ATHLETICS REVIEW
2017
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WELCOME

It is my pleasure to once again write a brief introductory message and offer a warm welcome to the annual Athletics Review, a summary of what has happened in European Athletics during the previous calendar year.

The Athletics Review in this form was inaugurated in 2013 so this is the fifth edition. Each year, I think what we have produced has got better and better and I have no hesitation in saying that I believe this year’s publication is the best yet, both in design and content.

As always, it looks back at the athletics year on this continent, but this Review is particularly special and important as it also looks ahead to the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships, which will be a landmark event both in terms of athletics and sport in general. European Athletics has come together with the governing bodies of six other sports to stage the inaugural multi-sport European Championships in both Berlin and Glasgow and I feel sure this will be a spectacular event.

Looking back, 2017 was a special year for European Athletics. In addition to the many successes of European athletes at the IAAF World Championships London 2017, we had a series of continental competitions which will long stay in the memory not least of which was the Belgrade 2017 European Athletics Indoor Championships, which was followed in the summer by two outstanding age-group events in Poland and Italy: the Bydgoszcz 2017 European Athletics U23 Championships and then the following week the Grosseto 2017 European Athletics U20 Championships.

Thus, in the past 12 months, we have been treated to superlative performances by the current stars of our sport but also got a glimpse into the crystal ball and seen many future stars and potential household names. In October, the European Athletics Congress and Convention was held in Vilnius, with the Golden Tracks award night and gala providing a glamorous climax to our time in the Lithuanian capital.

Important decisions were taken there about the future of our sport and the direction of European Athletics as an institution, and we then celebrated the very best by Europe’s athletes on the field of play. I will look back on the past year with a great deal of fondness and pride, not only because of what our athletes achieved but also because I think our sport has started to overcome some of the well-publicised challenges it has faced in recent times.

The Athletics Review chronicles all these events and I am sure you will find it an enthralling and entertaining read.

Svein Arne Hansen,
European Athletics President
FROM THE STADIUM TO SCREENS EVERYWHERE
WELCOME

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German and Greek stars make history for themselves and for their countries in Vilnius.

World javelin champion, Johannes Vetter from Germany and world pole vault champion Ekaterini Stefanidi from Greece were named 2017 European Athletes of the Year at the Golden Tracks award ceremony in Vilnius, Lithuania. To the backdrop of the sounds of the Vilnius Sinfonietta Orchestra, a magnificent year for European athletics was reflected upon and broadcast live both on Lithuanian television and via live streaming on the European Athletics website homepage.

In a year in which they were both crowned world champions, Vetter and Stefanidi also created their own piece of history in Vilnius. Vetter is the first German to be crowned male European Athlete of the Year while Stefanidi is the first Greek athlete – male or female – to lift the accolade. Vetter, 24, soared to second on the world all-time javelin list with 94.44m in Lucerne before winning gold at the IAAF World Championships in London. His consistency was key in 2017 with seven throws in competition over 90 metres.

With the prospect of a win in front of a home crowd, he is expected to be among the names to watch at next year’s Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships, part of the inaugural multi-sport European Championships. Looking ahead to the event Vetter said: “When you are world champion you want to get a gold medal in Berlin as well. Awards like this are a big motivation for the next couple of years.”

Reigning European and Olympic champion Stefanidi, 28, asserted herself as the dominant force in pole vaulting again in 2017 by winning gold at the European Athletics Indoor Championships in Belgrade in March and then
“It is truly an honour for me and my country, being the first Greek athlete to win, and I hope it will bring more young athletes into our sport”

Ekaterini Stefanidi
becoming world champion in London. Stefanidi cleared 4.85m to claim victory by 10 centimetres in Belgrade before setting a Greek national record and world-lead of 4.91m to win the world title in London by 16 centimetres. She was unbeaten outdoors in 2017 and ended the summer by winning the IAAF Diamond League title in Brussels.

RISING STARS IN TRACK AND FIELD
At the star-studded gala, world 400m hurdles champion Karsten Warholm from Norway, and world high jump silver medallist Yuliia Levchenko from Ukraine were also crowned male and female Rising Stars showing what a pool of young talent Europe has. Warholm seemed to take himself by surprise when he became the youngest ever winner of the men’s 400m hurdles title at the IAAF World Championships London 2017. Fittingly, the 21-year-old received his award from fellow Norwegian, President Hansen.

