



## **EUROPEAN JUDO CHAMPIONSHIPS TO BE HELD AT BAKU 2015 EOC, EJU and BEGOC agree for 2015 European Judo Championships to be hosted in Azerbaijan from June 25-28 as part of inaugural European Games**

21 February 2015

The European Olympic Committees (EOC), the European Judo Union (EJU) and the Baku 2015 European Games Operations Committee (BEGOC) are pleased to announce that the 2015 European Judo Championships will be incorporated into the inaugural European Games being staged in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 12-28 June this year.

The decision guarantees that the continent's finest judoka will be competing at Baku 2015 for the right to be crowned the first ever European Games Champions. The number of sports offering qualification opportunities for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games has now risen to 12 of the 16 Olympic sports on the Baku 2015 programme, out of a total of 20 sports.

The 2015 European Judo Championships were originally scheduled to take place in Glasgow from 9-12 April. However, as issues with the British Judo Association (BJA) remained unresolved, the EJU's Executive Committee decided unanimously to designate a new host city capable of staging the event.

EOC President Patrick Hickey, said:

"This is wonderful news as we approach the final lap of our preparations for the inaugural European Games. The EOC has always intended for European Championships to become part of the European Games and this agreement indicates that our aim is coming true, even earlier than we had anticipated. I am sure other sports will follow suit at future editions of the European Games and that the event will become one of the main qualification routes for the Olympic Games.

"For now, I am very much looking forward to welcoming the best judoka in Europe to Baku in June, as well as judo fans from around the world. A great sports event starts and ends with great sport, and integrating the European Championships here means there will be even more top-class quality on show."

Sergey Soloveychik, President of the EJU, said:

"We are delighted that our flagship competition, the European Judo Championships, is going to be held in Baku this year. After the cancellation of the event in Glasgow, our priority was to find a new host as quickly as possible. We have done this and I am very happy with our choice. Baku 2015 has a world-class judo venue with supporting facilities which will help Europe's elite judoka reach peak performance in June.

"I am certain that we have made the best choice for European athletes and that the conditions will be most favourable for our main event. For all the judo fans who have

already bought their tickets for Emirates Arena in Glasgow they will have an opportunity to get free tickets to the judo venue in Baku.”

Mr Soloveychik also expressed his thanks to the EOC President Patrick Hickey and IJF President Marius Vizer for their support, saying: “Being judoka, they showed solidarity with the EJU and their devotion to the spirit of judo. I am confident that the best judoka in Europe will all be present at Baku 2015 and I have no doubt they will feel incredibly welcome and well-supported in Azerbaijan.”

Azad Rahimov, Azerbaijan’s Minister of Youth and Sport and Chief Executive Officer of Baku 2015, said:

“We were delighted to accept the chance to incorporate the European Judo Championships into the European Games when the opportunity was presented to us. This decision further strengthens the European Games with 12 of the 16 Olympic Sports now offering direct or indirect qualifying opportunities for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.”

The Judo competitions at Baku 2015 will take place at the newly upgraded 7,800-capacity Heydar Aliyev Arena on June 25-28.

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Notes to Editors:

Baku 2015 is the first ever European Games, an exciting and innovative multi-sport event for the continent which will take place from 12 – 28 June 2015.

There will be a total of 20 sports at Baku 2015: 16 Olympic sports and four non-Olympic sports. More than 6,000 athletes from across Europe will be representing their nations over 17 days of competition.

Twelve of the sports will offer qualification opportunities for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Those sports include Archery, Athletics, Boxing, Cycling, Judo, Shooting, Swimming, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Triathlon, Wrestling and Volleyball.

Baku was awarded the Games by the European Olympic Committees (EOC) in December 2012. The Baku European Games Operations Committee (BEGOC) will organise and run the Games in co-operation with the EOC.