

# UPDATE

Newsletter of the European Athletic Association

1|06 April



## 2 EVENTS

Review of recent EAA events

## 6 PREVIEW

A look ahead to future EAA events

## 9 INSIDE

Update on 'European Athletics – the need for change'

## 11 FACTS

Information, facts & figures

## 12 FINISH

Interview with world 110m hurdles champion Ladji Doucouré

## 2006: the year of European Athletics

### Message from EAA President Hansjörg Wirz



2006 is a special year for European Athletics. It is the year of the European Athletics Championships which take place in Gothenburg in August. Established and new stars of our sport will have the chance to shine on the Continental stage.

The European Athletics Championships is very important for our movement. It is the shop window for athletics in Europe and when our sport reaches its largest audience. The event is the highlight of our four-year competition programme and attracts a massive amount of interest from media, sponsors and the public.

We are greatly looking forward to being in Gothenburg in August for this year's Championships, which will be celebrated both inside and outside the stadium. The whole city of Gothenburg will be the arena for the event and many concerts and other festivities will take place in the streets, squares and parks of the city. For the first time ever the opening ceremony will take place outside the stadium in the city centre. In this way the whole population of Gothenburg will be integrated into the Championships and there will be an enjoyable atmosphere not only in the stadium, but in the whole city.

Staging the Championships is a great organisational challenge and I extend my thanks to the Organising Committee in Gothenburg under the leadership of Toralf Nilsson and to the EAA's delegates, consultants and staff who are working so hard to make the event a success.

An important measure of success is to have a full stadium every day. Ticket sales for Göteborg 2006 are progressing well and we are confident that sell-out enthusiastic crowds will cheer on the athletes every day.

There has been a strong demand for sponsorship packages for the event. Several important National Partners and Suppliers are signed up and all the EAA's International Partners – SPAR, SEIKO and EPSON – are contributing with their engagement to what will be an outstanding event in Gothenburg. 30 European television stations and some from outside Europe have already signalled their intention to broadcast this year's European Athletics Championships.

In Gothenburg we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the EAA's partnership with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), which is a strong sign of a successful cooperation. Television is the means by which we bring our sport to a wide audience and attract new fans and our relationship with EBU has been of the utmost importance in ensuring excellent coverage of our events across Europe.

Another important event in Gothenburg will be the European Youth Forum. It will be an excellent opportunity for young leaders from EAA Member Federations to share ideas with their counterparts in other European countries and to be inspired by watching top class athletics. Their experiences will help them to contribute towards the development of athletics in their country. Young people are the future of our sport and retaining their involvement in athletics is one of the key objectives of the 'European Athletics – the need for change' project.

All the elements of preparation give the picture of an outstanding European Athletics Championships in Gothenburg. I am sure that the spectators in the stadium and the millions of TV viewers across the Continent will enjoy some spectacular competition as Europe's best athletes battle to become European champions. I look forward to welcoming you to the European Athletics Championships.

[hjwirz@bluewin.ch](mailto:hjwirz@bluewin.ch)

European Athletic Association  
Avenue Louis-Ruchonnet 18  
1003 Lausanne  
Switzerland

Phone +41 (21) 313 43 50  
Fax +41 (21) 313 43 51  
Email [office@european-athletics.org](mailto:office@european-athletics.org)  
Web [www.european-athletics.org](http://www.european-athletics.org)

# France and Russia defend European indoor crowns



**The French men and Russian women defended their European Athletics Indoor Cup titles in Liévin on 5 March but took two different paths to reach the top of the podium.**



Winner of the women's 3000m  
Yekaterina Volkova

Russia's women, as they have done since the inaugural European Athletics Indoor Cup in 2003, dominated the competition from the first event and won five of the nine disciplines contested.

Steeplechaser Yekaterina Volkova, the world championships silver medallist last summer, proved that she is a highly competent competitor without the barriers and got Russia off to a winning start in 8:59.70.

"My indoor running was really just for training. The steeplechase is in the European Athletics Championships for the first time this year and I am very motivated to win the gold medal in Gothenburg as I don't actually win many races. My victory in the Cup was the first one this year," she commented after the race.

Tatyana Veshkurova then won the 400m in 51.67 seconds and Oksana Rogova took the triple jump with 14.08m to give Russia maximum points after three events.

Olga Komyagina in the 1500m and the relay quartet, with the race run over 4-3-2-1 laps of the track, added further victories for Russia to finish as emphatic winners with 69 points.

Poland had their best ever showing to finish second with 53 points, helped in no small part by pole vaulter Anna Rogowska clearing a national record of 4.80m – most pundits' choice for the performance of the Cup – before having three attempts at a world record height of 4.92m.

Rogowska was watched intently by Russia's current world record holder Yelena Isinbayeva, who had earlier been honoured as the 2005 Waterford Crystal Female European Athlete of the Year.



Shot put winner Tomasz Majewski

## Team Result

### Men

1. France, 59 points
2. Germany, 54
3. Spain, 50
4. Poland, 50
5. Ukraine, 47
6. Russia, 41
7. Italy, 38
8. Finland, 27

### Women

1. Russia, 69 points
2. Poland, 53
3. Romania, 46
4. France, 41
5. Germany, 37
6. Ukraine, 33
7. Spain, 31
8. Sweden, 21



Marc Maury interviews Christine Arron

Romania finished third on their Cup debut with 46 points. Maria Cioncan made a welcome return to major competition after spending the second half of last year recovering from injury and provided the highlight for the Romanian team when she came through strongly on the last lap to win the 800m in 2:02.21.

