



Media Release

Lucerne, 3 December 2021

No change to cancellation of Winter Universiade following modification to incoming travel rules

The Winter Universiade had to be cancelled last Sunday as a result of highly dynamic developments in the pandemic and related restrictions to incoming travel. The Swiss Federal Council has today lifted the quarantine requirement. This will not change the cancellation.

The measures introduced by the Federal Council to prevent and/or suppress the spread of the new Omicron virus variant meant last Sunday that it became impossible to hold the 30th Winter Universiade. Today's decision by the Federal Council to lift incoming travel quarantine for all countries does not change this in any way.

The Winter Universiade is the second largest winter multisport event after the Olympic Games: from 6 December to 21 December 2021 with the earlier curling matches competitions would have taken place in 10 sporting disciplines in eight venues. Around 1600 athletes with 900 officials from 54 nations were registered for the event. In addition international experts were set to assist organisation of the competitions in a wide range of areas such as refereeing, TV production and timekeeping.

“Because of the complexity of the event and the several thousand personnel involved, we had to react to the developments last weekend and could not merely look on”, states OC President Guido Graf and explains: “the cancellation of the Winter Universiade is extremely painful for everyone involved. We were very much looking forward to putting on a sporting festival in central Switzerland and the Grisons, but the circumstances that presented themselves last Sunday meant that holding the event became impossible.” Following discussions with the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health BAG and the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs EDI last Sunday it became clear that making an exception for amateur athletes participating in the Winter Universiade and for the technical personnel from the countries involved is not practicable. Furthermore, there was the possibility that the list of countries subject to quarantine restrictions could grow, and this subsequently happened during the course of the week.



Following the cancellation decision of Sunday, going ahead with the Winter Universiade is no longer possible. With an event of this scale there are thousands of people involved and the preparations are planned in minute detail. These activities ceased on Sunday after the cancellation. Against a background of rapidly rising cases and the situation in Lucerne's hospitals becoming more acute, the Lucerne authorities have just announced additional cantonal measures. "So against this backdrop today too, it is right that the Winter Universiade will not take place. As hosts we have a responsibility for our guests, but also for the wider population", says OC President Guido Graf.

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