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**SILESIA NAMED HOST OF 2021 IAAF WORLD RELAYS**

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The IAAF World Relays will head to Europe for the first time in 2021, with the Polish region of Silesia confirmed today as host of the fifth edition of the biennial event.

The newest addition to the IAAF's World Athletics Series, the World Relays were held in the Bahamian capital of Nassau for the first three editions, while this year's event was held in the Japanese city of Yokohama.

Poland has a proven track record of hosting major athletics events with Bydgoszcz having hosted the inaugural IAAF World U18 Championships in 1998 as well as two editions of the IAAF World U20 Championships and IAAF World Cross Country Championships. Sopot staged the 2014 IAAF World Indoor Championships, while Gdynia is currently preparing to host the 2020 IAAF World Half Marathon Championships.

Poland also has a strong recent record in relay events. Their women's 4x400m team was triumphant in Yokohama earlier this year and at the 2018 European Championships, while their men's 4x400m squad set a world indoor record en route to taking gold at the IAAF World Indoor Championships Birmingham 2018.

Chorzow's Silesian Stadium, which will hold the World Relays on 1-2 May, 2021, has in recent years hosted several well-attended international competitions that form part of the IAAF Hammer Throw Challenge, including the Kamila Skolimowska Memorial, which last year attracted a crowd of more than 40,000 people. The Silesian Stadium was also where, in 1969,

Nadezhda Chizhova became the first woman ever to surpass 20 metres in the shot put.

The region of Silesia is a major industrial hub and home to almost five million people.

IAAF President Sebastian Coe welcomed Silesia as the first European host of the IAAF World Relays.

“The World Relays is our youngest global event but in just six years it has developed a vibrancy that gives it a unique character,” Coe said. “Its focus on team races allows our athletes to show a different side to their sport, and their joy in competing with teammates shines through.”

“We have been blessed with wonderfully enthusiastic crowds at every edition of the World Relays and we are confident that the people of Silesia will provide another lively atmosphere. Poland is one of our most active member federations and has a deserved reputation for delivering excellent athletics events and attracting big crowds, so I’m delighted that we will be bringing another of our World Athletics Series events there in less than two years from now.”

The Marshal of the Silesian Voivodeship, Jakub Chełstowski, said: “The Silesian Stadium has been proving that it is the best athletics stadium in Poland. We have the best infrastructure, and thousands of spectators cheering stars of world athletics create an exceptional atmosphere. The IAAF World Relays will be a great opportunity to see the best runners, but also to inculcate passion for sports among children. In such activities the sports ambassadors of the Silesian Stadium such as Anita Włodarczyk, Justyna Kwaśny-Socha and Ewa Swoboda are supporting us. It will also be a wonderful opportunity to promote the Silesian Voivodeship as a region that is worth visiting.”

The 2021 IAAF World Relays will be used as a qualifying competition for relay teams aiming to compete at the IAAF World Athletics Championships Oregon 2021.

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