France's Christine Arron, who was cheered to the rafters every time her name was mentioned, did not disappoint and overcame a mediocre start to win the 60m in 7.16 seconds while Sweden's Susanna Kallur, the reigning European Indoor champion, won the 60m hurdles in 7.95 seconds to complete the female roll of honour.

In contrast to the women's contest, the lead in the men's competition changed hands four times during the course of the afternoon and going into the last event, the relay, any one of four teams could have triumphed.

Poland had a flying start and won the first two events. Shot putter Tomasz Majewski exceeded expectations and rose to the



The winning French men's team

challenge by producing a season's best of 20.60m in the final round to come from behind and wrestle the lead from Germany's highly favoured Ralf Bartels.

"I'm really happy because I knew my opponents were going to be strong, especially Ralf," said the delighted Majewski.



Men's relay

The Poles' 400m man Daniel Dabrowski then produced the fastest time over two laps of 46.62.

Germany took over on top after Jan Fitschen won an enthralling 3000m in 7:58.08 but it was to be the only event Germany won.

The host's neighbours hung onto the lead for another four events thanks to some solid performances, although Ronald Pognon's 60m win in 6.65 seconds and Ladj Doucouré's comfortable 60m hurdles victory in 7.62 seconds kept the home crowd happy and their hopes alive that France would be in contention at the end.

"I put some pressure on myself before the race because I wanted to do well for the team. I'm surprised about the time because I didn't think I would be running so fast," reflected Doucouré, the reigning world champion over 110m hurdles outdoors, after winning his first outing of the winter over the hurdles.

However Sergio Gallardo's victory in a tactical 1500m, following up an earlier win by Juan de Dios Jurado in the 800m, saw Spain rather than France go to the front after eight events.

The hosts were not to be denied though and the lead changed hands for the final time after the penultimate event, the long jump, which was won by Ukraine's reigning European outdoor champion Oleksiy Lukasevych with 7.88m. France's pre-event favourite Salim Sdiri picked up a hamstring injury but he still managed 7.85m and the second place he earned with that leap proved to be crucial.

With their noses in front, but only four points covering the top three, France ran the Russian relay winners close

## European Athletes of the Year 2005: Virgilijus Alekna and Yelena Isinbayeva



Lithuanian discus thrower Virgilijus Alekna and Russian pole vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva received their 2005 Waterford Crystal European Athlete of the Year Trophies from EAA President Hansjörg Wirz in the arena before the start of the European Athletics Indoor Cup. For both athletes it is the first time they have won the award.

World 110m hurdles champion Ladj Doucouré (FRA) was runner-up in the men's poll, with European Indoor high jump champion Stefan Holm (SWE) and World hammer champion Ivan Tikhon (BLR) taking joint third place.

World heptathlon champion Carolina Klüft (SWE) took second place amongst the women, ahead of Golden League jackpot winner Tatyana Lebedeva and World marathon champion Paula Radcliffe (GBR).



enough to retain their title and to ensure an exciting end to the day for the enthusiastic aficionados of French athletics who packed the Stade Couvert Régional.

France's final tally of 59 points gave them a five point margin of victory over Germany with Spain third with 50 points, despite the disqualification of their relay quartet.

**By Phil Minshull, a Madrid based sports writer and broadcaster**

# Super six for Sergiy Lebid



**Sergiy Lebid won his sixth title and there was a home victory for Lornah Kiplagat at the SPAR European Cross Country Championships in Tilburg on 11 December 2005.**

Sergiy Lebid unveiled yet another way to win the European Cross Country title by hitting top gear halfway around the last of the six laps in the senior men's race to leave his nearest rival, Spain's Alberto Garcia, trailing in his wake. His 12 second margin of victory was the biggest of any winner in Tilburg's attractive Leijpark.

"As usual, I was confident I could win but the Spaniard was strong. I decided to wait until about 600 metres to go and then kick. It was during the race that I decided to use this tactic, it was not pre-planned," commented Lebid after his sixth triumph.

France's Driss Maazouzi finished third, just like he did in 2004, overtaking his compatriot Bob Tahri in the closing stages of the race to grab the bronze medal and help France to their third consecutive team title with 21 points ahead of Spain and Ukraine.



Sergiy Lebid



Lornah Kiplagat

However, the biggest cheers of the day were not reserved for Lebid or France but the local heroine Lornah Kiplagat, the first Dutchwoman to win a European Cross Country crown.

Kiplagat kicked just after the bell and by the finish there were five seconds between her and Germany's tenacious Sabrina Mockenhaupt, who had taken the lead several times during the middle stages of the race. Sweden's Johanna Nilsson took the bronze medal.

"I could hear the cheers for me on almost every part of the course. It was a huge boost for me," said an emotional Kiplagat after the race. Her margin of victory would have been greater had she not taken the time to greet well wishers crowded close to the course barriers down the home straight.

Russia packed well to win the team title with 52 points, just two in front of Great Britain, for whom the defending champion Hayley Yelling was their first woman in sixth.

Hungary's Barnabás Bené fulfilled all the expectations that he would take a second successive gold medal in junior men's race. Just like 12 months ago the best of the rest of Europe's teenage distance runners had no answer to his finishing sprint.

