ANNUAL REVIEW 2018
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WELCOME

Once again, I am very pleased to write some introductory remarks to European Athletics’ Annual Review, which has now become our traditional reflection on the year that has just finished, both from a performance and institutional perspective.

Having been elected president in 2015, this is my fourth introduction to this annual publication. However, I can say that this has been the easiest one to write. Why? Very simply, without doubt 2018 was the best year of my presidency and perhaps the best year ever for European Athletics.

The high point was, of course, the European Athletics Championships in Berlin during the summer. This championship is the pinnacle of our sport in Europe and the athletes who were there responded magnificently to the challenge. In terms of performances, I am proud to be able to say it was the best multi-day meeting in the world last year.

However, what made these championships so special was the electric atmosphere in the Olympic Stadium and out on the streets of Berlin, with packed crowds night-after-night at every venue. Complementing the massive public enthusiasm, the local organisation was superb.

The championships were also part of the inaugural multi-sport European Championships, which were a huge success as well. European Athletics were one of the driving forces behind this innovation and it showed the way forward not only for athletics but also for many other sports.

Off-the-track, European Athletics had many achievements it can be very proud about, but space only permits me to mention two particular success stories. We signed an eight-year deal with our long-standing International Partner the EBU (European Broadcasting Union) so we have essentially secured most of our finances until 2027. This is very important because it will allow us to think and act strategically with regards to long-term objectives more than ever before. It is also a reflection of the value and respect that European Athletics has with our sport’s stakeholders.

Our anti-doping initiative I Run Clean continues to progress and be an example to other international sports federations. It was very rewarding to see that every single athlete at the Gyor 2018 European Athletics U18 Championships fulfilled the requirements of the anti-doping education programme and European Athletics will now start to implement this programme more comprehensively ahead of other forthcoming events.

This Annual Review that you have in your hand chronicles 2018 much more fully than I could ever do in such a brief introduction, so I hope you enjoy reading it.

Svein Arne Hansen
European Athletics President
Founded in 1945, Toyo Tires have been improving ever since.

New Proxes TR1 tyres have 16% better braking in the wet than their predecessor.
GOLDEN TRACKS

GOLDEN YEAR FOR FRENCH AND BRITISH ATHLETES

Kevin Mayer and Dina Asher-Smith make history for themselves and for their countries as they are crowned Athletes of the Year on a glittering night in Lausanne

Europe’s outstanding athletes were once again crowned at the annual European Athletics Golden Tracks award ceremony, which was staged at the SwissTech Convention Centre in Lausanne, Switzerland on 26 October.

A mood of celebration was summed up in his opening remarks by European Athletics President Svein Arne Hansen. He reflected upon the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships which he described as the “best ever” before looking ahead to the Glasgow 2019 European Athletics Indoor Championships and beyond.

“We are here to celebrate the best of European Athletics. These awards are decided by counting votes from athletics fans, media, Member Federations and an expert panel; 50,000 fans voted for these awards on social media,” commented Hansen.

“Our winners showed the spirit that drives our sport on our continent. We hope these excellent performances serve as an inspiration to young athletes in Lausanne, in Switzerland and all over Europe.”
Decathlon world record-holder Kevin Mayer became the third Frenchman to be crowned men’s European Athlete of the Year after Christophe Lemaitre in 2010 and Renaud Lavillenie in 2014. He was also the first decathlete to receive the accolade since Czech Republic’s Tomas Dvorak in 1999.

Mayer missed out on the European decathlon title after three fouls in the long jump, but the 25-year-old was at his brilliant best the following month on home soil in Talence, breaking Ashton Eaton’s world record with 9126 points.

Mayer was presented with the trophy by President Hansen and both recreated Mayer’s famous celebratory pose in front of the scoreboard in Talence — complete with the exultant roar — on stage in Lausanne.

On a more serious note, Mayer hopes the award will more bring the decathlon into the spotlight. “I will give everything to do that,” he said. “I think this is something which will bring my discipline to be known by the public.”

Alongside Mayer on the shortlist were European champions Ramil Guliyev from Turkey, Armand Duplantis from Sweden and Jakob Ingebrigtsen from Norway.

Dina Asher-Smith became only the third female sprinter in history to complete the sprint treble at the European Athletics Championships. She has garnered awards aplenty after her glittering summer, but none were quite as prestigious as the women’s European Athlete of the Year trophy.
Asher-Smith became the fourth British winner of the award, following in the footsteps of Olympic champions Sally Gunnell in 1993, Kelly Holmes in 2004 and Jessica Ennis-Hill in 2012. She was presented with the trophy by her compatriot and IAAF President Sebastian Coe.

“It’s staying injury free, training hard, staying patient and having faith the changes and the work I have done for the past few years are coming through,” she said on a season in which she finished with world-leading times in the 100m (10.85), 200m (21.89) and 4x100m (41.88).

“I knew the work I’ve been putting in is going to be something I’m going to see over the longer term in my athletics but I’m happy it’s come to fruition now.”

Asher-Smith was shortlisted alongside last year’s winner Ekaterini Stefanidi from Greece and Belgium’s European heptathlon champion Nafissatou Thiam.

**Rising stars: Herman makes it a first for Belarus**

It only took Elvira Herman three seasons to follow up her European U20 100m hurdles title with gold on the senior stage at the European Athletics Championships and the Belarusian was deservedly crowned as the women’s Rising Star.

“At the start of this year, I couldn’t think that I would be European champion and when I took first place, I was shocked. Belarus was surprised, and many people

“"This is honestly such a surprise as there are so many other worthy winners. I’m honoured and so pleased!" Dina Asher-Smith
Top: Elvira Herman accepts her Rising Star Award becoming the first Belarusian to do so.

Below: Sweden’s Armand Duplantis and Norway’s Jakob Ingebrigtsen were impossible to separate and split the honours in a Scandinavian one-two.

Herman, the first Belarusian athlete in Golden Tracks history to win an award, was presented with her accolade by European Athletics First Vice President Dobromir Karamarinov. The men’s Rising Star Award was jointly awarded to two of the brightest stars of the summer: Sweden’s Armand Duplantis and Norway’s Jakob Ingebrigtsen.

Neither of them could attend due to academic and training commitments but Duplantis said, via a video message from Baton Rouge where he is studying at Louisiana State University, “I would like to thank European Athletics for honouring me and I would also like to congratulate Jakob on being the co-winner of the award; there is not a better athlete I would like to share it with.”

The 2019 Golden Tracks award ceremony will be held in Tallinn, Estonia on 26 October.
Rutherford and Pryshchepa recognised

The recently-retired Greg Rutherford was the second recipient of the European Athletics Lifetime Achievement Award.

Rutherford won five major international titles in the long jump between 2012 and 2016, including the European titles in 2014 and 2016. He could not defend his title in Berlin due to a persistent ankle injury and decided to bid farewell to competition at the end of the season.

Two-time European 800m champion Nataliya Pryshchepa from Ukraine was also presented with the Fair Play Award for her sportsmanship in the heats in Berlin where she helped up the stricken Renee Eykens who fell in the sprint for the line.

The European Athletics Coaching Awards were announced at the Golden Tracks. These awards are handed out annually and form an important part of European Athletics’ strategy to promote coaching at all levels.

The coach of each European senior champion is automatically nominated and all Member Federations are invited to nominate one additional male and female coach based on the criteria ‘excellence in coaching’.

The first recipients were Sweden’s Carina Lindberg and Switzerland’s Jacques Binder. The latter was presented with his award by former athlete Lea Sprunger who progressed to win the European 400m hurdles title in Berlin. In total, 58 coaches representing 32 Member Federations will receive a European Athletics Coaching Award.

The overall winner of the biennial European Athletics Innovation Awards, which came into being in 1998 to encourage the development of innovative ideas related to athletics, was also recognised at the Golden Tracks award ceremony.

The winning entry this year was submitted by Antonio Sanchez Pato and Emanuele Isidori and was entitled: ‘An Innovative European Sports Tutorship Model of The Dual Career of Students.’
“I am thrilled to have been given this award. It’s lovely to have something like this that I can show my children and just be very proud of.”

Greg Rutherford
CELEBRATION AND OPTIMISM FLOURISHES

The mood was positive but President Hansen warned of the danger of complacency

“Celebrate good times, come on,” are the opening lyrics of Kool & the Gang’s worldwide hit Celebration, and you could be forgiven if you thought you heard delegates humming the universally-known 80s tune in the halls and rooms of the European Athletics Convention 2018 which was held in Lausanne, Switzerland in October.

President Svein Arne Hansen alluded to themes of celebration and optimism in his opening speech, but crucially, he also urged the European Athletics Family to guard against complacency after a year which has seen athletics make the headlines mainly for the right reasons.

“This is the fourth time I have opened the Convention with a celebration of the season just passed. This time, however, I can say that we are surely looking back on what must be the greatest year in European Athletics’ history. “It has been a year in which the world saw our sport at its very best and, if that was not enough, 2018 was when all of us could finally start to see the positive impact of the changes many of you here have worked so hard to implement over the last three years,” said Hansen.

Hansen praised the European 10,000m Cup in London and the European Athletics U18 Championships in Gyor. He also hailed the CEO Conference in Minsk as the “best ever” and exuded pride at the rollout of the flagship I Run Clean anti-doping education programme ahead of the European Athletics U18 Championships.

However, the focal point of the year was without doubt the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships, which formed part of the inaugural multi-sport European Championships with co-hosts Glasgow.

“In the past, I have spoken about my ambition for athletics to be in every home and on every phone in Europe. Now, on the back of our success in Berlin, I have the feeling we are really moving in that direction. It is realistic to think it can become a reality.

“Together with our television and new media audiences, we experienced the quality of what European Athletics can deliver though our core business of elite athletics and major events,” added Hansen.

On a more cautionary note, Hansen warned the sport
“This is the fourth time I have opened the Convention. This time, however, we are surely looking back on the greatest year in European Athletics’ history.”

Svein Arne Hansen
Engagement levels were high throughout the convention as delegates took the opportunity to share their experience and make new contacts.
could not afford to rest on its laurels and called on everyone to continue to work hard to ensure a continued bright future for the sport.

