

Statement

Dear fencing family,

After winning the silver medal at the U23 European Championships in Tallinn, a lot was written about us. But not because of our strong performance. We are responsible for this: we would now like to clarify our approach and express our regrets.

We competed in the final against the Israeli team without any tension – we shook hands with them and congratulated them before and after the podium with great respect for them and their performance. During the ceremony, we did not turn towards the flag during the national anthem. This was not a political statement and did not reflect any rejection of Israel. It was a personal gesture, born out of our discomfort and empathy with the current context of great human suffering affecting all parties in this conflict. At the time of the ceremony, we were overcome by our emotions and by the situation, which is beyond us all.

We recognise that our behaviour was confusing and that it was a mistake on our part. As mentioned, we did not intend to express a political opinion.

We sincerely apologise to anyone who felt hurt, in particular our opponents from the Israeli team and the Israeli Fencing Federation.

We are learning from this situation and will act with greater clarity and discernment in the future.

With all due respect,

Ian Hauri

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