Behind him, Britain's Andy Vernon just edged Serbia and Montenegro's Dusan Markesevic for the Silver medal, with little more than the thickness of a vest dividing the pair for the closest call over a medal on the bright and dry winter afternoon.



Barnabás Bené

Poland picked up their country's first gold medal in the history of the Championships when they took the team title with 60 points, eight ahead of Great Britain.

Romania's Ancuta Bobocel moved up a place in the results by winning in Tilburg after finishing second in 2004. She shot straight to the front of the race from the gun and was never headed. Bobocel stopped the clock at 15:23, with Briton Emily Pidgeon two seconds in arrears and the Netherlands' Susan Kuijken taking the bronze eight seconds further back.

Pidgeon did get to stand on top of the podium though as Britain took the team gold medals. All six of the British contingent finished in the top 21 for them to run out comfortable winners with just 30 points, leaving 2004 junior women's champions Romania having to settle for second.

**By Phil Minshull**

# Polish throwers on form in Tel-Aviv

**Three Olympic and six World champions were among the 170 athletes from 29 countries who competed at the European Cup Winter Throwing in Tel-Aviv on 18-19 March.**

As expected the women's hammer was the highlight of the first day of competition in Tel-Aviv and 2000 Olympic champion Kamila Skolimowska (POL) was responsible for most of action. She opened her series with 71.55m, improved to a Cup record of 72.41m in the third round and then finished with 73.32m, another Cup record as well as an Israeli all-comers record.

The 2006 world leader Gulfiya Khanafeyeva (RUS) had four attempts of her own over 70m, topped by 72.01m in the last round, and Manuela Montebrun from France took the bronze medal with 70.29m.



Natalya Khoroneko

Poland won another two gold medals on day one in the men's discus and javelin. Piotr Malachowski improved his personal best and the all-comers record to 65.01m in the discus, beating a strong field and ending the three-year reign in the Cup of Gerd Kanter (EST). The 2005 World silver medalist had to settle for the bronze this time, with 62.55m behind Mario Pestano's (ESP) 63.40m.

Igor Janik hurled the javelin to a season's best of 81.16m in the morning's Group B and found in the evening that none of the Group A throwers were able to overtake him. The other medals went to Vladislav Shkurlatov from Russia (79.27m) and Ainars Kovals from Latvia (78.64m).

In the women's shot, Natalya Khoroneko (BLR) repeated her victory from the previous week's World Indoor Championships with an all-comers record of 19.18m. Her three other legal throws were also better than the rest of the field, headed by Russian Olga Ryabinkina (18.55m) and German Nadine Kleinert (18.30m), who exchanged their World Indoor placings.

On the second day of competition, favorites Andrey Mikhnevich (BLR) and Szymon Ziolkowski (POL) both came from behind to win and set all-comers records in the shot and hammer respectively.

The most dramatic competition came in the men's hammer. Vadim Khersontsev (RUS) took the lead with a season's best of 78.54m in the second round and only on his very last attempt did Ziolkowski, the 2000 Olympic champion, manage to overtake him with 79.04m. Dmitri Shako from Belarus was in third place throughout the competition and threw 77m exactly.

The presence of five out of the eight finalists from the previous week's World Indoor Championships guaranteed a quality competition in the men's shot.



Piotr Malachowski

Manuel Martinez (ESP) was the first to throw over the 20m line with 20.07m. The lead was taken by Pavel Sofin (RUS) in the second round with 20.19m and then by Gheorghe Guset (ROM) in the third with 20.41m. Mikhnevich, who fouled on his two opening attempts, then heaved the implement out to 20.61m for the gold medal, ahead of Guset and Polish giant Tomasz Majewski who reached 20.26m.

Wioletta Potepa was also a winner for Poland in the women's discus with a throw of 61.89m in the second round. Oksana Yesipchuk (RUS) was the athlete to come closest with 61.70m. Romania's Nicoleta Grasu (60.86m) took the bronze medal ahead of former Olympic champion 45-year-old Ellina Zvereva (60.63m) from Belarus.

Strong winds meant that only one woman was able to throw over 60 metres in the javelin and surprisingly it was young German Mareike Rittweg. The winner improved her personal best to 60.06m and the other medals went to Russia's Lada Chernova (59.15m) and Spain's Mercedes Chilla (57.28m).

Both the men's and women's team titles went to Russia. For the women it was a sixth consecutive victory with 8178 points, ahead of Italy (7834) and Romania (7732). The men took the title for the fifth time with 8531 points. The Italians were again in second place (7981) ahead of the Polish, who collected 7662 points despite fielding only one javelin thrower.

**By David Eiger**



# European Athletics Championships 2006

**It is now less than four months until the European Athletics Championships take place in Gothenburg, Sweden, on 6\*-13 August.**

\* The Opening Ceremony will take place in the city centre on Sunday 6 August. The competition starts on Monday 7 August in the Ullevi Stadium.

## Jonathan Edwards to star in Opening Ceremony

World triple jump record holder Jonathan Edwards will be the Master of Ceremonies during the Opening Ceremony of this summer's European Athletics Championships. The ceremony will take place at Götaplatsen in the centre of Gothenburg from 8 to 10pm on Sunday 6 August.

Edwards set two world records at the 1995 World Championships in Gothenburg's Ullevi Stadium and became the first man ever to jump over 18 metres with a legal wind. He sailed out to 18.16m in the first round and then improved the mark to 18.29m in the second, an outstanding world record that no one has come close to since.