“Our enemy is not football, or doping, or short attention spans and modern lifestyles. These are significant challenges, but I believe the biggest hurdles we have to overcome now — our real enemies — are complacency, a continuing reluctance to change. “I am reminded of a saying: nothing fails like success. The fact is, we need to be aware that we are at a place where it is essential to stay focused on the future, to keep moving forward, to keep changing, to keep innovating.”

A key theme throughout this year’s Convention was indeed innovation, and one of the most heavily subscribed seminars was the DNA (Dynamic New Athletics) workshop, which outlined the strategy of the event while addressing and answering logistical and technical specifics for Member Federation team leaders.

On the topic of change and innovation, the Convention also included a workshop on prospective revisions to the athletics calendar and the qualifying process for major championships, which generated a lively debate. The workshop was opened by Toralf Nilsson with Periklis Iakovakis and Lea Sprunger providing an athletes’ perspective to the proposals.

With mass participation running events arguably more popular than ever, even than during the ‘running boom’ of the 80s, there was also a workshop dedicated to running.

This focused on European Athletics’ initiatives such as Running for All, updates on the European Running Business Conference in Prague next September as well as European Athletics’ involvement in the European Week of Sport and Global Running Day.

Denmark’s Jakob Larsen, Belarus’ Aliaksandr But-Husaim and Norway’s Kjetil Hildesko each gave presentations on how mass participation running events fit into their respective domestic strategies and what can be gained from taking a proactive role.

Another key speaker at the Convention was Frank Kowalski who gave a powerful presentation on the importance of digital strategy and fan engagement, drawing on his recent experience as CEO of Berlin 2018.

IAAF President Sebastian Coe was also in attendance and he took part in a joint question-and-answer session with President Hansen.

A wide spectrum of topics was addressed, including doping, the future of the commercial circuit and calendar as well as the multi-sport European Championships.

This year’s Convention attracted an unprecedented number of delegates from Member Federations and relevant stakeholders, all keen to make the most of the programme as well as taking the chance to socialise and network with their peers.

The 2019 European Athletics Convention takes place in Tallinn, Estonia from 24-26 October.
“Thank you Berlin, you have delivered the best European Championships ever.”
Svein Arne Hansen

BERLIN: THE BEST OF 2018

Berlin 2018 will be remembered as the best athletics competition of the year

The competition was tough but Berlin was the best. Who says so? Well, not just the myriad of publications and broadcasters which eulogised the performances and organisation of the European Athletics Championships. Not just the thousands who filled the German capital’s famous Olympic Stadium night-after-night or cheered their heroes downtown at the European Mile on Breitscheidplatz, but the sport’s world governing body, the IAAF.

The IAAF assessed the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships to be the best in the ‘Championship Type competitions’ ranking, comfortably ahead of its nearest rival — the IAAF Continental Cup — as well as the Commonwealth and Asian Games and also all the leading one-day meetings including those in the IAAF Diamond League.

The plethora of outstanding performances saw 11 championship records set, five world-leading marks, one world U20 record, two European U23 records, two European U20 records and 44 national records.

Portuguese race walker Ines Henriques was the first to set a championship record when she won the very first women’s 50km race walk title on the morning of the first full day of competition, crossing the line in 4:09:21 to post a time only two other women — as well as herself — have ever beaten.

Later that day in the evening session, British sprinter Zharnel Hughes brought the curtain down on the first day proper by winning the 100m title in a championship record of 9.95.

The records kept on tumbling until almost the very last event. On the closing evening, the penultimate contest to finish was the men’s pole vault and Sweden’s teen sensation Armand Duplantis flew over 6.05m, a height only ever beaten outdoors by the legendary Sergey Bubka, to take the title.

Hosts Germany had an excellent championship and their performances galvanised the country, noted for its knowledgeable and enthusiastic athletics fans.

The German national anthem was heard six times as they
.finished third on the medal table, just behind the seven gold medals won by Great Britain and Poland. Germany did take away the largest haul of medals, 19 in total.

The whole of Europe was captivated by proceedings in Berlin, with the championships also forming part of the inaugural multi-sport European Championships.

No less than 28 European Athletics Member Federations — more than half the total number of members — were able to celebrate at least one appearance on the podium, including Russia whose eligible athletes competed under the Authorised Neutral Athlete label and were not included in the official medal table.

An additional eight Member Federations had athletes place in the top eight of an event.

A special mention should be made of Great Britain’s Dina Asher-Smith, the only athlete to come away with three gold medals courtesy of victories in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay. Her hat-trick, including national records of 10.85 and 21.89 in her two individual events — which also doubled as the fastest times in the world in 2018 — deservedly helped her end the year as the female European Athlete of the Year.

Berlin was the best

The Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships were the “best ever”, reflected European Athletics President Svein Arne Hansen on the final day.

“Thank you Berlin, you have delivered the best European Championships ever, that is for sure,” said Hansen, praising the local organisers.

“I have been to every one since 1970 and maybe people will have another opinion, but we have had an unbelievable atmosphere in the stadium which has been bringing tears to the eyes, not only in my country of Norway, but in many places.”
Norway’s Karsten Warholm celebrates winning gold in the 400m hurdles.

Below: Miltiadis Tentoglou takes long jump gold for Greece.
Main picture: Elvira Herman wins gold for Belarus
Below: Belgium’s Nafissatou Thiam competes in the heptathlon
Main picture: Sandra Perkovic adds another continental title to her collection

Opposite: Malaika Mihambo takes long jump gold to the delight of the home crowd
Packed to capacity
The support given to the athletes by the crowds in Berlin propelled many of them to exceptional performances.

The official spectator numbers in the Olympic Stadium, which doesn’t factor in the many thousands lining the route for the marathons and race walks, were: Tuesday 34,822, Wednesday 37,125, Thursday 39,335, Friday 48,567 Saturday 60,500, Sunday 42,350.

It will be impossible to match these figures at Paris 2020, the 25th edition of the European Athletics Championships, as the Charlety Stadium in the French capital only has a capacity of 19,000, but they will serve as a standard for other future organisers.

TV treat
European Athletics’ International Partner, the European Broadcast Union (EBU), took just two days to hail the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships a huge success in terms of television viewers, especially for German host broadcasters ARD/ZDF:

"The athletics, broadcast live from Berlin, proved particularly popular with over five million tuning in to ARD for the finals on the Sunday, while the women’s 4x100m relay reached a five-minute peak of over six million on ZDF," said the EBU in a press release.

ARD sports coordinator Axel Balkausky added: "We have reached more viewers than we thought possible.”

The EBU also singled out the phenomenal viewing figures in Norway. “NRK achieved an 80% market share for the conclusion of the 1500m [won by Jakob Ingebrigtsen] and the 400m hurdles [which saw Karsten Warholm take the gold in a national record] while the event as a whole reached 68% of Norwegians.”
BERLIN EUROPEAN ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Berlino came back with a bang

One of the many things which made Berlin 2018 such a success with the athletes and public alike was the return of Berlino, the lovable bear mascot who was such a hit at the IAAF World Championships Berlin 2009.

It was a poorly kept secret that Berlino was going to emerge again after a long hibernation — although he had been present at some of Berlin’s ISTAF meetings since — but that didn’t stop Germany, and the athletics world-at-large, hailing his return.

The announcement came in April during an interview between television presenter Jessica Kastrop and Germany’s discus star Robert Harting, a two-time European champion in addition to his many global honours.

Berlino crawled out of a large box before falling into Harting’s arms to bring back memories of the pair’s antics in 2009 after Harting had won his first world title.

The fun then didn’t stop for another four months.

Belgium’s victorious 4x400m relay team

Christin Hussong won javelin gold to add to the host’s medal count
Germany’s Gesa Felicitas Krause celebrates steeplechase gold with Berlino, the championship mascot.
Mixed teams of competitors will be a feature of DNA

DNA READY TO DEBUT

After two successful test events in 2018, Dynamic New Athletics will make its official debut at the second European Games

It has been a long time coming but Dynamic New Athletics — DNA for short — is now ready to make its official international debut at the second European Games Minsk 2019 this coming summer.

The Games will be staged from 21-30 June and athletics — in the form of a DNA knockout tournament — will take place in the Dinamo Stadium from 23-28 June, with four competition days and two rest days.

DNA, as many people already know from presentations at the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships and elsewhere throughout the year, is a new action-packed mixed-gender team event built on tactics, competitiveness and grit that has been refined over three years of development.

It consists of 10 events over a two-hour period, some of which are variations on existing disciplines and some of which are new innovations; including the final event, ‘The Hunt’, which is a distance-medley race with the team performing best in the first nine events getting a proportionate head start.

Europe’s 30 leading athletics nations will fight for the 33 medals up for grabs: gold, silver and bronze for the first three teams overall and gold, silver and bronze for the best individual athletes in each of the 10 events.

“I like what they [European Athletics] are doing,” said IAAF President Sebastian Coe. “It embraces the team ethic, it embraces the fact that you are asking athletes to do a range of activities particularly aimed at a younger grouping. I think it’s an innovative, thoughtful approach to try to ignite even more excitement among young people.”

Libor Varhaník, the European Athletics Council Member in charge of DNA, said of the concept: “Let’s be clear: we are proud of traditional athletics. We don’t want to change our sport at all, we only want to showcase it in an innovative new way, trying to be more dynamic and more interactive.”
Main picture: Spain’s Maria Vicente showed she will be one to watch in the future

Right: Ireland’s Sarah Healy won two gold medals
WORLD U18 BESTS IN GYOR

The second European Athletics U18 Championships in Györ celebrated two world U18 bests in the Hungarian city’s Olympic Sport Park.

World U18 heptathlon champion Maria Vicente acquired not one but two titles. The Spaniard dominated the heptathlon, coming away with not only the gold medal but also a world U18 best of 6221 points.

Vicente won by 592 points and two of her marks — 13.25 in the 100m hurdles and 6.37m in the long jump — surpassed the winning marks in those individual finals.

However, Vicente proclaimed she was most satisfied with her javelin and even though her mark of 43.28m was bettered by three of her rivals, that performance represented a lifetime best by more than seven metres.

