

Dear Friends,

You are all here in Zakopane today to attend or participate in the 1st World University Long Track Speed Skating Championship.

This event is part of FISU's wonderful program featuring 28 World University Championships in 2012; already in 2010, 27 championships had been held, gathering 4431 student athletes.

It is important to mention that over 300 University World Championships have been organized under the aegis of FISU since 1962 in 51 countries over the 5 continents. They have featured 31 disciplines and gathered nearly 55 000 student athletes in total.

The 2012 World University Championships represent the 25th edition of these competitions, which take place every two years in even-numbered years. They alternate with Summer and Winter Universiades, which are organized in odd-numbered years.

The championships provide a large number of students, teachers and sports leaders from various backgrounds with a place, in addition to Universiades, to meet and share their experiences and ideas. The success of the championships has regularly increased with time. This shows how dynamic FISU member National University Sports Federations have been; more and more of them have put themselves forward for the organization of a championship.

FISU actively supports those events and endeavors to satisfy students' creativity and aspirations by regularly promoting innovative sports disciplines. The aim is to retain the spirit of play and encourage the development of an open and curious mind among university athletes.

As university events, these world championships aim at the highest technical level and Excellence, which are the basic requirements in university. In this sense, your presence here is already a sign of success.

The International University Sports Federation, the National University Sports Federation of Poland and all the organizers wish to thank you for your participation and hope that you will be warmly welcome here, where you will find favorable conditions for the best practice of your sport.

In the name of FISU, I wish you an excellent championship.

Claude-Louis Gallien, FISU President