Gothenburg and the Ullevi are therefore special places for him and he is happy to come back for the opening ceremony in August.

"I am really looking forward to this event that I know will be a fantastic starting shot for the European Athletics Championships," says Edwards, who will also be working as a commentator for the BBC during the Championships.

## Spectacular official posters

Four spectacular official posters to promote the European Athletics Championships were unveiled in March.

The posters feature Swedish athletics stars in breathtaking poses. Heptathlon

star Carolina Klüft is shown on the roof of 'the lipstick', one of Gothenburg's tallest buildings. All the posters combine elements of athletics set in a unique and spectacular environment.

Creating the posters was a complicated task for Janolof Fritze, producer at Göteborg & Co's Media Centre:

"When Göteborg was appointed host city for the Championships one of the main goals was to create 'more than a sporting event'. My idea was that the posters should reflect this by bringing the athletes and the city together. The thought was to put well-known Swedish athletes in spectacular places with the entire city under their feet."



## European Mountain Running Championships

The fifth edition of the European Mountain Running Championships takes place in Úpice – Malé Svatoňovice in the Czech Republic on Sunday 9 July.

This year's Championships will be run over an up and downhill course. The men will compete over a distance of 11160m with a total climb of 900m and the women's race is over 7740m with a total climb of 600m. Public races and other festivities will take place over the weekend of the event.

The event takes place in a beautiful area of the Czech Republic known as 'The Krakonos's Garden' because it lies in the foothills of the highest mountains in the country, the Krkonoše or Giants Mountains. The races will start in the village of Malé Svatoňovice and ascend the Jestřebí Mountains. Nearby in the



valley of the Úpa River is the small town of Úpice, a traditional base of mountain running which hosted the World Mountain Running Trophy in 1997.

More information about the Championships can be found at [www.maratonstav.cz](http://www.maratonstav.cz)



## Tickets

Day tickets are now on sale for the Championships at [www.goteborg2006.com](http://www.goteborg2006.com), Got Event Ticket Office Scandinavium +46 31 61 20 06 and at Ticnet +46 77 170 70 70 / [www.ticnet.se](http://www.ticnet.se). Prices range from € 30 to € 140 and family discounts are available.

Over half of available tickets have already been sold and the most popular day so far is Friday 11 August for which less than 20% of tickets remain.

## LOC Contact

19<sup>th</sup> European Athletics Championships 2006  
Box 349  
S – 401 25 Göteborg  
Sweden  
Tel: +46 31 61 54 50, Fax: +46 31 61 54 74  
Email: [office@goteborg2006.com](mailto:office@goteborg2006.com)

For more information about the European Athletics Championships 2006 visit [www.goteborg2006.com](http://www.goteborg2006.com)

# Alhaji Jeng and Linus Thörnblad – two new Swedish stars



**Two young Swedes burst onto the international scene at the recent IAAF World Indoor Championships in Moscow. Pole vaulter Alhaji Jeng and high jumper Linus Thörnblad won their first senior international championship medals and are now looking forward to the European Athletics Championships on home soil.**

## Inspired by Sergiy Bubka

24-year-old Alhaji Jeng was born in Gambia, but came to Sweden when he was only three weeks old and has been living in Gothenburg since the age of 10. He was brought up in the suburb of Angered, the same one as top Swedish athletes Patrik Kristiansson and Christian Olsson.

Jeng watched the 1995 World Championships in Gothenburg on television and when he saw Sergiy Bubka win his fifth world pole vault gold medal, he was inspired to take up athletics. He has had a continuous curve of development through almost his entire career and finished sixth at the European Athletics Under 23 Championships in 2001.

At the end of February 2006 he set a Swedish indoor record of 5.76m in Gothenburg and then improved the record to 5.80m at Bubka's pole vault competition in Donetsk, Ukraine.

Then came the excitement of the World Indoor Championships. Jeng led the competition after clearing 5.60m and 5.70m on his first attempts. It wasn't until the American Brad Walker cleared 5.80m on his last attempt that Jeng was pushed down to second place and had to be satisfied with silver with 5.70m.

"I am very satisfied with the medal and the knowledge that I can fight at the top level will be of use to me in future championships," he says.

Jeng is a full-time athlete and explains his success in the following way:

"I have been free of injuries and without any long interruptions in my training. I do less strength training now than before and this makes me more alert during jump sessions and enables me to improve the technical details better. Among other things, I have moved my grip on the pole. I have, at the most, nine training sessions a week, led by trainers Thomas Kyötilä and Pekka Dahlhojd."

