



## *Nordic Fencing Union*

Fédération Internationale d'Esime (FIE)  
Executive Committee  
Via e-mail

In copy:  
European Fencing Confederation (EFC)  
The National Fencing Federations of the EFC

### *Individual European Championships 2023: Open Letter to the International Fencing Federation concerning the European Championships 2023*

The FIE has decided that the individual European Championships cannot take place at the European Games in Krakow as was originally planned, due to the fact that the Russian and Belorussian Federations do not accept the conditions for entry visas for their athletes to the competitions.

According to the information we have, these championships will be organised in Plovdiv, Bulgaria 14-18 June. However, the invitation has not yet reached the national federations, which will give a maximum of two weeks for the athletes to prepare for this extremely important but hitherto unknown event.

Since the decision to allow "Individual Neutral Athletes" (AIN) from Russia and Belarus was made by the FIE, international fencing has entered a chaotic situation which will cause permanent damage to our sport and has eroded trust and will make cooperation to develop fencing very difficult in the future. Important competitions for the Olympic qualification have been moved at short notice, causing unfair conditions for the athletes and damaging the brand of fencing in important countries. It has also become clear that the decision to allow AIN will make it impossible for Ukrainian athletes to participate in international fencing and qualify for the Olympic Games in Paris 2024.

Even with all these measures, the best Russian or Belorussian fencers will not be allowed to compete since they do not meet the criteria raising the question of their effectiveness.

The European Games 2023 with European Championship status would be a great leap forward for fencing and European national fencing federations. We would be able to fully join the European Olympic movement and have an arrangement that provided fantastic conditions for participants and an impressive Olympic qualification event that would substantially increase the interest in our sport.

The decision of the FIE is detrimental to the long-term development of fencing in Europe and to the efforts of the athletes and coaches who have prepared for a long time the realisation of their Olympic dream in Paris 2024.

We urge the FIE to change its decision and accept the individual competition at the European Games also as the individual competition of the European Championships 2023 and included in the Olympic qualification for fencing.

We also urge all national fencing federations of Europe to make their voice heard and appeal this decision to drastically change the terms of the Olympic qualification for European fencers. We also strongly recommend them to inform their national Olympic committees of the situation and demand that complaints are made to the International Olympic Committee.

31st of May, 2023

**NORDIC FENCING UNION**