

The Finnish Defence Force´s Chief
of Education Brigadier General
Jukka Sonninen´s Opening Speech –
50th WMC Orienteering – Hamina
(FIN)



Distinguished Guests of Honor,
Official representative of CISM, Lieutenant Colonel Harald Östby,
Representatives of participating missions,
Members of the Organizing Committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Hyvät sotilasurheilun ja suunnistuksen ystävät!

The International Military Sports Council (CISM) with the organization of the 50th World Military Orienteering Championship has entrusted the Finnish Defense Forces. Five times before, in 1968, '76, '84, '95 and 2005, the demanding Finnish terrain and forests have gathered the military orienteers to measure their skills in fair CISM Championships. It is a great honor for us to host the 50th Jubilee Championship and to offer the competitors a chance to attain their goals - to become a military world champion.

Sport has been a common language between the armed forces of the different nations during almost the last seven decades. Today the world and the armed forces are facing immense changes but sport and physical training will remain an essential part of the daily military life. Map reading and orienteering is still one of the basic skills of the soldier even on today's modern battlefield.

Orienteering is not only one of the oldest but today also one of the most dynamic sports within CISM. The number of the participating countries, 30, gives us a positive sign, that orienteering is important sport in the military context. Among the competitors, numerous orienteers represent the top level in the world. Besides the fair competition between orienteers, our common goal is to convey a positive image of military sport to all those who, at the stands and through the media, form an idea of military sport and of military athletes.

I am convinced that the organizers, the personnel of Army Academy have done their utmost, besides the normal routine training, to host this challenging Championship and to show their expertise as orienteering organizers.

Arvoisa yleisö! Hyvät Haminalaiset, Olette tervetulleita seuraamaan ja arvioimaan sotilassuunnistajien esityksiä vaativissa Kymenlaakson maastoissa. CISM: motto Friendship through sport - ystävyyttä urheilun kautta, luo mahdollisuudet uusien ystävyys-suhteiden luomiseen kilpailuviikon aikana.

Honoured Foreign Guests! On behalf of the Finnish Defence Forces, I express my sincere thanks for accepting our invitation. What we can offer you, besides the competitions, is warm hospitality and a warm Finnish summer with long days. I wish you a pleasant stay in Finland and the best of success in the exciting competitions. I hope that you will have good memories when leaving us.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the Teams!
You are cordially welcome to Finland and Hamina.

I declare the 50th World Military Orienteering Championship of the International Military Sports Council open!