

Dear Shogi friends,

warm greetings to all participants of the “ESC/WOSC 2020 in Minsk”.

Ever since the outbreak of the Corona pandemic we have been living in unusual times. Also Shogi has been hit hard and almost all activities moved to the internet. But we all know that online-shogi is only a very weak substitute for the real thing: real shogi tournaments are not just about competition, but bring together people from many places for friendship and exchange.

I am therefore very grateful to the Belarussian Shogi community for making a start and organize this important event in these challenging times. The Belarussian Shogi community has been the most active in Europe and serves as a very positive model in terms of promoting shogi in general, but also in terms of fostering top rated players. The first ESC/WOSC in Minsk 2013 was a landmark event, which provided a strong push for the further development Shogi in Europe.

The “ESC/WOSC 2020 in Minsk” will be a somewhat different event not unlike the “Olympic Games 2020 in Tokyo”, which were also delayed for one year and just closed one week ago. Unlike Olympic Games however, Shogi cannot afford to create a condition, where athletes or players will be isolated from contacts to the outside world. Therefore the ESC/WOSC this time may not see as many international players as would be expected in normal times. Many people are still reluctant to travel or simply have other priorities for the time being. But the signal given here is very encouraging and important. The Belarussian Shogi community is showing to the world that resigning is not an option and that life and exchange has to resume even under difficult circumstances. This sets another standard, which may be followed by other Shogi communities in Europe and around the world.

I wish all participants of the ESC/WOSC 2020 great games, but also great exchanges and experiences off the board.

Yours sincerely

Frank Rövekamp
Chairman
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