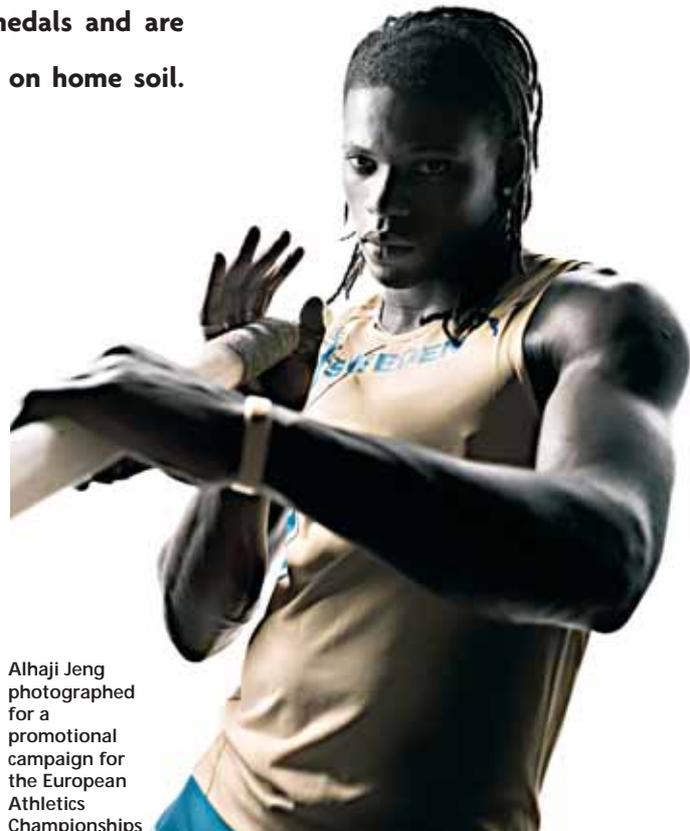
When we start speaking about the European Athletics Championships Jeng smiles: "It's going to be really fun! For me it's important to focus on my own performance. I do not feel any pressure from outside, the biggest pressure comes from myself."

## First medal for Linus Thörnblad

Just like Jeng, 21-year-old high jumper Linus Thörnblad had his big international breakthrough in Moscow. Before the Championships he had bettered his personal best first to 2.33m and then to 2.34m.

In the World Indoor final he cleared all heights up to 2.33m on the first attempt but was not able to set a new personal best at 2.35m and ended up with a bronze medal.

"I could hardly believe that it was true once the medal was a fact! It's always been a dream to win a medal in an international championship and when it actually happened it was a fantastic feeling," says Thörnblad who also beat his fellow countryman and three-time World Indoor champion Stefan Holm. He is only



Alhaji Jeng photographed for a promotional campaign for the European Athletics Championships

1.80m tall (one centimetre shorter than Holm) which is short for a high jumper in the world elite.

In the winter of 2005 Thörnblad started training with Stanislaw Szczyrba who has played a big part in his success.

"We have changed quite a lot. Among other things I now have a wider curve in the run-up and have increased the number of training sessions to 8-9 a week. It's going to be a lot of fun to compete at the European Athletics Championships on home soil in August. This is something I'm really looking forward to," he said.

The last time the European Athletics Championships were held in Sweden was in 1958 in Stockholm where the Swedes won five medals. This time the ambition is to win even more!

**By Jonas Hedman**



# SPAR European Cup

The 2006 SPAR European Cup will take place on 28-29 June at the brand new Athletics Stadium of Malaga on Spain's Costa del Sol.

## Timetable

For the first time this year, the SPAR European Cup will take place on two mid week evenings and not at the weekend as is usually the case. This is so that the Cup does not clash with matches at the football World Cup and to help ensure maximum TV coverage and spectator interest in the event.

## Timetable

### Wednesday 28 June

18:00	Hammer	Men
18:30	Pole Vault	Women
18:55	Triple Jump	Women
19:00	400m Hurdles	Women
19:05	High Jump	Men
19:10	400m hurdles	Men
19:10	Discus	Women
19:20	100m	Women
19:30	100m	Men
19:40	800m	Women
19:45	Shot Put	Men
19:50	1500m	Men
20:00	400m	Women
20:10	Long Jump	Men
20:10	400m	Men
20:15	Javelin	Women
20:20	3000m	Women
20:35	5000m	Men
20:55	3000m Steeplechase	Women
21:10	4x100m	Women
21:20	4x100m	Men

### Thursday 29 June

18:00	Hammer	Women
18:30	Pole Vault	Men
18:55	Triple Jump	Men
19:05	High Jump	Women
19:10	Discus	Men
19:25	110m Hurdles	Men
19:35	800m	Men
19:40	Shot Put	Women
19:45	1500m	Women
19:55	3000m Steeplechase	Men
20:10	Long Jump	Women
20:10	100m Hurdles	Women
20:15	Javelin	Men
20:20	200m	Women
20:30	200m	Men
20:40	5000m	Women
20:55	3000m	Men
21:10	4x400m	Women
21:20	4x400m	Men



'Manolito', the mascot of the SPAR European Cup Malaga 2006. The octopus design was the winning entry in a competition amongst primary school children.

## Qualified Teams

The Athletics Stadium of Malaga has a nine lane track, therefore nine teams will compete in the men's and women's competitions. The teams finishing in the top two positions in the men's and women's competition will qualify to compete in the IAAF World Cup on 16-17 September.

Men	Women
Finland (+)	France
France	Germany
Germany	Great Britain & NI (+)
Great Britain & NI	Poland
Italy	Romania
Poland	Russia
Russia	Spain (+)
Spain	Sweden (+)
Ukraine (+)	Ukraine

(+) promoted

## Tickets

Tickets will be available for purchase online at the event website [www.malaga2006.es](http://www.malaga2006.es) and are priced as follows:

	1 day ticket	2 day ticket
Main Stand	€ 20	€ 30
Upper Stand	€ 15	€ 20
Pelouse (no seat)	€ 7	€ 10

## Athletics Stadium of Malaga

The Athletics Stadium of Malaga is part of a new sports complex in the west of the city which also includes an indoor sports hall and swimming pool. The main grandstand on the home straight seats 7600 spectators, with capacity for an additional 3200 spectators around the rest of the track. The outdoor track has nine lanes and there is also an indoor athletics training area with a four-lane 100m track as well as jumps runways.