Vicente had also entered the triple jump — the event she won at the European Youth Olympic Festival which were also held in Györ the previous summer — and the 17-year-old produced an outstanding effort of 13.95m with the final jump of the competition to supplant Bulgaria’s Aleksandra Nacheva, who had just taken the lead with 13.88m.

Like Vicente, Ukraine’s Myhaylo Kokhan had won gold medals at both the IAAF World U18 Championships and the European Youth Olympic Festival in 2017 and he added to his list of accolades by winning the hammer title in Györ.

All five of his valid throws would have won the final by more than two metres and his sixth throw hit the turf at 87.82m to surpass the world U18 best with the 5kg implement by 66cm. It was also the longest throw ever recorded with any implement.

Ireland’s Sarah Healy also came away with two gold medals after impressively winning both the 1500m and 3000m in championship records of 4:18.71 and 9:18.05.

Lorenzo Benati was another double gold medallist, winning the 400m in a championship record of 46.85 before anchoring Italy to a defence of their boys’ medley relay title in the last race of the championships.

Great Britain topped the medal table again with six golds ahead of Italy, Germany and Belarus with four gold medals apiece. France won the most medals with a tally of 12, three of which were gold.

A total of 29 nations — including Authorised Neutral Athletes — won medals in Györ and
Davide Finocchietti of Italy was an emotional winner of the 10,000m race walk.
35 nations had at least one athlete placing in the top eight of an event.

The hosts Hungary enlivened the enthusiastic crowds by performing excellently on home soil, winning three medals including a shared gold in the 400m hurdles after Daniel Huller and France’s Martin Fraysse couldn’t be separated by the judges after examining the photo finish.

As well as two world U18 bests, 16 world U18 leading marks were also set. After winning bronze in the 100m, Norway’s Pal Haugen Lillefosse went over 5.46m to win the pole vault and Ukraine’s Yaroslava Mahuchikh was another notable performer, clearing 1.94m to win the high jump.
All the competitors in Győr wore I Run Clean bibs to show their commitment to clean athletics.
European Athletics’ I Run Clean initiative took another big step forward to ridding the sport of the scourge of doping last year when it was able to announce that all 1063 registered competitors for the Gyor 2018 European Athletics U18 Championships had completed the mandatory anti-doping education programme prior to their arrival in the Hungarian city. The championships were a landmark event as it was the first time anti-doping education has been a mandatory entry requirement for any international athletics championship. Athletes participating in Gyor were required to provide an encrypted certification number showing they had logged on to the I Run Clean e-learning platform with their smartphone or computer and then created a personal profile before successfully finishing the eight interactive units. These covered anti-doping rules, general information on doping control procedures and the personal values that lead to good decision-making. Launched in 2017 in English, the platform was expanded to 25 languages in 2018, by far the most of any anti-doping education programme in the world. “This is a real success story for European Athletics and for our sport,” commented European Athletics CEO Christian Milz. “Since we first used the words I Run Clean on the bibs at the 2015 SPAR European Cross Country Championships, the project has engaged most of our organisation, from our Medical & Anti-Doping Commission to our Events & Competition Department, our Communications network, our Member Federations and, of course, the athletes.” The I Run Clean initiative will be expanded further in 2019 when the completion of a similar education programme will be made mandatory for entering both the European Athletics U20 and U23 Championships in July. By the time of the Paris 2020 European Athletics Championships, all athletes will be required to complete the I Run Clean programme before entering any European Athletics event. “We had a flawless implementation of our unique, mandatory anti-doping education requirement for entry into the European Athletics U18 Championships using our innovative I Run Clean e-learning platform. This sends a very strong signal to all our stakeholders about our commitment to the fight against doping,” said European Athletics President Svein Arne Hansen, before adding on a cautionary note. “However, nothing fails like success. We need to seize the current moment and build on it. Like any good high jumper, we need to raise the bar, and keep raising the bar.”
THE FUTURE IS NOW

Young European athletes excelled on the world stage in Tampere and Buenos Aires

Great Britain lead the way with a trio of titles in Tampere
Twenty one European Athletics Member Federations won medals at the IAAF World U20 Championships Tampere 2018 with Great Britain leading the way courtesy of three gold medals, all achieved in the same session.

Jake Norris started the haul by winning the hammer in a British U20 record of 80.65m with the 6kg implement. The session concluded with Jona Efoloko leading a British 200m one-two in 20.48.

Niamh Emerson also won gold in the heptathlon after a terrific battle with Austria’s reigning champion Sarah Lagger. Emerson led by only two points after the javelin, but she clung to first place by winning the 800m — and the title — with 6253 points to Lagger’s 6225.

An early casualty in the heptathlon was European U20 champion Alina Shukh but she still came away from Tampere with a gold medal. The Ukrainian was the slightly surprising winner of the javelin on the second day with 55.96m but had to withdraw from the heptathlon before the high jump.

The future of European 400m running looks bright as Belgium’s Jonathan Sacoor won in 45.03 and only missed the European U20 record by 0.02 while the championships concluded with Italy winning the 4x400m ahead of the USA in a European U20 record 3:04.05.

Moldova’s Alexandra Emilianov completed her set of major U18 and U20 discus victories with 57.89m and Bulgaria’s Aleksandra Nacheva was outstanding in the triple jump, just missing the world age-16 best when leaping 14.18m to win.

Three gold medals for Ukraine in Buenos Aires
Ukrainian youngsters excelled at the Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires, Argentina in October.

Yaroslava Mahuchikh cleared a lifetime best of 1.95m to win the high jump and European U18 hammer champions Myhaylo Kokhan and Valeriya Ivanenko secured another double for Ukraine by winning their respective events.

Only seventh at the European Athletics U18 Championships in July, Greece’s Elina Tzenggo made amends by winning the javelin with a European U18 best of 63.34m with the 500g implement and there was an historic moment for Iceland as European U18 100m champion Guðbjörg Jóna Bjarnadottir won Iceland’s first gold medal in Olympic history in the 200m.

Eleven European athletes representing nine Member Federations topped the podium in Buenos Aires.
Clockwise from the left: Jona Efotoko of Great Britain wins 200m gold, Jonathan Sacoor wins 400m gold for Belgium and Niamh Emerson in action in the heptathlon.

German 4x100m winners and Edoardo Scotti crosses the line to give Italy victory in the 4x400m.
INGEBRIGTSSEN DOUBLE ADDS TO NORWAY’S GOLD QUOTA

A magical mixture of everything which cross country should be was encapsulated at the Tilburg 2018 SPAR European Cross Country Championships

Thirteen years on from the last gathering in Tilburg, the Dutch city played the host to these championships for the second occasion when 616 athletes from 38 nations were entered for the seven races on a day of mud, rain and sun at the Beekse Bergen Safari Park.

It had already been a year to remember for the Ingebrigtsen family from Norway after their success at the European Athletics Championships in Berlin, and in the second race of the day, Jakob, 18, created history by becoming the first man to win the U20 title three times, a run which saw him lead his nation to team glory too.

On the back of his 1500m and 5000m golds in the German capital, he won in 18:00 over the 6.3km course and while his older brother Filip, 25, might not have been the favourite for the senior men’s race over 10.3km, he also won in style, breaking the tape in 28:49 with Turkey taking the team gold.

Italy won the first title of the day as Nadia Battocletti triumphed in 13:46 over 4.3km with team gold going to Great Britain before Anna Emile Moller bridged a gap of 21 years — or 7665 days to be exact — since Carsten Jorgensen had won the last gold for Denmark at the SPAR European Cross Country Championships when she triumphed over 6.3km in 20:34 as Germany were crowned team champions.

It truly was an occasion for records and Turkey’s Yasemin Can added one of her own as she completed a hat-trick of victories, the first woman to win the senior race on three consecutive occasions. She won by one second in 26:05 from Switzerland’s Fabienne Schlumpf. In fourth, Susan Krumins led home the Dutch team for a memorable triumph at their own championships.

France’s Jimmy Gressier became the first man to retain the men’s U23 crown as he won over 8.3km in 23:37 and hardly put a foot wrong... until the finish line. A badly misjudged and executed victory celebration became a social media sensation but nothing could detract from his impressive win.

France — and Gressier — also won team gold with a Spanish quartet of Saul Ordonez, Esther Guerrero, Victor Ruiz and Solange Pereira taking the final event of the day, the mixed relay over 5.8km in 16:10.
This win and the success I've had in 2018 really motivates me to do well next season."

Jakob Ingebrigtsen

Yana Smerdova Authorized Natural Athlete wins the 10,000m race walk

Opposite: Sweden’s Armand Duplantis of Sweden wins the pole vault

Main picture: Jakob Ingebrigtsen topped off a memorable year

Right: Nadia Battocletti took the day’s first gold medal
Turkey’s Yasemin Can became the first woman to win three consecutive senior titles.
Opposite: Dutch women celebrated team gold on home soil
Below: the testing course contrasted with picturesque scenery
GREAT EDINBURGH XCOUNTRY

TEAM EUROPE GETS 2018 OFF TO A FLYING START

Team Europe produced a sparkling start to 2018 — providing a prelude to a magnificent year for European Athletics — when they triumphed at the Great Edinburgh XCountry on a glorious day at Holyrood Park.

This annual match between Team Europe, Great Britain and USA — and also a European Athletics Cross Country Permit Meeting — came just over a month after the SPAR European Cross Country Championships in Samorin and Team Europe was packed with a series of stars from that event.

They combined to achieve a clear overall victory from the four races — men’s and women’s senior and U20 events — with 137 points. Great Britain finished second with 182 and USA third with 190.

Turkey’s runners made a big impression, just as they had in Samorin. It was there that Yasemin Can had successfully defended her senior women’s title and in Edinburgh she found herself in a real race over 6km, in the end winning by just two seconds in 20:58 from Britain’s Emelia Gorecka.

Her teammate Kaan Kigen Ozbilen had won the senior men’s crown in Samorin and though he was beaten into second in the sprint at end of the 8km race by Leonard Korir, finishing three seconds behind the US athlete in 24:35, he achieved valuable points along with his compatriot Aras Kaya.

