

LEN Bureau Meeting
Berlin (GER), 10-11 May 2002

Several decisions of interest concerning European aquatic sports have been made by the LEN Bureau at their annual Spring meeting in Berlin (GER) over the past weekend:

7th European Short Course Swimming Championships (2003)

The 7th edition of the Continental title contests in the 25 meter pool have been allocated to the capital city of the Republic of Ireland (IRL). They will be staged in **Dublin** from **11th to 14th December 2003**. The competitions will be held at “the pool @ abbotstown”, that is a new indoor aquatics centre to be inaugurated at the end of 2002. The Bureau was very much convinced with the contents of a most professional presentation by Swim Ireland, and particularly satisfied to see that the Irish Government (Tourist Board) was strongly supporting the candidature to host this most prestigious and first ever international swimming championship on the green Island. In consideration of long term planning, most modern engineering and technology that is used for the construction of the facilities (amongst others a 50 meter, 10 lanes Olympic standard competition pool with moveable bulkheads on both sides), it is also expected by LEN that the venue will probably become one of the fastest swimming pools in Europe.

A total of 55 World and European records were broken at the past 5 editions held in Rostock (Ger, 1996), Sheffield (Gbr, 1998), Lisbon (Por, 1999), Valencia (Esp, 2000) and Antwerp (Bel, 2001). The Event of December 2002 was recently allocated by LEN to the City of Riesa, a small town situated in between Leipzig and Dresden. In Riesa the athletes will perform inside a temporary pool that will be erected at the Erdgas Arena, a multifunctional hall used for several activities ranging from music concerts and shows to sporting contests.

2nd European Masters Water Polo Championships (2003)

The Bureau of LEN further decided to allocate the European Masters Water Polo Championships of 2003 to **Slovenia (SLO)**. After the success of the premier event last year in Split (CRO), it is expected that 40 to 50 teams with 600 to 800 masters age group athletes will travel to the second edition. The Bureau of LEN and the European Water Polo Family are enthusiastically looking forward to a festival of Water Polo that will be extending over 16 days. First the European Water Polo Championships in Kranj and Ljubljana from 6th to 15th June, then followed by the European Masters Water Polo Championships from **17th to 22nd of June**, and a unique opportunity for the masters athletes to use the same facilities and pools as the professionals.

26th European Swimming Championships (2002)

When meeting in Berlin, the German Swimming Federation (DSV) and the Berlin Organising Committee (BOC) did not miss the opportunity to update the LEN Bureau Members on matters stand and preparations towards the prime aquatics event of the international swimming calendar of 2002. At the present moment over 300 journalists have forwarded their accreditation request to BOC. Ten weeks prior to the start of the Championships (25th July – 4th August), this is an absolute record high of media entries.

The atmosphere around swimming pools in Europe is heating up as all of the European top swimmers are focusing their preparation on Berlin. A total of fifty-seven (57) Gold Medals will be awarded by LEN in Open Water Swimming (6), Synchronised Swimming (3), Diving (10) and Swimming (38). Over 300 hours of pan-European broadcasts and up to 200 million dedicated TV audience is expected by LEN. Tickets are sold out already on certain days, for bookings and availability please go to the LEN website (www.len-aquatics.org) and then click on the berlin2002 logo for the link to the BOC site with ticket information).

In Germany the European Championships will be transmitted on the public channels ARD and ZDF for almost 30 hours of live broadcasts, interviews, background information and reports. At the time of circulating this press release 39 European Federations have forwarded their preliminary entries for up to 998 athletes. The Championships in Berlin will be the supreme showcase for all European swimming stars to confirm their ranking and status as elite swimmer and the big chance for all others wanting to reach international notoriety and recognition before the Olympic Games of 2004.

Cyprus (CYP) and Armenia (ARM) with 1 and 3 athletes form the smallest delegations so far, while the hosts from Germany (GER), Russia (RUS) and Italy (ITA) have entered the largest teams with 80, 78 and 74 competitors respectively. Due to the very high interest in these Championships the international media is reminded that late accreditation requests *may not be processed*. For late comers please contact urgently the Media Department of the Event (Cosmos-pps at tel: +49.2131.131203 fax: +49.2131.131114 e-mail: redaktion@cosmos-pps.de)

At the occasion of the meeting the 13 Members of the LEN Bureau under the chair of President Bartolo Consolo further decided to introduce blood testing at the European Championships this Summer too. The procedures for blood testing that will be made in addition to traditional urine sampling will follow the new rules regarding doping control that have been recently adopted by the FINA Congress in Moscow (RUS) in April. The LEN Executive, in co-operation with the LEN Medical Committee will decide the number of blood samples that will be collected and screened. Additional information will be available in Berlin at the European Championships.

LEN Office Rome, 14th May 2002

Attention Press. On 15th May 2002, LEN press release European Water Polo “Final Four”