

the EuroSkills 2020: Postponement European Skills of **Championships until January 2021**

First, the good news: EuroSkills2020 is still going to be held in Graz. However, due to the situation concerning the coronavirus pandemic and the extreme difficulty in predicting how things will develop, we as the organisers – together with the ongoing umbrella organisation, World Skills Europe - have decided to postpone the European Skills Championships until January 2021. An international event of this scale unfortunately cannot be held any earlier because of the current coronavirus crisis and the resulting travel restrictions in Europe, which are expected to continue well into autumn 2020. Austria's EuroSkills debut is now rescheduled for 6-10 January 2021, at the Messe Congress Graz exhibition centre.

The postponement of the event presents huge challenges for the whole team, which they must now deal with over the coming months. It won't be easy, but it can be done. Over the last few weeks, everyone has continued to work just as hard behind the scenes, from their homes, with partners and experts all over Europe. The Competition Preparation Meetings and Workshops originally planned to be held in Graz in March were highly successful for the most part, having been conducted almost entirely by video link.

We would like to thank all partners, supporters and sponsors for their understanding as we take this step. The decision has also been welcomed and supported by the 30 European member countries. The solidarity of the World Skills Europe family in this situation shows that other matters take priority at this time. Our main concern must now be for the health of the young, skilled workers, the teams and the visitors. It is good to know that, despite the difficult situation that this decision creates, it also gives rise to an encouraging perspective. We are convinced that staging this extraordinary event at the beginning of the new year will be a positive and motivating sign for our economy and for our unique skilled workers. And I'm convinced that this first European Skills Championships in Austria will be a great way - a sensational way, even – to start the new year in 2021. Together, we can make it happen.

Josef Herk

President of the Styrian Economic Chamber EuroSkills 2020 GmbH Supervisory Board Chairman

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