

Dear chess friends from all over the world, dear Mrs. X, dear Mr. Y,

it is a great honor for me to welcome all of you at the Candidates tournament. The German Chess Federation and all chess players in Germany appreciate very much that eight of the best players in the world will be our guests for the next two-and-a half weeks. In 2015 we hosted the Rapid and Blitz Chess World Championship and I am pretty sure that this time the number of spectators will be even higher than three years ago. The Chess clubs in Berlin have organized a lot of chess tournaments for the average player before and after the rounds so that every visitor of the candidates tournament can touch the pieces himself. All over Germany there will be an outrageous number of Chess clubs following the live coverage of the event at their club nights. To sum it up: The next weeks Chess will hopefully attract the attention that it deserves.

2018 is an important year for Chess in Germany. Beside the Candidates tournament we celebrate the 150th birthday of the only German World Chess Champion Emanuel Lasker. I would like to draw your attention to the exhibition in his honor which is located on the xth floor. I would also like to remind you of the fact that in 1910 Emanuel Lasker nearly lost his title in Berlin to Carl Schlechter by winning the last game of the match. 2018 is an important year for the World Chess Organization FIDE as well due to the fact that at the FIDE congress in October in Batumi there will be elections. But this is not the time for chess politics, today we should only think about the beauty of the game.

I would like to thank FIDE and WorldChess for the decision to organize the Candidates tournament in Berlin. We are really looking forward to 56 inspiring battles and I wish all eight players the best of luck. The candidates tournaments in the past have always produced beautiful games and an exciting course of the event. Hopefully the same will happen here in the Kühlhaus so that all Chess players will keep "Berlin 2018" in best memory.

Thank you for your attention.