Ukrainian high jumper Levchenko, 20, won three major medals in her first season as a senior. Her year began with bronze at the European Athletics Indoor Championships in Belgrade before she moved to the top of the podium in July with victory at the European Athletics U23 Championships in Bydgoszcz with a lifetime best of 1.96m. She then cleared a national U23 record of 2.01m to claim the silver medal at the World Championships.

“The award is a real honour and a great way to finish my season”

Johannes Vetter

Left: Yuliia Levchenko celebrates her Rising Star award with President Svein Arne Hansen
European Athletics’ Member Federations gathered in Vilnius in October for the annual Convention and the 26th European Athletics Congress and the mood was in sharp contrast to 2016. President Svein Arne Hansen struck a defiant tone in his opening address focusing on a highly successful year for the sport both on and off the field of play.

There were many headlines to come out of this important meeting including the introduction of the ‘I Run Clean’ education platform, the emergence of new and enthusiastic hosts for future European Athletics events and an update on Dynamic New Athletics and its planned rollout in Minsk in 2019. But by far the biggest development was the unanimous approval of all eight proposed amendments to the European Athletics Constitution.

Perhaps the most important amendment put forward by the Council and introduced by President Hansen was the measure to align the organisation with recent changes made by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

In his introduction, Hansen said: “We trust that as you have supported all of these changes at IAAF level, you all agree these important steps shall also be made at European level.”

The proposal was approved overwhelmingly meaning the European Athletics Constitution now shares the same set of fundamental principles as the IAAF on topics ranging from gender equity, transparency, eligibility criteria, term limits, athletes’ voice and a vote at the Council.

POSITIVITY AND UNANIMITY IN VILNIUS

The mood was positive as European Athletics Member Federations gather for Congress in Lithuania.
A further seven proposals were put forward relating to topics including “roles, duties and power” and “European Athletics Association (EAA) Court, EAA Code of Ethics and Ethics Board” and the implementation of good governance requirements for European Athletics Member Federations. All were approved unanimously by the 50 Member Federations in attendance in a show of support for the leadership which is committed to driving forward the agenda for change upon which President Hansen was elected.

The final order of business was the approval of Prague, Czech Republic as the host city for the next European Athletics Congress in 2019.

“We have to show to the world that our governance is the best and transparent and always open to improvement”

President Svein Arne Hansen
PLAQUE OF MERIT AND GOLDEN PINS AWARDED

Seven outstanding servants of our sport were honoured at the European Athletics Congress.

Italian Roberto Quercetani received European Athletics’ highest open accolade becoming just the 28th person to receive the Plaque of Merit. The honour was inaugurated in 1995 and is awarded to persons who have given outstanding service and assistance to the development of athletics in Europe.

Six recipients of the European Athletics Golden Pin were also honoured, taking the total number of men and women receiving this accolade to 61. Hungary’s Imre Matharazi, one of athletics’ foremost technical officials was recognised for his contribution to the sport and to the success of major events in his native country.

Israel’s Jack Cohen was the General Secretary of the Israel Athletics Association for more than 20 years from 1996 to 2017 before, earlier this year, becoming the federation’s Director of International Relations. Montenegro’s Milorad Vučetić first came to recognition as a multiple Montenegrin champion at 800m, 1500m and cross country before moving into sports administration. He has been the President of his national athletics federation since 2006.

Serbia’s Snezana Pajić-Jolović, was the 1987 and 1989 European U20 1500m champion before becoming the 1990 European 1500m champion just a few days before her 20th birthday. She moved into sports administration and is currently the Vice President of the Athletics Federation of Serbia.

Sweden’s A Lennart Julin is a renowned statistician and broadcaster, the Vice President of the Association of Track and Field Statisticians, and has been closely involved in the sport since the early 1970s when he began work at the Swedish Athletic Association with a brief to coordinate their statistics. Ukraine’s Olexander Mashchenko was awarded the European Athletics Golden Pin posthumously after his untimely death in July at the age of 38. Mashchenko was a TV producer and commentator in Ukraine and often referred to as his country’s ‘voice of athletics’.

“I am tired of the cynicism that exists around our sport”

Diane Modahl
As they look back on 2017, organisers of the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championships can feel satisfied with progress to date but they know that a great deal of work remains. The year started with the announcement of a sporting schedule packed with exciting finals and gold-medal moments for television. That was the platform for broadcast partner and host broadcaster Eurosport to build relationships with national broadcasters.

The response was positive and, at a media launch event in London in the summer, major networks including the BBC in the UK, and ZDF/ARD in Germany, committed to giving the championships the full big event treatment. By the end of the year agreements had been signed with broadcasters in all the major European markets meaning that around 250 to 300 hours of programming will be available to a potential audience of more than 1 billion people on radio, television and digital platforms.

