

Jewish Games to be held in Berlin for the first time in 2015

European Maccabi Games at Olympiapark

Berlin, 14 August 2014 From 27 July to 5 August 2015, the Maccabi Games, the European Jewish sports competition, will be held in Berlin for the first time. The organisers are anticipating 2,000 athletes who will compete with each other in 24 disciplines at Berlin Olympiapark.

Burkhard Kieker, CEO of *visitBerlin*: "Berlin is becoming increasingly popular among visitors from Israel. It fits to the fact that the Jewish Games will be held in the city. This is a great honour for us, we are looking forward to welcoming the athletes."

Alon Meyer, President of Makkabi Germany, adds: "What a powerful symbol to now hold the largest Jewish sports event after the war at the former location of the atrocities. 50 years after refounding Makkabi Germany and after establishing the German-Israeli diplomatic relationship, the time is right for it."

The Games were first held in Europe in Prague 1929, the second one year later in Antwerp. After World War II and the persecution of the Jews, the Games returned to Europe in 1959 and were held in Copenhagen. Like the Olympic Games, the international Maccabi Games are held every four years in Israel. The European version of the Games are held between each of the international Games. The sports categories include football, badminton, tennis, archery, dressage riding, chess and fencing.

The Games are not just about the best athletic performance, but also about coming together. With the motto "Let's play together," Jewish junior teams play against teams with professional players. Thus Jewish athletes will play against a team of the German Football Association, the Alba Berlin Bundesliga team in basketball, and the Berlin Hockey Association in hockey. In tennis, a friendly game for wheelchair users is played.

In addition to sports, there is also an event programme, the highlight will be the "Music for Goals" concert on 2 August which unites artists and athletes against racism, anti-Semitism and exclusion. Information about the history of the Maccabi Games and the events in Berlin:

www.emg2015.org

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