



## **Press release**

Lucerne, 2 July 2020

### **The Winter Universiade Organising Committee is benefiting from the experience of the organisers of Lausanne 2020**

*The Youth Olympic Games were held in Lausanne in January 2020. Within the space of one year, Switzerland will once again host an international multisport event in the form of the Winter Universiade 2021. The Winter Universiade Organising Committee (OC) is able to benefit from the experience of the organisers of Lausanne 2020 and is currently facing up to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial feedback from the nations has been positive.*

Yesterday, the President of Lausanne 2020, Virginie Faivre, and her team informed the media about the successful outcome of the Youth Olympic Games in January 2020. The next major multisport event in Switzerland will take place just twelve months later: the Winter Universiade 2021 is being held from 21 to 31 January 2021 in Central Switzerland and Lenzerheide. "The success of Lausanne 2020 gives us additional motivation for our work," said Urs Hunkeler, Managing Director of the Winter Universiade 2021. He is particularly grateful to the OC of Lausanne 2020 for openly sharing their experiences: "We can benefit enormously from their experiences." For example, a large number of managers from the different departments were on site in Lausanne during the Games and were able to look over their counterparts' shoulders while they worked, and joint meetings were held after the Games to share experiences and findings.

### **Platform for top-class sport and studies**

The CEO of the Youth Olympic Games Lausanne 2020, Ian Logan, is convinced that this sharing of experiences is important: "Switzerland needs visibility and big unifying events." OC President Virginie Faivre added: "Lausanne 2020 showed the world an innovative Switzerland that invests in its youth. I hope that the Winter Universiade 2021 can reinforce this message. I also hope that our two events can demonstrate the challenges of combining top-class sport and study in Switzerland. This will enable us to further improve the structures so that our young sporting talents can develop in the best possible way, in terms of both sports and their studies." All of the participants in the Universiade are both first-class athletes and students, hailing from more than 50 nations and over 540 universities.



### **Mobilising youth as a success factor**

According to Ian Logan, a key element in the public success of the Youth Olympic Games was involving young people in the design process of the major event. This was also a central element for the organisers of the Winter Universiade from the very outset: among other things, students designed the mascot and medals. "Being involved in an event like the Youth Olympic Games or the Winter Universiade is a unique opportunity. It is important to us that as many students as possible can benefit from this," explained Urs Hunkeler, Managing Director. However, these two events are not only a unique opportunity for the students but also for Swiss sport as a whole, as the President of Swiss Olympic, Jürg Stahl emphasised: "The Youth Olympic Games 2020 in Lausanne were the last major international multisport event before the coronavirus crisis. We expect that the Winter Universiade will be the first major international multisport event after the crisis. I am very confident that the Universiade will be equally as successful as the Youth Olympic Games Lausanne 2020 and that it will have the same positive impact on sport and the perception of major sporting events in Switzerland." Against the backdrop of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Winter Universiade 2021 will play a special role: "With such events, we are helping to ensure that we are all come out of the crisis together and create new opportunities for SMEs, the economy, tourism and society."

### **Pleasing number of registrations despite the pandemic**

The Organising Committee of the Winter Universiade is monitoring the development of the pandemic in close cooperation with the authorities and the National and International University Sports Federation. "We were relieved to hear that the Swiss Federal Council has announced that larger events can be held again from September 2020 onwards, if the situation permits. This is a positive signal for organising the Winter Universiade in January 2021." Under the direction of the Security Manager Beat Hensler, the impact of the applicable rules is currently being analysed in all areas of the event and, where necessary, the plan is being adjusted. The health of all the participants is paramount. Another encouraging sign is the number of registrations, with over 50 nations having registered by mid-June 2020. Urs Hunkeler was also pleased about the number of registered participants: "We're expecting some 2,500 athletes and officials. We are particularly pleased that, in all probability, we will be able to conduct the Ice Hockey tournament with twelve men's and eight women's teams. That's great news for all ice hockey fans!"



## **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 and Lenzerheide. 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 21 to 31 January 2021 comprises ten sporting disciplines, to be contested at seven competition 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.

Images and further information on the Lucerne 2021 Winter Universiade can be found at the following address: [www.winteruniversiade2021.ch](http://www.winteruniversiade2021.ch)

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