



Media Release

Lucerne, 21 January 2020

The Winter Universiade 2021 starts in one year

The opening ceremony of the 30th Winter Universiade will be held in Lucerne one year from today. This is a matter close to the heart for Lucerne's sports director and association president Guido Graf. Today the Organising Committee presented information about the event to the public in Central Switzerland, including numerous "One-Year-To-Go" activities. The highlight of the day was the presentation of the 2021 Winter Universiade mascot.

It all starts in 366 days: on 21 January 2021 the opening ceremony of the 30th Winter Universiade will be held on the Europaplatz in Lucerne. The Organising Committee has used this occasion to draw attention to the event with an attractive programme: in addition to an information stand on the Bahnhofsplatz (station square), personalities from the worlds of education and sport discussed the compatibility of top-class sport and study in Lucerne's government building. The highlight of the day was the presentation of the official mascot.

It was a special day for Lucerne's sports director and association president Guido Graf, who noted: "We want today's starting signal to ignite the flame of public enthusiasm." The State Councillor added: "This occasion is a matter close to my heart. In particular, the project demonstrates the excellent cooperation between the six cantons of Central Switzerland and the city of Lucerne, and strengthens their cohesion."

The mascot arrived by boat

Lucerne's Director of Tourism, Marcel Perren, was also delighted to welcome the official mascot to the host city shortly before 11am, accompanied by the Vice-President of the Association and former member of the State Council Niklaus Bleiker. In keeping with the event motto, Marcel Perren greeted the mascot with "Welcome home!" and added: "The Winter Universiade has definitely arrived in the region today. It's a day for celebration." Luisa Zürcher, creator of the mascot and animation student at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, had also been looking forward to this day for a long time. The St. Gallen-based artist was able to marvel at "her" mascot for the first time in full size, and take it in her arms. The young artist summed up her feelings: "What could be more exciting than designing a mascot that you can hug?" The fabulous creature arrived by boat, accompanied by the carnival group "A-KLANG". The reason: the mountains of Central Switzerland, their myths and the carnival were the inspiration for Luisa Zürcher's creation.

The public will choose the mascot's name

At the moment the Mascot has no name. Starting today, the public can submit their suggestions via Winter Universiade social media channels. The naming ceremony will take place on 29 January 2020 in Lenzerheide, as part of the Biathlon Youth and Junior World Championships. This event is one of several test events for the Winter Universiade:

Discipline	Test Event	Date
Biathlon	IBU Junior World Championships	26.01.-02.02.2020
Alpine Skiing	FIS Super-G Races	04.-06.03.2020
Cross-Country Skiing	Swiss Championships	27.-29.03.2020
Ice Hockey	Swiss National Team game	18./19.04.2020
Curling	Tournament	25./26.04.2020
Ice Hockey	Lehner Cup	14.-16.08.2020
Short Track	StarClass Junior A/B Series	13.-15.11.2020
Figure Skating	Swiss Championships	11.-13.12.2020

Official invitations have been sent to the delegations

The test events provide an important assessment of the current status, and indications of any further preparations required. Urs Hunkeler, Managing Director of the Winter Universiade, is optimistic about the coming year: "The opening ceremony of the Winter Universiade is drawing ever closer. Things are now happening in rapid succession: at the beginning of the year we sent official invitations to the delegations, and today the registration platform was opened." The Managing Director describes the "Head of Delegation Meeting" from 8 to 11 September 2020 as the main rehearsal for cooperation with the over 50 delegations expected to attend. The delegation heads will then travel to the host city for the first time, to receive event information on-site. "We are looking forward to the coming months eagerly" says Urs Hunkeler, adding: "A glance at the Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne shows the unique atmosphere that can be expected in the host city of Lucerne, and at all the venues in Central Switzerland and Lenzerheide."

Largest Swiss team ever

The Swiss team should expect similar successes to those achieved in Lausanne. In the past, successful sports stars such as Ramon Zenhäusern (alpine skiing) or Patrizia Kummer (alpine snowboarding) have won Universiade medals for Switzerland. At the Winter Universiade in his own country Swiss University Sports President Mike Kurt expects a delegation of around 120 athletes and some 60 coaches and staff, which will be the largest Swiss team to date. Also, for the first time Swiss athletes will be competing in all disciplines. The athlete selections will be announced in October 2020.



Winter Universiade as an ideal platform

A common denominator amongst Swiss team members is that they all combine top-class sport with further education. This is a challenge, as shown by today's panel discussion with personalities from education and sport:

- Prof. Dr. Sarah Springman, Rector of ETH Zurich
- Prof. Dr. Martina Caroni, Vice-Rector of the University of Lucerne
- Patrick Bloch, CEO of the Swiss Ice Hockey Federation
- Mike Kurt, President of Swiss University Sports, Swiss Olympic Executive Council member and three-time Olympian
- Selina Witschonke, Lucerne curler and bronze medallist at the Junior World Championships 2019
- Michael Schmid, former top rowing athlete and sports science doctoral candidate

Swiss University Sports President Mike Kurt notes: "It is central to the Swiss sports system that athletes can complete a course of study concurrently with their sporting activities." The participants in the discussion agreed that the 2021 Winter Universiade is an ideal platform to create new impetus for the "dual career", and to further improve the compatibility of "top-class sport and studies" in cooperation with universities and professional associations.

The Winter Universiade

The Winter Universiade is the largest winter multisport event after the Olympic Games. In 2021 the 30th occasion of this unique event will take place in Central Switzerland. The organisation is a joint project of the six cantons of Central Switzerland Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Obwalden, Nidwalden and Zug, and the City of Lucerne. The programme from the 21st to the 31st January 2021 comprises ten sporting disciplines, to be contested at seven event venues. Students aged between 17 and 25 from more than 540 universities in 50 countries are expected to attend. A total of over 2500 individuals will take part.

More about the Winter Universiade Lucerne-Central Switzerland 2021 may be found here:

www.winteruniversiade2021.ch

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