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## The interview with FIP President, Luigi Carraro, by the italian news agency "Ansa"

During the **European Padel Championships 2024** taking place in **Cagliari**, FIP President **Luigi Carraro** gave an interview to **Ansa**, Italy's most important news agency, where he discussed various topics regarding the present and future of padel: from the success of the European Championships in Sardinia in collaboration with FITP to the World Championship in Doha and participation in the Junior Pan American Games; from the Premier Padel circuit to the goal of spreading padel in Africa and the United States; from the success at the European Games in Krakow 2023 to the goal of the Olympics.

### THE INTERVIEW

**CAGLIARI AND THE EUROPEANS** *"Tomorrow marks the end of 15 extraordinary days of padel in Sardinia, which began in the first week with the **FIP Platinum**, a huge success just like last year, and continued with the European Championships. Great attendance, top-level players, and above all, the victory of an Italian player (Carolina Orsi) for the first time in the history of a major professional circuit tournament". This was stated to Ansa by the President of the **International Padel Federation, Luigi Carraro**. "It's wonderful that this happened in Sardinia, we are happy about it because it was the first region that brought a major padel event to Italy in 2020, in the midst of the Covid pandemic. It's the right reward for Sardinia to see an Italian player win at the professional level. Then we started with the European Championships, which the President of the Italian Tennis and Padel Federation, Binaghi, called the largest event ever organized by the FITP. 320 athletes came to Cagliari, staying here for over eight days, along with their 320 families because athletes come with their families. This is somewhat the goal of hosting these events in partnership with the region: we bring about a thousand people from all over Europe who get to know a place they probably didn't know and then fall in love with. The impact is enormous", Carraro continues, "just think that there is no room in any hotel in Cagliari. Usually, we try to accommodate all delegation participants in one hotel, but here we had to use 4 hotels, maybe even 5". The numbers for padel are constantly growing worldwide. In Sardinia, in the last three years, padel courts have increased by 400%. "The growth of padel on the island", observes the world padel leader, "is extraordinary, confirming that these events help promote the region and develop the sport".*

**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS AND PAN AMERICAN GAMES** After the European Championships in Cagliari, there will be the World Championships. *"This is a very intense year for us because it is the first year we fully manage the Premier Padel circuit with 25 tournaments. And in November, the **World Championships** will be played in **Doha**". "Argentina and Spain", concludes Carraro, "are still at another level, but Italy is growing a lot, both in the men's and women's categories. Padel is an easy and very fun sport to play, so everyone who tries it becomes passionate and keeps playing.*

*Now it's up to us to reduce the gap with Spain and Argentina by creating structured paths starting from the youth. In Italy, the Italian Tennis and Padel Federation is carrying out a very important project."*

**OLYMPIC GOAL** *"Padel at the **Olympics**? Last year, padel was part of the **European Games** in **Krakow** and, according to everyone, it was the sport that had the most success and the most public following. Next year we will be part of the **Junior Pan American Games**, and I believe these concrete steps will soon lead us to achieve the Olympic dream, which is clearly the dream of every discipline". Thus said to Ansa the President of the International Padel Federation, Luigi Carraro. "In Krakow, we set up the central court in the main square. And in one day, we had 16,000 people to watch the finals. A great result".*

**EXPANDING THE BASE AND THE FIP** *"I will say one thing", emphasizes Carraro, "the Olympic dream is important, and we must all aim for it, but let's not forget everything else because we are interested in developing grassroots sports, we are interested in the professional circuit, in short, we want to develop the sport in a 360-degree way". "As the International Federation, we have 81 members", says the president. "We aim to reach 130-140 members in the next three or four years. Padel is already played in over 130 countries, and 81 Federations is already a lot, far beyond the requirements of the International Olympic Committee, which requires 60 countries; we already have 81. Where are we aiming today? We are focusing on **Africa**, which is a continent developing a lot, and the **United States**, where padel started late but is now growing tremendously. Next year", anticipates Carraro to Ansa, "we will hold a Premier Padel tournament in the United States, and I believe that hosting a Premier Padel tournament will be a driving force that will allow the entire country to develop in an extraordinary way".*

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