

More State-Sponsored Doping Anticipated By WADA

Recently-appointed World Anti-Doping Agency director general Olivier Niggli has remarked an expanding investigations staff will be on the lookout for state-sponsored cheating in other nations after Russia's widespread anti-doping violations at the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

In an interview, Niggli remarked it has happened in one country and he believes it would be naive to think it is the only country. The director general of WADA said we have to have our eyes really open and also make sure we act on intelligence and information we might get.

State-directed manipulation of drug-testing results at the Moscow anti-doping lab from at least 2011 through the summer of 2013 was discovered through a report commissioned for [WADA](#). More than 100 Russian athletes, including all but one member of the track and field team, were not allowed to participate in this year's Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Niggli, a 46-year-old Swiss lawyer who replaced David Howman on July 1, remarked the World Anti-Doping Agency will have conversations with FIFA about testing at the 2018 World Cup in Russia. Niggli was hired as the legal director of WADA in 2002 and added the title of finance director two years later before he left for a law firm in 2011. Niggli made a return to WADA two years ago as chief operating officer.

Niggli added it is still sufficiently far away to hope that things will have changed and improved in Russia. The World Anti-Doping Agency director general also remarked it is very important that we be able to work with the Russians to try to set up a system that is called compliant and that will provide some safeguards so that everybody regains confidence in what is going on there.

Niggli also rejected a suggestion by Russian President Vladimir Putin that athletes with therapeutic use exemptions be excluded from major competitions. The WADA director general said he does not think it is meaningful and remarked he thinks every human being has a right of being treated for medical conditions.

Niggli praised Major League Baseball, the NFL, and the NHL for their anti-doping programs that are subject to labor laws and negotiated with their unions. Niggli also said the [World Anti-Doping Agency](#) accepts decision of the Court of Arbitration for Sport to cut the suspension of Russian tennis player Maria Sharapova from two years to 15 months. Sharapova, a winner of all four Grand Slam tournaments, tested positive for the heart drug Meldonium, added to the banned list this year. Niggli however remarked it was slightly surprising that at that level she would not get warned properly by her entourage.

In another development, WADA has joined hands with Astellas Pharma Inc and announced a global agreement to partner on the prevention of misuse and abuse of medicines for [doping in sports](#). Astellas will help WADA in identifying compounds solely developed by Astellas or its affiliates with the potential for sport-related doping abuse. It will also cooperate in sharing relevant information to aid WADA in the organization's development of detection methods for these compounds.