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France

International Ice Hockey Federation
President René Fasel

Brandschenkestrasse 50
CH-8027 Zürich, SWITZERLAND
E-mail to: office@iihf.com

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Dear Mr Fasel,

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) has learned that representatives of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) plan to visit Belarus in January to discuss the 2021 Ice Hockey World Championship with the de-facto President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, and we welcome this decision. However, we believe that the visit would not be complete without a meeting with the Belarusian civil society.

The Ice Hockey World Championship is the sport's highest profile international event, and the current political and epidemiological situation in the country challenges the IIHF to take a difficult decision ensuring that the tournament takes place in a safe and responsible environment. It is therefore crucial that the security and ethics concerns brought to your attention by several human rights organisations, prominent athletes and states, specifically those flowing from the mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic and mass repressions against innocent citizens, are also carefully assessed. To this end, we believe that a discussion with some of the civil society representatives and independent Belarusian athletes, alongside the meeting with those responsible for the handling of the crisis, would help the IIHF to form a complete and unbiased picture of the situation in the country.

Considering the above, we would like to take this opportunity to invite you for a meeting at the headquarters of the FIDH member organisation - Human Rights Center "Viasna" - during your visit. Chairman of Viasna Mr. Ales Bialiatski and FIDH Vice-President Mr. Valiantsin Stefanovic would be pleased to welcome you in Minsk and to provide you with insights based on their expertise emanating from 25 years experience leading the widely renowned, award-winning human rights organisation in Belarus.

We would be happy to facilitate the organisation of the meeting and remain available at eeac@fidh.org.

Yours sincerely,

Eléonore Morel
CEO, FIDH



Ales Bialiatski
Chairman, Viasna