## LOC Contact

Anacleto Jiménez  
RFEA  
Avenida de Valladolid nº 81, 1º  
28008 Madrid  
Spain

Tel: +34 91 548 2423  
Fax: +34 91 547 6113  
Email: [malaga2006@malaga2006.es](mailto:malaga2006@malaga2006.es)  
[www.malaga2006.es](http://www.malaga2006.es)



Athletics Stadium of Malaga

# European Athletics – changing hearts and minds

**EAA Director General Christian Milz explains why the ‘European Athletics – the need for change’ project requires a change in philosophy.**



The EAA took an important step forward in October 2005 when the Council adopted a framework for change aimed at ensuring a successful future for European Athletics.

The ‘European Athletics – the need for change’ project represents a significant change of philosophy within the EAA. We have decided to widen our area of activity and move from being primarily an event organiser to a body with a much fuller role of promoting and developing the sport of athletics as a whole within Europe. The EAA will take up the challenge of providing an even more active leadership role within European Athletics.

The European Athletics brand should not only be about events, but about involving as many people as possible in athletics in different ways and promoting the health and fitness benefits of the sport.

We recognise that the worlds of sponsorship, marketing and television are changing and that we must also adapt to be as successful as we have been in the past.

The process has started and the winter saw a very busy schedule of activities. A Steering Group was appointed to drive the whole project forward. Then, after an initial ‘brainstorming’ session with experts from across Europe, five working groups have started to tackle tasks in key areas.

One of the most crucial areas that must evolve to ensure that athletics remains a successful and popular sport is that of **Competition**. The development of an attractive and coherent competition programme is crucial for the marketing and promotion of our sport.

The working group for this task, including former Olympic champions Ellen van Langen and Jonathan Edwards, met in February to discuss ways in which the athletics competition programme can be improved and developed into a clear, coherent structure. The group agreed that there should be a link between national and European competition calendars, that the year’s major championship should form the climax to each season and that the competition structure should provide a logical pathway for athlete development.

The group discussed ways to improve the attractiveness of European Cup competition as well as the development of a ‘Euro-Series’ meeting concept and an annual **Europe v USA** match. The group also recognised that some radical changes to the rules might be necessary to enhance the presentation of the sport for modern audiences.

It is important that we build up a full picture of all the potential consequences of introducing a **European Championship every two years**, a development requested by the EAA Congress. Therefore a second working group is currently investigating the economical and logistical impacts of increasing the frequency of the event and its possible effects on all areas of the sport.

A working group on **Youth** met in January to develop ideas about how athletics can be made more attractive to young people. This group concluded that the EAA should consider developing a ‘European Athletics Youth Initiative’ in conjunction with Member Federations, governments, commercial companies and other partners. This initiative will aim to increase the participation of young people in athletics not only as athletes, but also as coaches, officials, event organisers and volunteers.

Working groups on **Marketing** and **Communication** are engaged in developing inter-linking strategies that will involve Member Federations, sponsors and other partners to promote the sport and the European Athletics brand. Work in these areas will be crucial for realising the new concepts for Competition and Youth mentioned above.

Finally, to make the radical changes envisaged work, it is essential that the **EAA and the IAAF** coordinate their strategies and work together for the benefit of athletics. Leading figures from the two organisations met in February to discuss ways in which we can work more closely together, particularly in developing the international athletics calendar. The meeting was very fruitful and we plan to hold similar meetings on a regular basis in the future.

Many interesting meetings and discussions have been taking place, resulting in a number of new and innovative ideas. The Steering Group will meet in May to follow up the discussions and formulate some concrete proposals and actions for change.

Now is the time for us, with the cooperation of all our Member Federations and partners, to start to make these ideas into reality and put our plans into action.

The ball is rolling at the EAA but it is clear that the Member Federations are crucial to the success of the project. EAA President Hansjörg Wirz gave an update to the leaders of the Federations at our recent CEO Conference in Riccione. He stressed that we will only be able to implement change if all those involved move forward and change their philosophy with us. We look forward to working with you for the future success of our sport.

## EAA surveys attitudes to athletics

In order to gather information about the attitudes towards the sport of athletics fans and those interested in sport in general, the EAA contracted independent specialists Sports Marketing Surveys to carry out a survey on its behalf.

Sports Marketing Surveys distributed a questionnaire to their online panel of sports fans, with links to the same questionnaire displayed on the websites of the EAA and its Member Federations.

Over 5000 people from across Europe participated in the survey and were asked about their participation in athletics, how they follow the sport in the media as well as about their attitudes towards athletics. The results are currently being analysed in detail and will help to build a framework for developing the appeal of athletics to different sectors and markets.

# New Opportunities for Athletics



The fifth edition of the European Athletics CEO Conference, entitled 'New Opportunities for Athletics', took place in the Italian seaside resort of Riccione on 7–9 April.

More than 60 representatives from 40 EAA Member Federations took part in the conference, which aimed to raise awareness of resource and communications opportunities in the changing environment facing athletics.