Norway’s Simen Halle Haugen gave Team Europe a winning start to the day in the men’s U20 6km race, coming home in 19:13 three seconds ahead of Spain’s Ouassim Oumaiz in 19:16; while in the women’s U20 race over 4km, Team Europe saw Portugal’s Mariana Machado and Jasmijn Lau, of the Netherlands, finish second and third respectively as US runner Kelsey Chmiel won in 14:10.

“The greatest names in the sport competing in a festival of cross country running in Edinburgh.”

Brendan Foster, Great Run Company chairman and founder
Top: Great Britain’s Laura Muir lines up with Garrett Heath of Team USA and Adel Mechael of Spain

Middle: Turkey’s Yasemin Can delivers victory for Europe

Below: USA’s Leonard Korir poised on the shoulder of Kaan Kigen Ozbilen

Opposite: Simen Halle Haugen of Norway wins the men’s U20 6km race
TEAM EUROPE SECOND IN OSTRAVA

Superb individual performances were not quite enough for team victory

Team Europe had to settle for second place, unable to defend their crown from four years ago at the IAAF Continental Cup Ostrava 2018. Europe’s representatives finished with 233 points, 29 points behind a victorious Team Americas, but still chalked up an impressive five individual victories.

Pride of place went to European 5000m champion Sifan Hassan, who dropped down to contest the 3000m. Hassan set a world-leading mark of 8:27.50, also a Dutch and Cup record.

“I knew the race was fast and I was happy with that, but I had no proper idea I was going quite so fast and I didn’t come here (to Ostrava) aiming for a record,” joked Hassan.

Sergey Shubenkov defended his 110m hurdles crown from 2014 with a 13.03 performance, a time nobody in the world other than the Russian himself was able to match in 2018.

Victories in Ostrava were also achieved by German javelin thrower Thomas Röhler as well as Russia’s Mariya Lasitskene and Anzhelika Sidorova, competing as Authorised Neutral Athletes, in the high jump and pole vault.
Born in Switzerland in 1115.
Nothing gets the crowds on their feet like a home superstar competing at a major championship. So the Glasgow 2019 European Athletics Indoor Championships from 1-3 March, will feel like a homecoming for Scotland’s most famous vet.

Laura Muir’s ascent has been nothing short of spectacular since winning double gold at the European Indoor Championships in Belgrade two years ago, triumphant in the 1500m before landing the 3000m title a day later and breaking championship records in both events.

Muir’s second gold medal came an hour before the adulation went to Serbia’s Ivana Spanovic who defended her long jump title with a national record of 7.24m — the longest jump recorded indoors since 1989 — and lay flat out in the sand in disbelief.

Now it is Muir carrying the home hopes on a track which is her principal training venue. Last summer at the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships, she won her first outdoor 1500m title after banking her first global medals with silver (1500m) and bronze (3000m) at the IAAF World Indoor Championships in Birmingham in March.

It is 29 years since Glasgow last hosted this championships, an event fondly remembered for Tom McKean winning the 800m. The mantle has been handed on to Muir who will be looking to further embellish her medal tally.

While she won the women’s 1500m in Berlin, Norway’s Jakob Ingebrigtsen became the youngest male gold medallist in European Championships history in the men’s 1500m.

Ingebrigtsen, 18, already has eight European medals but none on the boards thus far. What will the next chapter in the story of this amazing athletics family bring? Jakob will be joined on the start-line by older brothers Filip and Henrik.

Greece’s Ekaterini Stefanidi won the women’s title for the first time with a championship record of 4.85m. She has amassed a brilliant record in big events, including European outdoor titles in 2016 and 2018, and will not want to give up her crown. Neither, too, will Spanovic but this time the cheers from the 5000-strong crowd will be for someone else.
Championships hopefuls clockwise from top left: home favourite Laura Muir, Poland’s 4x400m quartet, Pavel Maslak of Czech Republic and Serbia’s Ivana Spanovic.
LOOK AHEAD TO GAVLE AND BORAS

The summer ahead will be a bumper one for athletics in Sweden as two major age-group championships will be held there in back-to-back weeks

Twenty years after Gothenburg hosted the European Athletics U23 Championships, the championships will take place from 11-14 July at the Gavleho Stadium Park in Gavle, 180 kilometres to the north of Stockholm.

Three outright championship records remain on the books from 1999 but it is not implausible that two of them could be broken by home athletes in July. Berlin 2018 silver medallist and reigning European U23 champion Andreas Kramer is a renowned front runner who could challenge Nils Schumann’s mark of 1:45.21 in the 800m while the organisers will be hoping European senior champion Armand Duplantis can challenge Romain Mesnil’s championship record of 5.93m in the pole vault.

The European Athletics U20 Championships will take place the following week at the Ryavallen Athletic Stadium in Boras from 18-21 July. The championships were held on Swedish soil as recently as 2015 when Eskilstuna staged the event.

Notable gold medallists on that occasion included Poland’s Konrad Bukowiecki, Hungary’s Bence Halasz, Germany’s Gina Lucken kemper and Belarus’ Elvira Herman which shows the championships might be a useful form guide for the European Athletics Championships in the not-too-distant future.

Two world U20 records were set at the Grosseto 2017 European Athletics U20 Championships courtesy of Germany’s Niklas Kaul winning the U20 decathlon with 8435 points while the German 4x100m relay team broke the world U20 mark in their heat with 43.27.

Another three championship records were broken across the four days of competition: Duplantis cleared 5.65m in the pole vault, Belarus high jumper Maksim Nedasekau cleared 2.33m to break the 40-year-old record and Ukraine’s Hlib Piskunov won the 6kg hammer with 81.75m.

German athletes should again be to the fore after topping the medal tables in 2017 at the last edition of the European Athletics U23 Championships with four gold medals and also at the European Athletics U20 Championships with five gold medals.
There will be a new feel and a new calendar slot for the European Athletics Team Championships

There will be a number of changes at the European Athletics Team Championships this summer as the competition celebrates its 10th anniversary, but one thing will remain the same: every point will be crucial and this adage is especially pertinent this time.

The event has moved from its traditional slot at the end of June to the second week of August in a year when the outdoor season builds towards the IAAF World Championships Doha 2019 from 27 September to 6 October.

The Super League from 9-11 August will also have a new home as the Zdzislaw Krzysztofik Stadium in Bydgoszcz, Poland stages the competition for the first time, although it did play host to the event’s predecessor, the European Cup, in 2004.

Most significantly across all four divisions, the issues of relegation will affect more nations. The European Athletics Council approved the streamlining of the top tier reducing the Super League from 12 to eight nations in 2021.

This will mean the bottom five teams from the Super League in Bydgoszcz will all be relegated to the First League with only the winning team from the European Athletics Team Championships First League in Sandnes, Norway — the hometown of the Ingebrigtsens — gaining promotion.

A similar story will run through the other Leagues with the lowest five teams in the First League standings going down and only the winning nation in the European Athletics Team Championships Second League gaining promotion.

The bottom five nations in the Second League in Varazdin, Croatia will also be relegated to the European Athletics Team Championships Third League with only the winning team in Skopje securing promotion.

Two years ago in Lille, Germany were crowned champions for the second time in three editions with 322.5 points with Poland second with 296 and hosts France third with 271.

This year’s hosts Poland have never won this competition but they will have strength in all areas, having won five individual disciplines in 2017 through 2019 event ambassador Marcin Lewandowski (1500m), Pawel Fajdek (hammer), Sofia Ennaoui (3000m), Kamila Licwinko (high jump) and the women’s 4x400m relay team.

Sweden, Finland and Switzerland will be competing in the Super League after securing promotion in Vaasa, Finland in 2017 while Hungary, Slovakia and Lithuania will all be taking part in the First League after filling the three promotion spots in Tel Aviv, Israel two years ago.

Luxembourg, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Georgia are into the Second League and with the five teams being relegated across the board, it means every nation will be doing their utmost to ensure they reach the highest standards possible.
12,777 STORES
48 COUNTRIES
13.5 MILLION DAILY CUSTOMERS

SPAR, INDEPENDENT RETAILERS SINCE 1932 AND PROUD SPONSOR OF EUROPEAN ATHLETICS SINCE 1996
SUPERPOWERS TO CLASH IN MINSK

Europe vs USA duel set for September

A Ryder Cup-style duel between Team Europe and the USA will be staged little more than two weeks ahead of the IAAF World Championships in the Dinamo Stadium in Minsk, Belarus on 9-10 September 2019.

It will be the last major meeting before Doha 2019 so it is expected that both teams will feature many medal prospects in their ranks. It will be the first such meeting outdoors, although the two superpowers did clash indoors in 1978 when Europe won both the men’s and women’s contest.

The agreement was signed between European Athletics and USA Track & Field (USATF) in January 2019 and European Athletics has started operational work with the Belarus Athletic Federation ahead of the event.
European Athletics President Svein Arne Hansen said: “The Belarusian Athletic Federation has made a great contribution to the organisation of the match. Minsk will host a historic event for the world of athletics. Minsk has an excellent modern facility which is one of the best in Europe.”

The winner of each individual event at the Bydgoszcz 2019 European Athletics Team Championships Super League — as well as the first three athletes from the outdoor season list at 12 August 2019 — will be selected for Team Europe in each individual event.

At least six Belarusian athletes — three men and three women — will also be part of Team Europe which will create considerable local interest with the likes of Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships medalists Maksim Nedasekau and Elvira Herman expected to be in contention for selection.

The match will take place in the renovated Dinamo Stadium, which was reopened in June 2018 and has the capacity to hold 22,000 spectators.

The match will include every individual track discipline up to the 3000m, all the jumps and throws as well as a 4x100m relay and a mixed 4x400m relay. There are also first prize cheques of €7000 on offer for individual event winners and prize money awarded to the top eight as well as for the relays.

Facing a team that is likely to be replete with reigning European champions, the USA could potentially call on current stars such as sprinters Christian Coleman and Noah Lyles as well as reigning world champions like Tori Bowie, Brittney Reese, Sam Kendricks and Christian Taylor.
“We look forward to visiting Belarus for this great competition.”

Max Siegel, CEO, USATF
GERMANS MAKE THEIR MARK IN LEIRIA

Vetter's record-breaking javelin throw was just one of the highlights of a memorable meeting

Germany’s world javelin champion Johannes Vetter rewrote the record books on a damp afternoon during the second day of the European Throwing Cup in Leiria, Portugal.

