University Center for Belt and Road Studies), Semih Nişancı (Sports Journalist); Anil Solmaz expressed his thanks to the speakers and participants. 🌸