



## Press release

### **Serbia's men and Russia's women teams crowned 2006 European Champions LEN President Bartolo Consolo: "I'm happy with these Championships"**

Belgrade (pps) Ecstatic joy reigned in Belgrade's streets minutes after fantastic fireworks concluded the 27<sup>th</sup> European Water Polo Championships in the Serbian capital. People were dancing in the streets, hundreds of cars hooting with people lying on the roofs or sitting on the bonnets waving national flags – that's how the Serbs celebrated the European gold medal won by their men's national team.

LEN President Bartolo Consolo and LEN Secretary Sven-Egil Folvik both drew very positive conclusions of the 2006 European Water Polo Championships. Bartolo Consolo: "We are very happy with the smooth running of these Championships. The importance water polo enjoys in Serbia has also been proven by the attendance of Serbia's Head of State at the men's final." Sven-Egil Folvik congratulated the organisers: "The Organising Committee with all its partners, sponsors and suppliers has done a tremendous job. I'm particularly pleased about the excellent security in place, which shows they paid attention and learned from the incidents at the 2003 Championships."

The LEN officials, including Haluk Toygarli, Chairman of the Technical Water Polo Committee, also expressed their appreciation of the new rules applied for the first time at European Championships. Toygarli: "We saw faster games than in the past, more action and more opportunities to score. The best example were the Romanians who excellently played that game adjusted to the new rules. These Championships will be remembered for the first realisation of the new rules."

Consolo: "The new rules have certainly upgraded the quality of the game. This fact is a great motivation for LEN to think about other important improvements for the future."

Serbia's men team achieved their third successive European title after 2001 (still as Yugoslavia) and 2003 (Serbia and Montenegro) defeating Hungary 9-8 in a dramatic final on Sunday evening. As in 1993, Spain beat Romania 10-4 for the bronze medal. Romania repeated their best final position ever at European Championships by finishing fourth. Aleksandar Sagic (SRB), Tamas Kasas (HUN) and Denis Sefik (SRB) received Omega Seamaster watches as best goal-scorer (33 goals), best player and best goalkeeper respectively.



**Ligue Européenne  
de Natation**

Via Cassia 929  
00189 Rome - Italy  
tel: + 39.06.30.20.71.27  
or + 39.06.30.20.72.63  
fax: + 39.06.30.36.40.38  
e-mail: len@lenoffice.it  
www.lenweb.org



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Russia's women finally won their first ever European gold medal narrowly beating the defending champions, Italy 12-10 on Saturday. 32-year-old Italian player Martina Miceli collected her seventh European medal since 1991. She was on all Italian teams that won medals – bronze in 1991, two silver in 2001 and 2006, and four gold (1995, 1997, 1999, 2003). Italy's star attacker Tania di Mario was elected best player of the tournament, her team-mate Elena Gigli best goalkeeper, and Russia's Ekaterina Pantulina was best goal-scorer with 18 goals. All three were awarded Omega Seamaster watches from LEN partner Omega/Swiss Timing.

In addition to the European Championship medals, the last six European places (three each in the men's and women's events) to the 2007 FINA World Swimming Championships in Melbourne (March 17-April 1) were determined in the Serbian capital, as well as the first six (men) and first four (women) tickets to the 2008 European Water Polo Championships in Malaga (ESP).

### **2007 FINA World Swimming Championship qualifications**

Serbia, Hungary, Spain, Croatia, Italy and Romania will be accompanied to Melbourne by Greece, Germany and Russia to complete the European competitors in the men's event. In the women's event the Netherlands, Greece and Germany booked the last European places since Italy, Spain, Hungary and Russia had previously qualified.

### **2008 European Water Polo Championship tickets**

The best six men's teams in Belgrade - Serbia, Hungary, Spain, Romania, Italy and Greece – qualified directly for the next continental event in Malaga. Russia, Hungary, Spain and Italy ascertained their participation in the women's tournament. The remaining six men's and four women's teams will be determined at LEN Qualification Tournaments to be staged in spring of 2008.

### **Final placing 27<sup>th</sup> European Water Polo Championships Belgrade 2006**

#### **MEN**

1. Serbia
2. Hungary
3. Spain
4. Romania
5. Italy
6. Greece
7. Croatia
8. Germany
9. Russia
10. Netherlands
11. Slovakia
12. Slovenia

#### **WOMEN**

1. Russia
2. Italy
3. Hungary
4. Spain
5. Netherlands
6. Greece
7. Germany
8. Serbia

- END -



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