Warsaw, 25 February 2020

 Participants and Organizers

of the Opening Ceremony

 of the European Winter Para Sport Event, Poland 2020

Dear Mr President,

Dear athletes from Poland and from the whole of Europe,

Ladies and Gentlemen – members of teams, guests and fans!

You are gathered here because of an important and significant event. I warmly greet all of you attending the opening ceremony of the European Winter Para Sports Event, but first and foremost, all the athletes. I am very happy that Poland is the host country of such an important sports event within the framework of the international Paralympic movement, the first of this kind in Europe. I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our dear guests visiting our country – the athletes and members of their teams representing many European nationalities.

During the event the athletes will compete in four winter disciplines – para alpine skiing, para – snowboard, para-cross country skiing and para-biathlon. I am absolutely sure that great emotions await both: the athletes and the spectators.

The event motto: “One sport – one Europe – one dream” is both moving and inspiring. It emphasizes the fact that sport – which in its origin means rivalry, noble and tough rivalry – is at the same time the great meeting place for many people.

Sport strongly connects people – for each athlete sporting rivalry means also struggling with themselves, with their limitations and everything that could stop them from attaining victory. That very effort in reaching perfection and overcoming, even most difficult of challenges, unites the athletes, creates strong bonds of respect and friendship. Also we, your fans appreciate greatly your devotion, passion and involvement.

What should be especially admired is the effort of Paralympians and all athletes practicing parasport. Your results, successes and your attitude to life are extremely impressive indeed. You give testimony to the strength of your character, the steadfastness of your spirit and your body, to the notion that, as Paralympic champions say –the impossible does not exist ". This is a wonderful lesson and an immense inspiration to all of us.

I wish all the athletes good fortune in sport, much strength as well as many dreamt-of victories and successes. I hope they become a source of your personal satisfaction, acknowledgement and prestige. I wish all the fans wonderful and unforgettable impressions. I commend the work of the Polish Paralympic Committee for your effort  in organizing such an important event. I am confident it will strengthen co-operation among the European Paralympic organizations.

I wish you all the best and, once again, extend my heartfelt greetings to you all. .

President of the Republic of Poland

Andrzej Duda