In his keynote speech on the opening day of the conference, EAA President Hansjörg Wirz stressed the importance of change to meet the challenges faced by the sport and provided an overview of the work which has taken place to date on the 'European Athletics – the need for change' project.

Each of the invited speakers discussed changes related to current and potential sources of support and resources and the implications for the sport. The speakers and their presentation titles were:

**Dr Sylvia Barlag** (NED) – Taking advantage of new opportunities for government support: a case study from the Netherlands

**Tilo Friedmann** (GER) – Possibilities for support from the European Union

**Patrick Nally** (GBR) – Changes in the commercial sponsorship market and implications for athletics

**Jean-Marc Riss** (FRA) – Using media channels to promote the image of athletics

**Prof. Alberto Madella** (ITA) – How to motivate volunteers

**Adam Walker** (GBR) – Promising commercial opportunities for athletics: a case study from Great Britain

General Secretary of the Spanish Athletic Federation and EAA Council Member José Luis de Carlos said: "It is clear that we, the Federations, have to change our mentality and find new ways of working and resources in order to promote the sport of athletics in its entirety. The conference was very positive and we saw that the future can be bright, it is now up to the Federations to take the initiative to change."

Deputy General Secretary of the German Athletic Federation Georg Kemper added: "It was a very positive and informative weekend. It showed that there are many challenges for the EAA and its Member Federations, but also many opportunities. We need to take a look in the mirror, see where we are and whether we are still on the right track. If we work hard and set realistic goals, the challenges can be met."

The conference also included workshop sessions on different topics, including constructing a model communications plan. A new feature at this year's conference was an exhibition in the area used for coffee breaks. The participants were able to view posters explaining recent EAA research projects and selected projects from the European Athletics Support Programme.

Reports on the main presentations and other aspects of the conference are being compiled by a working group and will be posted on the EAA website.



## Development grants awarded for 2006



The EAA has announced the award of European Athletics Support Programme grants totaling more than 200,000 CHF to 15 Member Federations for development projects to be carried out in 2006.

"This is the largest number of projects approved in the programme's five years," said EAA President Hansjörg Wirz. "We are happy that the quality of the applications continues to improve each year."

"Support from the programme is meant to help Federations cover part of their costs for special initiatives," Wirz explained. "Our experience has been that even a little financial assistance from the EAA gives a kind of official international recognition and approval that helps the project organisers attract other funding and support locally."

Wirz says that the EAA Development Committee, which is responsible for overseeing the programme and making grant recommendations, is continuing to study the regulations and procedures for ways to improve.

"The programme is obviously very popular with the Federations and we want to make sure that the projects really make a difference to how the sport develops."

Federations considering applying for grants to be paid in 2007 should note that information on the application procedure will be published on the EAA website in May and that the application deadline for grants is 31 August 2006.



## ECCC Cross Country

The 2006 edition of the European Champion Clubs Cup Cross Country took place in Caceres, Spain, on Sunday 5 February in front of over 10,000 spectators.

In the senior men's competition CA Adidas from Spain won the title for the sixth time and were led home by individual winner Zersenay Tadesse ahead of his team mate José Ríos and Frenchman Driss El Himer from Olympique de Marseille.



Ancuta Bobocel

In total the Spanish club scored 14 points, with a very big margin of victory from Grupo Desportivo da Conforlimpa from Portugal (28) and Olympique de Marseille (53).

The Russians from Club Moscow were the clear winners in the senior women's race, scoring only 14 points, and were accompanied on the podium by SCO Sainte-Marguerite (France) with 26 points and Valencia Terra i Mar (Spain) with 28. In the individual race Maria Konovalova (Club Moscow) dominated and was the clear winner over Frenchwoman Julie Coulaud (SCO Sainte Margerite) and Italy's Nadia Ejjafini (Runner Team 99 SBV).

The programme was completed with two junior races for the first time in the history of the competition. In the men's race the team victory went to Turkish club Turk Telekom while in the women's their compatriots from Besiktas were the clear winners, led by reigning European Junior Cross Country champion Ancuta Bobocel from Romania.

## EAA Staff Update

### Jérôme Parmentier



Jérôme Parmentier joined the EAA at the end of March as Event Co-ordinator with special responsibility for television matters.

He is French and was previously working for Eurosport TV in London as a Senior Sales Executive where his role included analysis of TV audience figures to provide advertising and sponsorship campaigns to advertisers. Prior to that he also gained experience in event management, working for an event organisation company in France for one year.

In addition to French, Jérôme can speak English and some Spanish. He will be responsible for event co-ordination with specific involvement in the area of television for all EAA events.

### Aurélie Raffin



Aurélie Raffin has been carrying out a six month internship at the EAA since the beginning of April, working in particular in the area of communications.

Aurélie, who is French, has recently finished a postgraduate course in sports management and has previously worked on the organisation of various sporting events. She can speak good English and Spanish in addition to French.



