Dear distinguished guests, dear members of the Lifesaving Family, Dear Presidents,

Dear President Pawel Blasiak,

**63 victims of drowning per day in Europe. Over 2.5 millions preventable deaths in the water worldwide in the past decade – these are too many!**

The International Life Saving Federation of Europe (ILSE) is the European branch of International Lifesaving (ILS). The International Life Saving Federation of Europe is Europe’s non-profit association of about 5 Millions aquatic Lifesavers. ILSE is representing 54 national federations working in the field of Water Safety in Europe. We are the authority for drowning prevention, lifesaving and lifesaving sport for Europe. We promote and organise lifesaving sports to stimulate the interest of competitors to improve their ability and willingness to save people who are in danger in the aquatic environment. Our vision is a Europe free of drowning.

The European Youth Lifesaving Championships in Gorzów Wielkopolski and in Międzyzdroje is the top international event for the young European top athletes. Later in September the championships for the older ones will follow in Belgium.

On behalf of ILSE, I welcome all representatives of the 15 participating nations, the delegates, referees, competitors, spectators, volunteers and guests to Gorzów Wielkopolski. The organisation of our European Youth Lifesaving Championships is a great task and the whole lifesaving family is very grateful to the Polish Lifesaving Federation WOPR, the organizing committee and all the volunteers helping to make this the event remarkable.

EYLC 2023 is more than a competition, winning medals and becoming champions. It is about meeting fellow lifesavers, renewing friendships and exchanging ideas. Our competitors are lifesavers. Our lifesavers perform patrols on the beach, a lake or a pool. The competition is a method of improving lifesaving skills and engaging people in the global drowning prevention effort.

To all participants, I hope you will achieve your goals in fair competitions and enjoy acting together to make the European Youth Lifesaving Championships 2023 in Poland a special event in the spirit of friendship through lifesaving.

Please follow the ideas and hints of the organizing committee and the referees to make this competition to the climax of your sports calendar this year. Enjoy the great hospitality of the Polish here in the North of their lovely country!

Dr. Detlev Mohr, PhD

President of International Life Saving Federation of Europe ILSE