April saw the launch of the volunteer programme in Germany which ran through the year and was part of wider efforts to raise the public profile of the championships. Also in April, the sports federations and broadcast partners met to coordinate a series of promotional campaigns and the launch of the hashtag #TheMoment.

The success of these campaigns could be measured through ticket sales and as 2017 closed ticket and hospitality sales were at record levels topping 125,000 for the first time ever. Never have so many tickets been sold so far in advance of
Opposite: Berlin's Olympic Stadium will be the venue as history is made in August
Above: Athletes Karsten Warholm, Ekaterini Stefanidi, Konstanze Klosterhalfen and Balazs Baji looking forward to the European Championships

“Jürgen Kessing, President of the German Athletics Federation commented: “I am delighted that 125,000 tickets have already been sold so far. In the history of the European Athletics Championships, such a great pre-sale result has never been seen seven months before the start of the event. Congratulations to the entire organising team of Berlin 2018 for their outstanding work.”

Frank Kowalski, Managing Director of the Berlin 2018 European Athletics Championship is feeling both excitement and pressure at what lies ahead in the coming months.

“Our goal is to host the best track and field championships ever in August 2018. For this, we are working as a team with a lot of passion and commitment at Berlin 2018. We are looking forward to exciting and busy months ahead which we will tackle with great momentum behind us.”

Berlin 2018 is working closely with European Athletics Member Federations and is well advanced with preparations to welcome athletes, officials and spectators to the Olympic Stadium. Excitement will build in the coming months among athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and fans who will be ready to raise the roof in Berlin in August.

“I am delighted that a record 125,000 tickets have already been sold”
Jürgen Kessing
Laura Muir
The reigning European indoor 1500m and 3000m champion will hope to build on a superb 2017 with her first outdoor title. She is still improving and could be the one to beat in Berlin.

Karsten Warholm
Norway’s rising star will only be 22 at the European Championships but he will go into the event as the reigning world 400m hurdles champion after winning gold in London last year in 48.35.

Sandra Perkovic
The Croatian discus star has won everything in a glittering senior career since 2010, including four successive European titles. She will be aiming for an unprecedented fifth consecutive title in Berlin.

Paweł Fajdek
Poland topped the medal table at the last European Championships in 2016 with Fajdek winning one of their six gold medals in the hammer. With Anita Wlodarczyk in the women’s hammer, Poland is tipped to take a sweep of the titles in this event.

Dafne Schippers
Schippers was the fastest European woman over 100m and 200m in 2017. The reigning 100m European champion from 2016 will be looking to repeat her sprint double from 2014.

Kevin Mayer
2017 was the best year of his career as the French multi-eventer lived up to his promise with gold in Belgrade and London. He will have to fight off local challengers in the form of Rico Freimuth and Kai Kazmirek who will want to please the crowd in Berlin.
Main: Great Britain’s Laura Muir, European indoor record-holder over 1000m and 3000m
Right: Croatian discus star, Sandra Perkovic

“I hope the Championships are successful for everyone”
Karsten Warholm

Dutch sprinter Dafne Schippers
Hammer champion, Paweł Fajdek from Poland
When the Serbian capital, Belgrade, was awarded the 2017 European Athletics Indoor Championships back in 2014, Veselin Jevrosimovic, President of the Athletics Federation of Serbia, told President Svein Arne Hansen that they would be the best organised in the event’s history, and staged in the most beautiful stadium. He admitted that some were sceptical at the time but Belgrade pulled off a significant achievement in March.

On the eve of the event, President Hansen described the arena as “the best indoor facility I have ever seen.” This was no idle comment as Hansen has been to every European and World Indoor Championship since the 1980s so he should know.

The endorsement was backed up by European Athletics CEO Christian Milz who praised the work of Local Organising Committee President Slobodan Brankovic and his team who had done, he said, “a fantastic job”. During the competition itself a large and enthusiastic crowd watched as Rio 2016 Olympic gold medallist Belgian, Nafi Thiam set a pentathlon PB to take gold, Great Britain’s Laura Muir do the double in the 1500m and 3000m and set two championship records in the process, and Kevin Mayer of France added to his Olympic silver medal with gold in the heptathlon and a new European record. But the biggest cheers of the weekend were reserved for local heroine Ivana Spanovic who made it three European long jump golds in a row. Her winning jump of 7.24m was the longest for almost 30 years and the crowd raised the roof when the result flashed up.

