

Letter on the 2021 IIHF World Championship co-hosted by Belarus

Stockholm, 23 november 2020

Dear President René Fasel,
Dear International Ice Hockey Federation,

We, the undersigned elected members of the European parliament, are writing with regards to the upcoming 2021 IIHF World Championship, co-hosted by Belarus and Latvia, scheduled to take place in Minsk and Riga. It is our strongest request that Belarus immediately will be deprived of the hosting of the Championship.

The current situation in Belarus is cause for a great sense of worry and concern. During this year, the cruelty imposed by Belarus Authorities towards the Belarusian people have escalated. It has become unequivocally clear to the world that Belarus is a country of oppression, with Aliaksandr Lukashenka as its dictator. The 9 August elections were fraudulent, and Lukashenka and his government has ever since captivated, imprisoned, and abused political opponents, as well as journalists and civilians.

Furthermore, light has been shone on Dzmitryj Baskau, the president of the Belarusian Hockey Federation, and allegations that he has participated in the structural oppression under the Lukashenka regime. Witnesses have identified Baskau as taking part in the abuse and violence causing the death of Raman Bandarenka: a peaceful protester unlawfully taken into police custody on November 11, arrested on the Square of Change.

We, the undersigned, request for a reconsideration of the Belarusian hosting of the Championship. It is unthinkable that the IIHF will collaborate with the current Belarusian regime, and thereby indirectly legitimise the dictatorship and oppression in Belarus. We further expect that the IIHF will immediately put a stop to any contact with the Belarusian Hockey Federation, as long as they are under the lead of Dzmitryj Baskau.

Sincerely,
Karin Karlsbro, Renew Europe

Abir Al-Sahlani, Renew Europe

Andrius Kubilius, EPP

Andrzej Halicki, EPP

Arba Kokalari, EPP

Dace Melbarde, ECR

David Lega, EPP

Dita Charanzová, Renew Europe

Eero Heinäluoma, S&D

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Evzen Tosenovsky, ECR

Fredrick Federley, Renew Europe

Geert Bourgeois, ECR

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Tineke Strik, Greens/EFA

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Viola von Cramon, Greens/EFA

Vlad-marius Botos, Renew Europe