Entering a competition in which teammate Julian Weber held the championship record with 85.58m from last year, Vetter not only went past that in the second round with 88.28m but then created the biggest headline of the weekend with a fifth-round effort of 92.70m, a world-leading throw and the 12th longest in history.

Vetter was not the only German making their mark in Leiria as discus thrower Nadine Muller won her sixth title since 2007 with 60.42m.

Fresh from victory at the IAAF World Indoor Championships in Birmingham the previous weekend, Hungary’s Anita Marton maintained her early season form with a commanding victory in the shot put by 65cm with 19.12m.

Two years after being crowned U23 champion in Arad, Hanna Malyskh from Belarus won the senior women’s hammer with 72.62m. Norway’s Sigrid Borge also took the senior plaudits in the women’s javelin with 62.42m.

World silver medallist Daniel Stahl led a one-two for Sweden in the discus as he won with an opening round effort of 66.81m from Simon Pettersson who extended his personal best to 65.81m.

Poland’s world and European champion Pawel Fajdek did not make his mark in the hammer until the final two rounds, hitting 76.13m in the fifth round before improving to 77.30m in the sixth. His training partner Marcel Lomnický from Slovakia was second with 75.97m.

Authorised Neutral Athlete Aleksandr Lesnoy also triumphed in the men’s shot put with 21.32m ahead of soon-to-be European champion Michal Haratyk’s 21.18m.

Highlights in the U23 events included a Hungarian double in the hammer with Bence Halasz (74.83m) and Reka Gyuratzi (69.00m) taking the plaudits and Turkey’s Eda Tugsuz winning the women’s javelin title with 60.92m.
“So many big names in action and a privilege to watch Johannes Vetter set a championship record.”

Svein Arne Hansen
Success in May ensures European 10,000m Cup will return to the city in 2019 and 2020

The success of the European 10,000m Cup at the Parliament Hill Athletics Track on 19 May was such that the event, which was held in conjunction with the Night of the 10,000m PBs, will be returning to north west London in 2019 and 2020.

A huge crowd, a raucous, rousing night and the novelty of canopies adorning the home straight and back straight from where spectators could watch proceedings unfold, close enough to be able to touch the athletes, only added to the sense of occasion.

The men’s race could not have been more dramatic as France’s Mourad Amdouni reached the bell with the narrowest of leads from Germany’s Richard Ringer.

As they ran the last 100 metres, there was nothing between them but Ringer produced a late finishing charge to win in 27:36.52 from Amdouni in 27:36.80. Italy’s Yemaneberhan Crippa, 21, was third in 27:44:65 to break the long-standing national U23 record as seven men broke the 28 minute mark.

Spain’s Adel Mechaal was fourth on his debut in 27:50.56 to lead his nation to the team title ahead of Great Britain and France.

European leader Lonah Chemtai Salpeter from Israel lived up to her billing with an outstanding performance just two months prior to the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships where she delivered again to win gold.

After the pacemaker dropped out, Salpeter led for the remainder of the way with victory in a national record of 31:33.03 from Romania’s Ancuta Bobocel who broke her personal best by more than half a minute in 31:43.12.

Great Britain’s Charlotte Arter was third in a lifetime best of 32:15.71, leading the hosts to team gold ahead of Romania and Germany.
“Usually the 10,000m is a little bit boring but nothing was boring tonight. There was food, drink, music and some crazy races.”

Richard Ringer
Italy emerged with the honours after a testing course in the mountains above Skopje

Being an even year, the athletes at the European Mountain Running Championships had to tackle an up-and-down course on a warm and picturesque day in Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 1 July.

The highest point of the course on Vodno Mountain was 950 metres and the participants had to contend with ascents and descents of 700 metres over the two loops, covering a total of 11km of difficult terrain.

The Dematteis brothers — Bernard and Martin — are among the most famous modern-day exponents in the men's event with three individual titles between them before this championship.

Make that four now after Bernard led Italy to a clean sweep, joining Antonio Molinari (1998, 1999 and 2001) as the only Italian to have lifted this crown on three occasions.

Bernard, who had previously won in 2013 and 2014, regained the title in 46:51 from Cesare Maestri in 47:18 and brother Martin in 47:47 to give Italy the team gold for the 22nd time from the 24 editions of the championships.

The women's senior race was a story of individual brilliance from Switzerland's Maude Mathys, who retained her title in impressive fashion.

Just three months after winning the Zurich Marathon, Mathys led all the way and defended her crown by more than four minutes, breaking the tape in 52:32 from France's Anais Sabrie in 56:41. Sabrie led her country to the team title.

Along with the glory of their senior men, there was further success for Italy over 6km in the women's U20 race as Angela Mattevi won in 29:30 along with gold in the team race.

Romania's Gabriel Bularda also won the men's U20 title in 25:45 from Joseph Dugdale (25:52) who was at the helm of Great Britain's team triumph.
Top: Switzerland’s Maude Mathys successfully defending her title
Opposite top: a clean sweep for Italy as the Dematteis brothers were split only by Cesare Maestri
Opposite bottom: women’s U20 winner Angela Mattevi made it a good day for Italy
The men of Enka SK, from Turkey, and the women of Sporting Clube de Portugal triumphed in Birmingham on the weekend of May 26-27 in the European Champion Clubs Cup Group A division.

Enka successfully defended the title they won at home in Mersin in 2016 as they scored 163.5 points, taking victory by only 4.5 from Portugal’s Sport Lisboa e Benfica.

Enka won six individual events with Turkey’s 2016 European 400m hurdles champion Yasmani Copello among them as he won over the barriers in 49.72.

One of the big names in Birmingham was 2017 discus world champion Andrius Gudzius, competing for Lithuania’s Cosma, and with a massive throw of 67.82m, he broke the 29-year-old championship record of 67.42m.

Belgium’s Royal Excelsior SC (79.5 points), Slovenia’s AD Mass Ljubljana (70), Ireland’s Clonliffe Harriers (66) and Slovakia’s AK Slavia Uk Bratislava (48) were all relegated.

In the women’s competition, six points separated the top three as Sporting Clube de Portugal banked 166 to beat Enka by just two with Valencia Esports, of Spain, a close third with 160.

The women’s 4x400m proved crucial in Sunday’s finale with the two points between first and third as Sporting Clube’s quartet of Filipa Martins, Dorothe Evora, Noellie Yarigo and Catia Azevedo combined to win in 3:32.62 from Valencia with Enka third.

As with the men, the bottom four teams were relegated: Rotterdam Atletiek (82 points), Slovenia’s AD Kladivar (81), Belgium’s Cercle Athletique Du Brabant Wallon (72) and AK Spartak Dubnica Nad Vahom (54) from Slovakia.

Group B took place in Tampere, Finland and it proved a great competition for the Czech Republic as VSK Univerzita Brno’s men triumphed with 99 points and USK Praha comfortably won the women’s contest with 114 points.

Almost four months later, there was more success for the teams from Turkey and Portugal at the ECCC Track & Field U20 in Castellon, Spain.

Fenerbahce’s women won Group A for the seventh successive year with an emphatic victory of 31.5 points from hosts Playas de Castellon, 134.5 to 103. Sport Lisboa e Benfica won the men’s competition with 115 points from Denmark’s Sparta AM with 103 points.
Athletes representing clubs from Turkey, Denmark, Portugal, Spain, Great Britain and the Netherlands battling for honours in track and field.

Above: David Lima anchors Sport Lisboa e Benfica to victory in the men’s 4x100m.

Left: Sporting Clube de Portugal celebrate victory at the ECCC Track & Field Group A in Birmingham.
It was a good day for the hosts as Sporting Clube de Portugal won team gold in both the men’s and women’s senior races and had the individual senior men’s champion at the European Champion Clubs Cup Cross Country in Mira, Portugal on 4 February.

On a course of flat and twisting woodland terrain with hard underfoot conditions, Kenya’s Davis Kiplangat produced a decisive performance in the senior men’s 10.3km. He won by 100 metres in 29:44, some 18 seconds ahead of Belgium’s Isaac Kimeli who was running for Olympic Essenbeek Halle.

Kiplangat was ably supported in a strong team by Rui Pedro Silva in sixth (30:30), Rui Teixeira in seventh (30:32) and Licinio Pimentel in eleventh (30:48) as Sporting won team gold with 25 points from Olympic Essenbeek Halle (40) and Spain’s Atletismo Bikila (74).

After finishing 31st at the SPAR European Cross Country Championships two months earlier in Samorin, Poland’s Katarzyna Rutkowska would not have been among the favourites for the senior women’s 6.3km.

But competing for KS Podlasie Bialystok, Rutkowska delivered the shock of the day, coming through to win by one second in 20:07 from home favourite Jessica Augusto with Romania’s Ancuta
Bobocel, who was representing Spanish Club Bilbao Atletismo Santutxo, third in 20:10.

Along with Augusto, Sporting had four runners in the top 10: Sara Moreira in fifth (20:19), Ines Monteiro in seventh (20:24) and Belarusian Sviatlana Kudzelich in eighth (20:24) to earn them the team title with 22 points from Bilbao (31) and Turkey’s Bursa Buyuksehir Belediye SK (55).

Twelve months after being crowned U20 champion in Albufeira, Denmark’s Anna Mark Helwigh retained her individual U20 title as she won by one second in 14:11 over 4.2km for Sparta AM from Emine Akbingol who led Turkey’s Fenerbahce Sport Club to team gold with 36 points, just one point ahead of the Danish team.

Aaron Las Heras and Mario Garcia made it a one-two for Spain’s Playas de Castellon in the men’s U20 race over 6.3km, a performance which also took them to team gold with 30 points.
OUTDOOR PERMIT MEETINGS

A SPRINGBOARD FOR BERLIN

With every throw, jump, run and hurdle cleared, the intention would have been the same: counting down to the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships, giving the European Athletics Outdoor Permit Meetings added importance this season. There was no greater proof of this than on 4 June in Prague at the Memorial Josef Odlozil Meeting as Belarusian Elvira Herman lowered her personal best in the 100m hurdles to 12.69 — one of a sequence of victories ahead of Berlin where she stormed to the European title.

