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UEFA Considers Holding Euro 2020 Exclusively in Russia – Le Parisien

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Russia has a strong infrastructure after it hosted the 2018 FIFA World Cup. **Yury Kochetkov / EPA / TASS**

Europe's football governing body UEFA might make Russia the sole host of the Euro 2020 football championship that was postponed by the coronavirus pandemic until 2021, the French daily Le Parisien reported Monday.

UEFA's Euro 2020 is currently scheduled to be staged in 12 cities, including St. Petersburg, between June 11 and July 11, 2021. London is slated to host the semis and the finals.

Citing unnamed sources, Le Parisien reported that Russia is under consideration as the sole host because of its 2018 FIFA World Cup infrastructure and relatively low Covid-19 infection rates in spring, when UEFA moved to postpone the tournament.

Russia has since confirmed 1.65 million coronavirus cases, the fourth-highest in the world, and 28,500 deaths. These figures, Le Parisien reported, "could weigh on the final decision to retain Russia or simply keep St. Petersburg as the host city."

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UEFA did not confirm Le Parisien's report and said it will take "all its time" to decide on how to organize the tournament.

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said last month the organization is exploring several scenarios for holding the Euro 2020 finals in 2021. One of the options included slimming down the tournament from 12 host venues, Ceferin told the German broadcaster ARD.

"I wouldn't be skeptical about the possibility of holding Euro 2020 in Russia. It's quite possible," the veteran sportscaster Vasily Utkin told Russia's Ekho Sport radio station.

Russia qualified for the tournament with a 5-0 win over Cyprus in October 2019.

Pre-pandemic, St. Petersburg was due to host three UEFA Euro 2020 group stage matches and one-quarter-final at its 68,000-seat stadium.

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