

## Press Release

Lucerne, 31 August 2020

### **Lucerne 2021 Winter Universiade will not take place in January 2021 as planned**

*The Lucerne 2021 Winter Universiade will not take place as planned from January 21 to 31, 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the International University Sports Federation FISU, together with the Organising Committee and Swiss University Sports, has decided to stop preparations for the event to be held in January 2021 and to examine in the coming weeks a possible postponement of the event to a later date.*

The Winter Universiade is the largest winter multisport event after the Olympic Games. In 2021 the 30th occasion of this unique event was planned to take place in Central Switzerland and Lenzerheide from 21 to 31 of January. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the International University Sports Federation FISU, together with the Organising Committee and Swiss University Sports, has decided to stop preparations for the event to be held in January 2021 and to examine in the coming weeks a possible postponement of the event to a later date. "After more than four years of preparation it is painful decision, but in the end an easy one. The health of all the participants has always been the top priority in our evaluations", says Guido Graf, President of the Organising Committee and Cantonal Councillor of Lucerne.

### **World sports event currently not feasible**

Decisive factors for the decision were the epidemiological situation as well as the current restriction for entry into Switzerland. Currently more than 40 % of the registered participants are affected by the entry ban. Among others the large delegations of the USA, Russia, China and Kazakhstan. Therefore the event loses its sporting relevance. "The Winter Universiade is a world sports event. In addition to the sporting comparison, the exchange between the delegations is enormously important to us as an element that brings people together. The entry restrictions as well as the implementation of the precautionary measures would have made this exchange impossible", explains FISU President Oleg Matytsin and emphasizes: "We are deeply sorry for this decision. But we are convinced that it is the only right decision in the current situation. We would like to thank the Organizing Committee and the national university sports federations for their commitment over the past weeks and months". Swiss University Sports supports the decision. President Mike Kurt explains: "Under the current conditions, the Winter Universiade cannot create the expected legacy for Swiss sport and society. In particular, the involvement of the population in the event would be lacking."

## Postponement is being evaluated

Together with the organising committee and Swiss University Sports, FISU will now examine a possible postponement of the event. Lucerne 2021 Managing Director, Urs Hunkeler, explains: «We will examine various time frames in detail together with all our partners. On the one hand, this evaluation will focus on the timing of the postponement, and on the other hand on the willingness to accompany us during a later event». And he adds: «I would like to take this opportunity to thank our OC members as well as all our partners for their great commitment and support. Many have already indicated that they will be part of the event at a later date too. This is a great appreciation and motivation for the evaluations that are now pending».

## The Winter Universiade

The Winter Universiade is the largest winter multisport event after the Olympic Games. 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 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the event was planned to take place from the 21 to 31 January 2021 in Central Switzerland and the Lenzerheide. Currently a postponement is being evaluated. The programme 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 are taking 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)

## Media Contacts

Selina Wyss  
OC Lucerne 2021 Winter Universiade  
Communication & Marketing  
selina.wyss@winteruniversiade2021.ch  
041 / 318 37 75

Tina Sharma  
FISU  
Head of Communications & PR  
t.sharma@fisunet  
021 / 692 64 03

Mike Kurt  
Swiss University Sports  
Präsident  
mike.kurt@swissuniversitysports.ch  
078 / 736 67 78