The season had hit full speed on 29 May with two meetings which produced a spree of notable performances. At the European Athletics Festival in Bydgoszcz, Polish pole vaulter Piotr Lisek won with a 5.85m clearance while at the 56th Riga Cup, Sindija Bukša broke the Latvian 100m record which had stood since 1987 with 11.34 before winning the 200m in a national U23 record of 23.02.

Bukša’s double success was part of a theme of these permit meetings: athletes delivering in front of their home fans. A crowd of 20,000-plus were treated to a night they will long remember at the 64th Janusz Kusocinski Memorial in Chorzow on 8 June as soon-to-be European champion Wojciech Nowicki won the hammer with 80.63m and Justyna Swiety-Ersetic beat Allyson Felix in the 400m — 51.11 to 51.35 — on the path to double gold in Berlin.

On the way to a successful defence of her European crown in Berlin, Greece’s Ekaterini Stefanidi showed her form by winning again at the Athens Street Pole Vault in June with a 4.73m clearance. Frenchman Jimmy Vicaut broke the 10-second barrier for the 20th time in wind legal conditions as he won the 100m at the Meeting de Marseille in 9.92 in June. There was also fast sprinting at the Istvan Gyulai Memorial in Székesfehérvár where Sergey Shubenkov almost eclipsed the European 110m hurdles record with a lifetime best of 12.92 on 2 July.

At the Spitzen Leichtathletik Luzern on 6 July, Estonia’s Magnus Kirt won with 85.42m as he beat the Olympic champion Thomas Rohler (84.25m) although Rohler did prevail when they met at the European Championships the following month. The Karlstad GP on 25 July was the last meeting before Berlin and Armand Duplantis won the pole vault, breaking the meeting record with 5.80m, a taste of his heroics at the European Championships.

Ten days after Berlin, a crowd of 40,000 were at the Kamila Skolimowska Memorial in Chorzow on 22 August when newly crowned European shot put champion Michal Haratyk reached 21.33m on home soil to beat New Zealand’s world indoor and outdoor champion Tom Walsh by five centimetres. And at the last meeting of the season at the 32nd Citta di Padova on 2 September, Shubenkov maintained his unbeaten run since winning silver in Berlin, winning the 110m hurdles in a meeting record of 13.09.
OUTDOOR PERMIT MEETINGS

Top: Belarusian Elvira Herman set up a European title challenge.

Middle: Justyna Swiety-Ersetic beats Allyson Felix in Chorzow.

Below: Switzerland’s Mujinga Kambundji gives Luzern fans something to cheer.

Opposite: Poland’s Piotr Lisek delights the home crowd in Bydgoszcz and below, Sindija Buksa in Riga.
Ekaterini Stefanidi delivers for the home crowd in Athens

Jimmy Vicaut goes under 10 seconds for the 20th time in Marseille

Michal Haratyk took the shot put win on home soil in Chorzow
From the moment Pavel Maslak triumphed in front of his home crowd in the opening European Athletics Indoor Permit Meeting of 2018 at the Czech Indoor Gala in Ostrava on 25 January, the quality of performances reached not only a superb level but also acted as a launchpad for success in upcoming major championships.

The target for many was the IAAF World Indoor Championships in Birmingham between 1-4 March with the knowledge that a great winter would be the ideal precursor to a glorious summer campaign culminating at the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships.

Maslak had a busy evening, winning two races over 300m as a test of speed for his main event. Just under two hours apart, he clocked 32.83 and 32.52 and six weeks later he was crowned world indoor 400m champion for the third time in a row.

Compatriot Tomas Stanek also made the most of his domestic appearance by producing an early season mark of 21.61m in the shot put, a foundation for a Czech record of 22.17m in Dusseldorf the following month before a bronze medal in Birmingham.

It was to become some year for France’s Kevin Mayer who went on to break the world decathlon record in Talence with 9126 points.

And in the first week of February, the men’s European Athlete of the Year in 2018 had a quite a time at the Meeting de Paris Indoor, breaking his 60m hurdles personal best with 7.80 en route to winning a special triathlon. He crowned his indoor campaign with heptathlon gold in Birmingham.

Poland’s multiple European 800m champion Adam Kszczot was without a world title and as the Meeting de Lievin returned to the calendar on 13 February, he showed he meant business by coming through late to win in 1:47.12. Kszczot extended his unbeaten streak all the way through until Birmingham where he claimed his maiden global title.

There was a similar story for Ivana Spanovic as well. A year after defending her European indoor
Yemaneberhan Crippa achieved a major senior title in Albufeira long jump title at home, Spanovic entered the season also in search of her first world title. It would duly arrive in Birmingham and fans in attendance at the Serbian Open Indoor Meeting on 21 February would not have been surprised by that as Spanovic won there with 6.93m.

No indoor season would be complete without Renaud Lavillenie at his home meeting, the All Star Perche in Clermont-Ferrand on 25 February. He was beaten on countback at 5.93m by world outdoor champion Sam Kendricks as Sweden’s Armand Duplantis increased his world indoor U20 record to 5.88m. This was the deepest competition in the history of the pole vault with seven vaulters clearing 5.88m or higher.

In Birmingham, Lavillenie was crowned world indoor champion for a third time — reaching 5.90m as Kendricks took silver with 5.85m — and then in Berlin in the summer the Frenchman could only stand back and clap as Duplantis won the European title with his amazing 6.05m.
Renaud Lavillenie would take a third indoor world title in Birmingham but was beaten into second place in Clermont-Ferrand.
Armand Duplantis cleared a world U20 record of 5.88m in Clermont-Ferrand

Dina Asher-Smith announces the start of her year at the Meeting de Paris Indoor

Poland's Adam Kszczot with a late surge in Lievin
HOME SUCCESS APLENTELY IN THE MUD

There was ample home success to toast in European Athletics Cross Country Permit Meetings in 2018 beginning with some of the opening events of the calendar year. Belgium’s Soufiane Bouchikhi had been bidding for a victory for some time and he scored a notable victory at home over 9km in the Easykit Cross Cup in Hannut on 20 January. He triumphed in 29:10, winning by 17 seconds from Great Britain’s defending champion Andy Vernon.

Spain’s Chakib Lachgar and Denmark-based Kenyan Sylvia Medugu were also celebrating on the same day at the Abdijcross in Kerkrade. Muddy paths made for a real test and Lachgar won the men’s 10.5km in a close finish in 34:02 ahead of Germany’s Samuel Fitwi and Denmark’s Abdi Ulad Hakin. The women’s 7.4km saw a 10-second margin of success for Medugu who triumphed in 27:17. Kenya’s Norah Tanui Jeruto won the Cross Internazionale della Vallagarina in Rovereto on 20 January with Italy’s Sara Bottarelli next over the line from Valeria Roffino.

The famous TCS Lidingoloppet in Lidingo, Sweden on 29-30 September marked the start of the 2018-19 European Athletics Cross Country Permit Meeting series and a busy run-in to the SPAR European Cross Country Championships. The conditions were good and the performance from Sweden’s Napoleon Solomon was outstanding winning in 1:37:42 in a grueling test over 30km.

He went on to finish fifth in the men’s senior race in Tilburg, his best performance at the European Cross Country Championships to date.

There was further podium success for Sweden in the women’s race for Hanna Lindholm in third place behind Medugu and Norway-based American Annie Bersagel.

In the build-up to Tilburg, the Warandecross proved a glorious dress rehearsal for Switzerland’s Fabienne Schlumpf and Delia Scabas. Schlumpf regained the title she won two years ago with victory over 8km in 26:37 and set herself up for silver at the European Cross Country Championships just behind Turkey’s
two-time reigning champion Yasemin Can. Scibas won the women’s U20 4.3km in 14:00 en route to silver a fortnight later.

Italy’s Yemanberhan Crippa won the senior men’s 10.3km in 29:23 coming sixth a fortnight later and winning team bronze. It was a similar story of preparation at the Darmstadt Cross in Germany on the same day with Fitwi winning the men’s senior 9km in 26:57 before taking silver in the U23 race at the European Cross Country Championships on his debut in a German vest.

Also victorious on the road to Tilburg was Denmark’s Anna Emilie Moller. She won the senior women’s 8km at the Skanderborg Cross on before winning the U23 title in Tilburg.
Top: Samuel Fitwi won in Darmstadt ahead of Tilburg
Bottom: Anna Emilie Moller winning the senior women’s 8km at the Skanderborg Cross
Opposite: Competitors line up in the Abdijcross in Kerkrade
Matej Toth lapped up every bit of the home support as he made a winning return to the 50km distance with a brilliant victory at the 37th Dudince 50 in March, one of three European Athletics Race Walking Permit Meetings in 2018.

Slovakia’s Rio 2016 Olympic Games gold medallist produced a performance that he later admitted was beyond his own expectations as he won in 3:42:46, almost two minutes ahead of Finland’s Veli-Matti Partanen in second in 3:44:43.

He was not the only Slovakian celebrating. Making her debut at the distance, Maria Czakova won in a national record of 4:14:25.

Two weeks later, over the border at Podebrady, Germany’s Christopher Linke triumphed for the third time in four years in the Czech spa town as he won the men’s 20km race walk in 1:21:55 with Italy’s Eleonora Giorgi breaking the meeting record in the women’s race with 1:28:49.

Linke added to his success on the European Athletics Race Walking Permit Meetings circuit as he won in June at the 44th International Race Walking Festival in Alytus, Lithuania — the venue for the 2019 European Athletics Race Walking Cup — leading all the way to triumph in the men’s race in 1:21:10 while Brigita Virbalyte-Dimsiene earned a home win in the women’s race in 1:31:24.
INTRODUCING

I RUN CLEAN™

I RUN CLEAN™ is European Athletics’ anti-doping education programme for athletes of all ages and performance levels.

Elite athletes wishing to enter a European Athletics championships are required to complete the programme and obtain an ‘I RUN CLEAN™’ certificate.

But anyone else who loves athletics and wants to play their part in the fight against doping is welcome to join. It’s free, it’s easy to use and it’s available in 25 languages.

Obtaining the ‘I RUN CLEAN™’ certificate represents your pledge to observe sport’s anti-doping regulations and compete fairly – to run, jump, throw or walk clean.