### IMPRESSUM

**European Athletic Association**  
**Association Européenne d'Athlétisme**

**President:** Hansjörg Wirz SUI  
**Vice Presidents:** Valentin Balakhnichev RUS, Agoston Schulek HUN  
**Treasurer:** Karel Pilny CZE  
**Director General:** Christian Milz SUI

**Office:**  
Avenue Louis-Ruchonnet 18  
CH-1003 Lausanne  
Switzerland  
Phone +41 (0)21 313 43 50  
Fax +41 (0)21 313 43 51  
office@european-athletics.org  
www.european-athletics.org

"UPDATE" is published by the European Athletic Association

**Co-ordination:**  
Emily Lewis  
EAA Communication Manager  
Phone +41 (0)21 313 4357  
emily.lewis@european-athletics.org

**Text, Photos:**  
Ofer Bayda ISR, Jean-Pierre Durand FRA, Bill Glad GBR, David Eiger ISR, Andy Heading GBR, Jonas Hedman SWE, Ursula Kaiser GER, Emily Lewis GBR, Ignacio Mansilla ESP, Christian Milz SUI, Phil Minshull GBR, Marcel Wakim GER, Hansjörg Wirz SUI

**Design, Production:**  
AMK Atelier für Marketing und Kommunikation  
Amstutzstrasse 14  
CH-6010 Kriens, Switzerland  
Phone +41 (0)41 320 00 72  
Fax +41 (0)41 320 00 79  
eaa-update@amk.ch

**Print:**  
Multicolor Print AG  
CH-6340 Baar, Switzerland

### IAAF World Indoor Championships: Medal Standing by Area

Area	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Percentage
Europe	13	14	16	43	55.1%
NACAC	8	6	5	19	24.4%
Africa	5	3	4	12	15.4%
Asia	0	1	1	2	2.6%
S. America	0	2	0	2	2.6%
Oceania	0	0	0	0	0.0%

16 European nations won medals in Moscow led by host nation Russia with 18 (8 gold, 5 silver, 5 bronze). There were also gold medals for Ukraine (2), Belarus, Germany and Ireland (1 each).

## European Athletics Yearbook 2005–06

The European Athletics Yearbook 2005-06 is now available for purchase by downloading an order form from [www.european-athletics.org](http://www.european-athletics.org).

The Yearbook contains calendar and contact information, reports and results from EAA events in 2005 as well as features on the winners of the 2005 Waterford Crystal European Athlete of the Year Trophy.

The comprehensive statistics section includes 2005 ranking lists for seniors, under 23s and juniors and 2005 indoor lists and all-time lists for seniors. Also listed are European indoor and outdoor records, championship best performances and national records set in 2005.



### EAA International Partners



# “I am the same person as before the World Championships”

German freelance journalist Ursula Kaiser talks to World 110m hurdles champion Ladji Doucouré (FRA)

Ladji Doucouré is not small, but if he appears somewhere you can't see him very well because there are always countless people around him. Since his two titles at the 2005 World Championships in the 110m hurdles and the 4x100m relay, the French media in particular are taking a great interest in the young athlete who celebrated his 23rd birthday on 28 March. And they want almost daily news about him.

Sometimes Doucouré can't believe all the interest in him. When people ask him if his life has changed after his big victories in Helsinki, he says with a little sarcasm in his voice: “No, it didn't change. I still eat and drink the same.” Of course the French record holder for 110m hurdles (12.97) knows very well that his success made him popular in his home country - even the famous daily French sports newspaper L'Equipe elected him as Sportsman of the Year - but he is very relaxed about it.

“I am the same person as before the World Championships,” he says again and again. He knows that if he wants to win again next time, he has to train very hard. Glory is short lived and his opponents are waiting to beat the new French idol who doesn't feel like a star.

“Hurdles training is not like riding a bicycle. You have to start almost from the beginning, if you didn't do it for a long time,” he explains.

As a young boy he played soccer until another player fouled him so badly that he broke his leg. Then he turned to athletics and met Renaud Longuèvre, who is still his coach. “When I first met him, Ladji was small, slim and shy,” the young coach remembers. He started with the decathlon and was a huge talent. He had many successes including winning the European Junior title in 2001.

Doucouré loved the decathlon. The only bad thing was that he was very often injured. But he had a lot of options and in the end he decided on the hurdles. “I took up this event because I love



the complicated things in live,” he says and laughs. “I like the challenge.” Even if he is cool and relaxed, he has a very strong will. “If I start something, I will finish it” is like a kind of motto for him.

The double world champion is semi-professional because he also needs something to keep his mind occupied: “Sometimes I work in the council administration of my city close to Paris and I am taking a coaching course.” He works with young people too. He loves it and the kids love him. “He is predestined for a job like this,” Longuèvre says. Doucouré is an idol in France for the young generation, not only because of his sporting success.

Family is very important for him. His father comes from Mali, his mother from Senegal. The athlete grew up with two sisters and one brother in a suburb of Paris, 20km from the centre. He still lives with his parents and he likes it. “I am thinking about moving to my own apartment, but it must be walking distance from my parents' house because my mother's cooking is just too good,” the 23-year-old says and laughs. “At home we live a mixture of African tradition and modern French life and we try to take the best bits from both.”

After his victories in Helsinki, he earned good money, but he kept his feet on the ground. “I didn't buy a Ferrari, I still drive an old Renault,” he says and laughs again. “I am educated like that and I want to remain that way.” If he had become crazy, his father would have told him the right things. Doucouré will never forget one experience. When he was 12 his dad gave him and his brother a map of Paris and disappeared. “We had to work out how to get home,” remembers the hurdler. “It was a test of courage on the way to becoming a grown-up.”

At the moment he has a dream - maybe at the end of the season he will do a decathlon competition again. “My heart still beats for this event,” he says. “A decathlon is like life and life is not always very easy.” Even a double world champion notices this every day.