

Report of the Euromeetings Board 2008

A fantastic season for athletics! - With an excellent indoor and outdoor season sending us off, and on, the right track to the 2008 Olympic Games. The ultimate gathering creating tremendous heroes in our sport. We could embrace and enjoy unbelievable performances, and athletes like Usain Bolt became the key promoter, giving athletics back its name and reputation. Beijing Olympics made the whole world speak about our sport, the athletes and the sprints. To break the world record in our most prestigious events popularized athletics and now we must do our best to carry this success forward in the years to come.

Again, the meetings prior to the Olympic Games had difficulties with some National Federations that did not allow their athletes to compete or even worse, forced them to withdraw from planned competition when they already had checked into the meeting hotel. These actions took place despite earlier meetings between IAAF and Euromeetings where we together had had discussions with the Federations, given an agreement from them, that this would not happen in the future. Euromeetings do not take lightly on these matters. We will continue to work for the athletes allowing them to participate in competitions they feel is adequate for their preparation leading up to the Championships. Continuous work together with IAAF is necessary to solve this problem.

Also, again clashes in the calendar occurred that caused problems for some members. In particular the meetings in June were affected by the clash with New York and Eugene causing major disturbances and affected the start fields of the meetings. Our continuous work to have a meaningful and well planned competition calendar is of highest importance to avoid these problems in the future.

Euromeetings has also continued the cooperation with the major parties of our sport, IAAF, EAA and AAM, leading up to successful actions and initiated projects. Part of this cooperation was shown during the Indoor World Championships in Valencia, where the AAM and Euromeetings staged a joint seminar "Revitalising one day Athletics". It was the first joint event by managers and meeting organisers and had attendance from all corners of athletics including governing bodies, television and media, marketing and sport companies. Euromeetings hope that this was a beginning of future deeper cooperation and work amongst all parties of athletics to make our sport more prosperous in the years to come. We would especially like to thank Patrick Magyar and his staff for the excellent work with the seminar.

During the year we have also seen the “beginning of change” in the structure of the one-day meetings calendar as well as structure of athletic events done both by IAAF and EAA. Euromeetings have been consulted in these matters and we hope that these changes will be successful and modernize and improve the athletic programme. The changes are a very important step towards better TV coverage and spectator attendance of athletics. Euromeetings hope that the decisions by the governing bodies are taken with the sports future in focus.

Our strong standpoint against doping has been a focus from both media and athletes and we are pleased that so many of our members have followed the recommendation not to accept athletes with a passed doping offence or have brought our sport in disrepute to their meetings. Unfortunately, not all members have taken this action as serious as the Board and in some cases athletes with a passed doping offence have been accepted, sometimes by mistake. Naturally these cases cause attention in the media and make our action less sincere. In the case of Blonska, who was caught on a second offence, we see that our standpoint is correct and the Board now expect that the members will follow the recommendation without exception in the future.

The financial crisis that has spread around the world lately will naturally also affect the sport world and athletics. In 2009 sponsorship and television coverage may be even more difficult to find than in the past. Meetings therefore must be cautious not to overspend and keep costs to a minimum until the future income is secured. This may mean less athletes and/or events thus this is our largest expense.

Finally, the Board of Euromeetings summarize 2008 as a successful year for athletics and with a vision of a prosperous 2009 we wish all the members good luck with next years work.

2008-10-17

Euromeetings Board

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