When you qualify for the ‘I RUN CLEAN™’ certificate you will be immediately linked to your social media accounts to share your accomplishment and encourage others to join you.

Find out everything you need to know by logging on to the ‘I RUN CLEAN™’ platform at www.irunclean.org.

#irunclean    europeanathletics    EuropeanAthletics    @EuroAthletics
Running for All reached another major milestone in 2018 — and an even bigger one could be achieved in 2019 — as more than 900 road races in Europe have now been officially certified.

In total, at the end of 2018, there were 902 certified road races across the continent with 45 Member Federations staging at least one event. With organisers across the continent recognising the value of securing certification for their road races, it is by no means inconceivable Running for All could reach four figures at some point during 2019.

What is also notable is nearly half of the currently certified races have received a five-star certification from Running for All. No less than 402 events have fulfilled the criteria for this highest level of certification, ensuring participants a high level of safety, security and organisation at their races.

Getting more closely involved than ever before with Running for All are the well-known race organisers RunCzech, who had plenty to celebrate in 2018. Not only was their entire RunCzech series given a five-star rating by Running for All, the organisers also celebrated their one millionth finisher in RunCzech event history in the Volkswagen Prague Marathon on 6 May.

With support from European Athletics, RunCzech also unveiled the ‘EuroHeroes’ initiative at the Karlovy Vary Half Marathon in May to put the spotlight back on elite Czech and European distance runners. Against a European-only elite field, local star Eva Vrabcova-Nyvitova won in Karlovy Vary, a stepping stone to her winning bronze in the marathon at the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships. The Ceske Budejovice Half Marathon on 2 June also supported the EuroHeroes project and RunCzech organisers will expand the initiative to four races in 2019.

“We believed that, as part of the EuroHeroes project in Karlovy Vary and Ceske Budejovice, we would discover new heroes who would inspire others to take up sport and an active lifestyle,” said RunCzech President Carlo Capalbo.

At the end of 2018, the five countries with the most certified events are Italy, Great Britain, Denmark, Portugal and Poland.
“We believed that we would discover new heroes who would inspire others to take up sport and an active lifestyle.”

Carlo Capalbo, President, RunCzech
European Athletics was once more a committed and proactive supporter of both the Global Running Day on 6 June and the European Week of Sport from 23-30 September.

European Athletics promoted the worldwide initiative Global Running Day to its 51 Member Federations and led by example with staff from the European Athletics head office in Lausanne taking part in a morning run.

Run Bulgaria was a particularly enthusiastic partner, staging a mass participation one-mile road race in Sofia as a prelude to a five-day running festival across the city the following month, in which participation and inclusion were the foremost objectives.

The Belarus Athletic Federation also organised a one-mile road race in which European marathon champion Volha Mazuronak was on hand to encourage participants.

“The spirit and intent of this initiative — to encourage people to lead more active, healthier lifestyles — is in keeping with our Running for All programme and the foundation on which the European Running Business Conference was built,” said European Athletics President Svein Arne Hansen.

Runners were also encouraged to engage with the initiative across social media by posting photos of their various activities and using the hashtag #GlobalRunningDay.

In total, 161 countries around the world staged activities in conjunctions with Global Running Day, reaching nearly 300,000 people including 54,000 children.
Inclusion was very much the theme of the European Week of Sport which European Athletics proudly supported for the fourth successive year.

The Opening Ceremony took place in Prater Park in Vienna where many of Austria’s top athletes were in attendance to draw attention to an initiative which has expanded into a pan-European movement since its inception in 2015 by the European Commission.

As well as endorsing physical activity as a means to achieving a healthy lifestyle, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Tibor Navracsics also noted how sport has a big role and can be a force for good in improving mental health and combating loneliness.

“Encouraging more people to be active is therefore important. It can help us tackle loneliness, a growing concern in our society. The European Commission’s in-house science and knowledge service, the Joint Research Centre, is analysing this topic as part of its work on social fairness,” commented Navracsics.

In terms of running events, 213 events were staged across 32 countries, reaching an estimated 230,000 people. Czech Republic alone held a total of 45 events which all supported the European Week of Sport’s #BeActive mission statement.

Running events were staged elsewhere across much of Europe and focussed specifically on enjoyment and participation.

Among the many memorable events, the #BeActive Children’s Run and a #BeActive Night Running event were both staged alongside the Vilnius Marathon in Lithuania which there was a #BeActive Night Race in Larnaka, Cyprus which also generated an outstanding response among participants.
ALL ROADS LEAD TO PRAGUE

Czech capital will stage second groundbreaking Running Business Conference

The second European Running Business Conference will be held in the Czech capital of Prague from 6-8 September bringing the global running community together in 2019 and following on from the success of the first edition in 2017.

The 2019 Conference is being organised by European Athletics and supported by Czech race organisers RunCzech and the Dutch sports timing company MyLaps.

There will be six keynote sessions and a myriad of networking opportunities, as well as several social occasions. The City of Prague will host an opening night dinner offering delegates the chance to sample Czech hospitality.

The Conference is aimed at the organisers of all types of running events — not just classic road races but also cross country events, trail runs, beer miles and even obstacle races — suppliers, federations as well as the media.

Registration is available up to two days before the start of the Conference but, as with many similar events, the price increases closer to the event so there is a big incentive to register early.


The Conference venue is the Hilton Prague Hotel which is centrally located and just a 10-minute walk from the historic Old Town. Famous sights and landmarks like the Charles Bridge and the Castle District are also close by for those intending to explore the city.

The timing of the three-day conference coincides with the Birell Prague Grand Prix on 7 September — one of nine RunCzech races on the 2019 calendar. The event is a five-star certified road race by European Athletics Running for All, an IAAF Gold Label Road Race — and registered delegates will all have the opportunity to attend this race which was judged to be the best 10km in the world in 2018 according to the IAAF Competition Performance Rankings.

The first European Running Business Conference took place in Frankfurt, Germany in October 2017 attracting 282 participants from 48 countries. It was a huge success and had a major impact on European running, but European Athletics anticipate the 2019 Conference will attract even more participants and will have an even bigger global reach.

It is already being talked about as a ‘must attend’ event for anyone serious about their involvement in the business of running. European Athletics President Svein Arne Hansen, who opened and attended the 2017 European Running Business Conference, said: “The 2017 European Running Business Conference attracted key stakeholders in the running industry, not just from Europe, but from around the world. I’m sure that 2019 will be an even greater success.”
Entitled ‘Embracing Change’, senior representatives from European Athletics’ Member Federations knew what to expect when they arrived for the European Athletics CEO Conference in Minsk, Belarus in April.

Over the course of two days they were treated to presentations from speakers who warmed to the theme of adapting to face the challenges of the future.

Media and sponsorship strategist Michael Payne, one of the most respected figures in sports marketing, delivered a keynote speech entitled ‘The 21st Century Reality for the Business of Sport’.

Payne said he believed the sporting landscape was the most uncertain it has been for decades but that such uncertainty also presented a huge opportunity for sports such as athletics.

Outlining various scenarios and predictions for the future of sport, he went on to show how athletics could embrace the future and take advantage of these situations.

EBU Director Stefan Kuerten catalogued developments in broadcasting and the new technologies that the EBU and its Members are adopting in response, setting out ways that new communication tools can be used to promote athletics to the next generation of fans.

World Rugby’s former Chairman Bernard Lapasset told the story of his organisation’s progress encouraging athletics to follow their lead by being adventurous and not afraid to fail.

“Olympic recognition was driving growth in many new markets for this sport, growth which has been accompanied by a dramatic expansion of popularity and fan interest on rugby’s re-entry into the Olympic programme,” he reflected.

The conference also addressed new European Athletics projects, programmes and support on issues related to Member Federations. European Athletics CEO Christian Milz outlined progress on topics introduced at the 2017 European Athletics Convention in Vilnius, Lithuania and Swedish Athletics Federation President Björn Nilsson presented a case study showing how their federations are working to improve governance.

Esther Fittko of the German athletics federation elaborated on the importance of gender balance and reviewed the efforts European Athletics has made over the last decade while European Athletics First Vice President Dobromir Karamarinov spoke about the Focus Federation Programme.

In his closing remarks, European Athletics President Svein Arne Hansen reflected: “What I want to see now is a cultural shift in the sport so that everyone, from the political level down to the local club level, embraces change and innovation.”
ATHTECH18 TACKLES DATA ISSUES

The third annual Athletics Data Conference — AthTech18 — brought together some of the leading technology experts in the sport for a two-day event in the Spanish city of Gijon in October.

A wide variety of topics were covered but three main areas dominated the presentations and discussion: open standards and standardisation in formatting of athletics data; the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which was implemented across the European Union during 2018, and competition management.
The biennial Young Leaders Forum took place once again in conjunction with the European Athletics Championships and encouraging women to take up leadership roles in sport — and specifically athletics — was a key topic of discussion during the four-day event in Berlin.

The theme was reflected in the gender diversity of the participants: 68 came from 44 countries, 39 of whom were women.

“I am very pleased to see a full room of Young Leaders, and I am also very happy to see the gender balance has been respected. In fact, it has gone beyond what we expected,” said European Athletics Vice President Jean Gracia in his welcome address.

He added: “Gender equity is a very important topic for us. We have included it in the IAAF and European Athletics constitutions, and we are pushing our Member Federations to do the same. In leadership positions we have a lot of progress still to make so we are counting on you as you are the future of our Federations.”

The four-day forum was aimed at young professionals in sport, giving them a chance to network as well as to further develop important work and life skills.

From the evidence of the continued involvement of sports organisations — and the elevation to leadership positions of participants in the forums held alongside the Zurich 2014 and Amsterdam 2016 European Athletics Championships — the principal aims of the forum are clearly being achieved.

Participants in 2018 took part in plenary and breakout sessions on a variety of relevant topics, from anti-doping and gender equity to youth advocacy. IAAF
68 delegates from 44 countries attended the 2018 Young Leaders Forum. Over half were women.

“Female representation is now enshrined in our constitution. The big jump will be from 2023 to 2027 when every governance structure will be 50-50.”

IAAF President Sebastian Coe

President Sebastian Coe also talked to the forum about his life in sport and the need for gender balance.

