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Published on *fina.org* - Official FINA website (<https://www.fina.org>)

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## PR 41 – FINA and OC Gwangju 2019 appeal to DPR Korea participation

FINA Communications Department

With 50 days to go for the Opening of the 18th FINA World Championships [1] in Gwangju (KOR), FINA and the

Organising Committee of the competition held today a Press Conference in the City Hall of the Korean metropolis, in order to underline the importance of DPR Korea (PRK) presence in the FINA showcase.

Up to now, athletes from PRK haven't registered for the Championships and the Gwangju authorities, together with FINA, have issued a joint declaration (see full text at the bottom of the text) asking for the country to reconsider their position.

FINA Executive Director Cornel Marculescu briefed the media on the present situation: *“At this stage, we don't have a final*

*decision on DPR Korea participation. We continue working with DPR Korea and all other National Federations to ensure*

*Korea National Federation, and some of its divers were present in the last leg of the Diving World Series, some days ago in*

*London. All channels remain open on this issue.”*

Mr Marculescu then recalled that there is an official deadline for registration, but FINA keeps exchanging correspondence

with National Federations to guarantee their presence in the FINA showcase. *“This is an ongoing process, and we are*

*confident that over 190 nations will be present in Gwangju,”* he concluded.



Leading the Gwangju team, the Mayor of the city Lee Yongsup considered that the competition in July will be a milestone for his city and for the entire Korean nation. Under the motto “Dive into Peace”, the event represents a strong commitment to peace in Korea.

*“As President of the Organising Committee, I would like to express the hope of 1.5 million citizens from the city of Gwangju.*

*for the success of this event as the motto of the competition is 'Dive into Peace'. We would like to emphasise this message to*

*the world. Last February, ministers from the two countries met with the IOC in Lausanne and this issue was discussed, but*

*up to now we don't have any answer from the North Korean side," Mr Lee considered.*

The 18th FINA World Championships, to be held from July 12-28, will be attended by athletes from over 190 nations. It will display a total of 76 medal events in the six aquatic disciplines – swimming, water polo, diving, open water swimming, artistic swimming and high diving.

The venues of the competition include the Nambu University Municipal Aquatic Centre, for Swimming and Diving, a facility that will have a 10'500-spectator capacity. Adjacent to this complex, the Nambu University football field will be transformed into the Water Polo location.

Artistic Swimming will be held in the Yeomju Gymnasium, normally a basketball arena that will incorporate two temporary pools for the needs of the competition.

The Chosun University football field will host the High Diving event, while Open Water action will take place at the Yeosu Expo Ocean Park, located 130km away from Gwangju.

The elite competition will be followed, from August 5-18, by the FINA World Masters Championships, the biggest FINA event in terms of athletes' participation (around 8'000 will be in Korea).

The full text of the Joint Declaration is as follows:

**“We respectfully request the North Korean team to take part in the upcoming FINA World Championships in**

**Gwangju”**

There are only 50 days remaining before the opening of the 18th FINA World Championships.

Gwangju, together with FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation), is gearing up to offer a warm and heartfelt welcome to more than 15,000 participants from over 200 countries. We are putting our utmost effort to ensure flawless preparation of the Championships featuring venues, accommodation, transportation, safety measures, and cultural events in order to stage one of the best Championships ever in its history.

Our official slogan “Dive into Peace” moves us towards the World Championships.

We wish to demonstrate it to the world that sports can overcome the barriers of politics and ideology through the upcoming World Championships held in the only divided country in the world, and to prove the fact that communications and exchanges through sports is peace which also reflects one of the key pledges of our city.

We are only a few days away from June 12th, the deadline of the registration for the Championships, and we earnestly desire the North Korean team to participate.

The North Korea’s participation in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games opened the national reconciliation and the path towards peace in the peninsula wide, consequently led to the inter-Korean summit and the summit meeting between North Korea and the United States.

It is our hopes that we get together once again here in Gwangju as we did in the recent Olympic Games.

We sincerely hope that one of the commitment made in the Panmunjeom Declaration in which “the two sides agreed to demonstrate their collective wisdom, talents, and solidarity by jointly participating in international sports events” to be kept.

To note, 43 percent of the qualification in aquatics for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games are available in the upcoming FINA World Championships. If both teams unify once again, it will open opportunities for us to participate in all events as the host nation.

It is a golden opportunity for us to reconcile and our athletes to unite together, and exhibit our spirit and show the peace on the peninsula to the world.

We would like to witness the outstanding performances of the North Korean athletes in Gwangju. 1.5 million Gwangju citizens, as well as the other South Koreans, are looking forward to cheering for the athletes together with the unified flag and seeing collaborations between the Korean artists on the stage.

The citizens of Gwangju and families and friends of the globe heartily hope the upcoming World Championships to be held in great success filled with peaceful waves.

In the hopes of delivering a Championships that will bring peace and unity to the world, we respectfully invite the North Korean team, cheering squad and performance groups to the festivity.

See you in Gwangju, the city of peace, on July 12th.

May 23, 2019

Dr. Julio MAGLIONE  
President  
FINA

Dr. LEE Yongsup  
President  
The 18th FINA World Championships Gwangju 2019  
Mayor of Gwangju Metropolitan City

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