“When I became IAAF President, I looked across the 214 federations and I realised that we are 50-50 on the field of play... but in 2016 there was only one woman who was head of a federation.”

He elaborated on changes within the world’s governing body which are already starting to have a profound and positive effect on European Athletics, even within the next 12 months.

“[This led me to want] to make some fundamental changes to the IAAF constitution. It is now enshrined in our constitution that 28 or 29 percent of all our governances will have to have female representation by 2019,” said Coe.

He added: “In 2023, that number will go to over 40 percent. And the big jump will be from 2023 to 2027, when every governance structure within the IAAF will be 50-50.”
TEN YEARS OF SUPPORT FOR COACHES

Five Member Federations host practice-oriented coaching summits on specific disciplines

The European Athletics Coaching Summit Series remains a vibrant and engaging programme a full decade after its inception with five conferences held in as many countries across a two-month period at the end of 2018 and into early 2019.

This year’s Coaching Summit Series kicked off with the Pole Vault and High Jump Symposium which took place in Cologne, Germany from 9-11 November. One of the highlights was a keynote speech from European high jump record-holder Carlo Thranhardt who gave a retrospective of his career to an audience of 200 attendees from 26 countries.

Thranhardt’s German compatriot Andreas Hofmann was the star name on the schedule as the World Javelin Conference in Kuortane, Finland returned to the Summit programme on 15-16 November. European silver medallist Hofmann and his coach Lutz Klemm gave presentations in the lecture hall before putting their knowledge to practice in a practical demonstration at the Kuortane Olympic Training Center.

The European Discus and Hammer Conference was staged on the same weekend in Vaxjo, Sweden. Leading Swedish discus throwers Daniel Stahl and Simon Pettersson and Rio 2016 Olympic Games hammer bronze medallist Sophie Hitchon from Great Britain all gave practical demonstrations, making the most of the full-sized indoor field at the Athletic Performance Center Vaxjo.

The European Athletics Endurance Summit took place the following week in Skanderborg, Denmark on 24-25 November covered the subject of how to prepare and compete in extreme weather conditions; a pertinent issue with the imminent IAAF World Championships Doha 2019 and 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo likely to require a high level of adaptation to hot weather.

The final event on the calendar was the International Festival of Athletics Coaching conference which took place at the UK Elite Athlete Centre in Loughborough, Great Britain from 4-6 January.

The programme featured day-long workshops addressing multi-events, speed, endurance and strength, all incorporating both practical and theoretical sessions. Most notably, the multi-events workshop was led by Jerome Simian, strength and conditioning coach to France’s world decathlon record-holder and European Athlete of the Year Kevin Mayer.

“The top team of presenters ensured the highest quality of content at IFAC.”

Frank Dick, European Athletics Coaches Association President
Left: Germany’s Andreas Hofmann was the star presenter at the World Javelin Conference.
Below: Jean Gracia addresses the International Festival of Athletics Coaching
As a successor to the highly regarded Women in World Athletics Seminars, which were held annually between 2013 and 2017, the inaugural European Athletics Women’s Leadership Seminar took place in Brussels, Belgium from 22-24 June.

The seminar was attended by 42 participants representing 33 countries, all of whom are potential leaders within their respective Member Federations and potential future members of the European Athletics Council. The three-day programme was opened by European Athletics Vice President Jean Gracia. He gave an overview of the efforts made by European Athletics to achieve gender equality, including the constitutional changes which were agreed during the 2017 European Athletics Congress, before outlining leadership positions available to women within athletics.

This was followed by a series of sessions featuring women in prominent leadership positions within athletics, including European Athletics and IAAF Council Member Sylvia Barlag, IAAF Women’s Committee Chairperson Esther Fittko and former Vice President of the German Athletics Federation Dagmar Freitag.

Participants from the Women in World Athletics programme also took part in a panel discussion about their experiences of being a woman in sport and Katrin Heyers explained how taking part in the European Athletics Young Leaders Forum provided a platform to build her career.

One of the conclusions reached was that while events such as the Women’s Leadership Seminar remain beneficial in further educating and empowering women, more regular communication is needed, and a mentoring scheme would also be helpful to support women moving through leadership positions.

Summing up the three-day seminar, Fittko said: “These days in Brussels have showed that there is a great potential for women in leadership positions in European Athletics’ Member Federations and this must be further developed.”
“Be brave, trust in yourself and never be afraid to tell your opinion.”

Nijole Medvedeva
European Athletics’ social media engagement with athletics fans is one of the main strands of its communications strategy and all platforms showed impressive growth during 2018.

Twitter followers increased by almost exactly 10% during last year and the number of followers of @EuroAthletics has recently surpassed 116,000. Impressions — the number of times a Twitter message is delivered to someone's timeline generally — averaged between one and two million per month for most of 2018 but spiked at a phenomenal 12.1 million in August, a month that was dominated by the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships.

In total, the number of views across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram during the week of the European Championships reached 40 million and the overall impressions across the three accounts stood at a whopping 975 million.

July and September also saw a lot of activity, reflecting the height of the summer season, with more than four million impressions each month and the figures remained strong throughout the last three months of the year.

Facebook also showed some exceptional activity in 2018 with the number of followers of the European Athletics page standing at 290,435 at the end of the year. More than 8000 followers — over one thousand per day — were added during Berlin.

The memorable milestone of 300,000 followers is anticipated to be passed during the Glasgow 2019 European Athletics Indoor Championships.

Instagram was also a big success for European Athletics’ communications ambitions and the platform now has more than 82,000 followers, an increase of almost a third from the start of the year, and one of the biggest increases of any international sports federation in the world during 2018.

The European Athletics YouTube channel also showed impressive growth by increasing its number of subscribers during 2018 by almost 30%. The videos on the channel were collectively watched more than 500,000 times last year.

Across all European Athletics’ social media platforms, the most viewed video of 2018 was of Ukraine’s Nataliya Pryshchepa returning to pick up Belgium’s Renee Eykens after the latter’s fall in the sprint finish in the 800m heats in Berlin. Pryshchepa went on to win the gold medal and deservedly got a special Fair Play award at the Golden Tracks award ceremony. This video got more than 665,000 views and almost 4000 ‘likes’ on Facebook alone.
THE POWER OF SPORT

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Created in 2013 to promote environmental sustainability and social responsibility, 2018 was another important year for European Athletics’ Green Inspiration initiative which has won plaudits both within the sporting environment and externally with governmental bodies and NGOs.

European Athletics was proud to have contributed to a report produced by the Green Sports Alliance (GSA) entitled: “Playing for our Planet — How Sports Win From Being Sustainable.” This was a collection of sustainability and environmental best practices by organisations and individuals in the sports movement and European Athletics hopes that their examples will motivate and inspire others to utilise their experience and embark on, or enhance, their sustainability programmes.

European Athletics has actively communicated developments with this initiative to its 51 Member Federations and during 2018 worked closely with Local Organising Committees (LOCs) of its major championships to encourage the implementation of projects designed to benefit the environment and effect social change for the better.

The Berlin Athletics Association strived to make sure Berliners were active and engaged ahead of the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships by unveiling a range of their initiatives, including the city-wide ‘Run.Jump. Throw.Berlin,’ with the support of European Athletics.

This fully-inclusive initiative targeted all age groups and backgrounds but had a particular focus on youngsters, older people — sometimes referred to as the ‘Third Agers’ — and people with disabilities.

The focal point of the initiative was the Urban Athletics KIEZ CUP, a mobile athletics event involving 12 districts in Berlin. The competition started in May with the finals taking place on the European Mile at the Breitscheidplatz during the European Athletics Championships.

Another important component of their legacy programme was the setting up of an online platform called ‘Interactive Athletics’, allowing users to find out where their nearest athletics track was located and how to get in touch with and join their local athletics clubs.

Inclusion was also very much the theme for associated events in conjunction with the Tilburg 2018 SPAR European Cross Country Championships in December.

In order to encourage social cohesion, approximately one-quarter of the volunteers for the championships were refugees, who then made up the Refugee Team — giving them a chance to improve their confidence,
life skills and the language which would assist them in finding future employment. Additionally, the LOC actively supported the ‘Unique Sports’ programme which is designed to promote sport to people with either a mental or physical disability.

European Athletics will continue to support and promote similar initiatives in the build-up to and during major events in 2019. In addition, to the impact of the initiatives themselves an additional aim is for European Athletics to continue to provide a paradigm which other sports organisations can utilise themselves.
The key event on the calendar for the European Athletics initiative Kids Athletics was the 2018 European Athletics Kids Athletics Activators Seminar in Samokov, Bulgaria from 22-24 February.

Participants came from 38 European Athletics Member Federations, showing the impact the initiative is having across Europe in encouraging young people, often in the pre-teen age group, to engage in athletics activities.

The concept of Kids Athletics embodies European Athletics’ mission statement of Your Sport For Life, which aims to build a greater awareness and popularity of our sport and well as encouraging personal development, fitness and greater responsibility towards the community and environment.

The first day in Samokov — host of the SPAR 2014 European Cross Country Championships — saw presentations on topics ranging from development through Kids Athletics, Kids Athletics at primary schools and an introduction to IAAF Kids Athletics, the complementary initiative by the sport’s global governing body which has been in operation since 2005.

Among the expert speakers was Lithuania’s two-time Olympic heptathlon medallist Austra Skujyte.

The second day moved from the lecture theatre to the sports hall where participants were given the chance to work with 48 local children, all under the age of 12, including practical demonstrations of ways to improvise Kids Athletics’ activities with limited equipment.

The final day saw case studies from Belarus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary and the Netherlands, all of whom have Kids Athletics schemes currently in operation.

Kids Athletics featured at many European Athletics competitions during 2018. Two notable events were the well-known SPARK Kids Athletics Park, which has been run alongside European Athletics competitions since 2010, at the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships and the Brabant Challenge held in conjunction with the Tilburg 2018 SPAR European Cross Country Championships.

The latter was a four-week programme aimed mainly at primary schools and was rolled out in the local Noord-Brabant province, concluding with 100 schoolchildren running half or three-quarters of a lap of the official course ahead of the championship races.

After the race, every child received a gift from European Athletics International Partner SPAR as well as a finishers’ medal.
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