Outside the stadium, the European Athletics Indoor Championships enjoyed a big rise in TV audiences with an increase in coverage from 29 European national broadcasters translating into a 16 per cent increase in total hours viewed on the previous edition in Prague two years ago.

President Hansen heralded the figures as showing athletics remained relevant and engaging especially to a younger age group. “I am especially pleased that the biggest proportion of the viewers were in the 25-49 years age group. This contradicts the view that athletics is predominantly being watched by a mature audience.

“We still need to look at improving our TV presentation to engage further the young adult audience of 15-24 year-olds but the figures from Belgrade show that we are going in the right direction.”
"I didn’t win a gold medal before at senior level so this is a really emotional event for me. I am proud to have heard the French national anthem playing again."

Kevin Mayer
“It’s the bang; it’s so short and there’s no room for mistakes”
Asha Philip
Local heroine Ivana Spanovic gave the crowd something to cheer about.

Opposite: Poland’s shot put gold medalist Konrad Bukowiecki

Great Britain’s Asha Philip wins the 60m.
“The biggest proportion of the viewers were in the 25-49 years age group showing that we are going in the right direction”

Svein Arne Hansen
BELGRADE EUROPEAN ATHLETICS INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Opposite: Poland’s winning relay team
Left: Sweden’s Susanna Kallur runs her final race
Below: Izmir Smajlij wins the men’s long jump for Albania
TEAM TRIUMPHS IN LILLE

A thrilling competition over three days in June at the Stadium Métropole Européenne de Lille saw Germany reclaim the team title they won in 2014.

Despite winning performances from Melina Robert-Michon in the discus and Renaud Lavillenie in the pole vault, hosts France were edged into third place by a dominant German team in the European Athletics Team Championships Super League in June.

Those stalwarts of German athletics including Robert Harting in the discus and Gesa-Felicitas Krause in the steeplechase were joined by emerging talents Konstanze Klosterhalfen in the 1500m and Max Hess in the triple jump to top the points total with a resounding 321.5. Seven individual victories over three days gave them a 26-point lead over closest rivals Poland with 295, their highest ever points total despite the absence of their Olympic champion Anita Włodarczyk.

Poland’s score could have been higher had they not suffered two early disqualifications – in the women’s 100m hurdles where Karolina Koleczek false-started and in the men’s 800m where Adam Kszczot’s victory was annulled for stepping off the track – although the overall result would not have changed.

Hosts France, missing the sprint talents of Jimmy Vicaut and Christophe Lemaitre due to injury, had to be content with third place after
Top left: Max Hess of Germany helps Germany to the top of the table.
Left: Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic throws a season’s best in the men’s javelin.
Above: Great Britain’s Harry Aikines-Aryeetey wins the men’s 4x100m.
However, the French crowd were buoyed by Mickael Hanany's winning performance in the high jump and Carole Zahi's victory in the 100m. Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch upset the form book in the javelin with a season's best of 87.95m and Britain's track specialists Harry Aikines-Aryeetey and Dwayne Cowan took victories in the 100m and 400m respectively. There was another big performance from European Athletics Athlete of the Year, Ekaterini Stefanidi winning the pole vault for Greece and Lisanne De Witte of the Netherlands who chased down European list-leader Olha Zemlyak of Ukraine in the 400m.

Elsewhere, Sweden topped the European Athletics Team Championships 1st League in Vaasa, Finland where the hosts’ consistency saw them secure second place. Switzerland, in third place also earned promotion to the Super League for the first time. A huge performance and a 66-point winning margin for Hungary in the 2nd League in Tel Aviv saw them promoted and they were joined by Slovakia, who won their second promotion in a row, and Lithuania who bounced back from relegation two years ago.
EUROPEAN ATHLETICS TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

Below: Israel finished a creditable sixth in Tel Aviv.

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Luxembourg were convincing winners of the European Athletics Team Championships Third League in Malta.
A VITAL SPRINGBOARD

The European Athletics U23 Championships in Bydgoszcz proved their value as a transition from youth to senior events.

There were records and memorable performances in abundance at the European Athletics U23 Championships in Bydgoszcz, Poland in July. The hosts performed brilliantly as a collective, winning three gold medals – and ten in total – to finish equal second on the medal table. Konrad Bukowiecki set championship records of 21.26m and 21.59m to win the shot put title on home soil, Ewa Swoboda maintained her brilliant championship record with 100m glory and then, on the final afternoon, the nation’s 4x400m relay team landed a fabulous victory in the women’s event. There were championship records too for Turkey’s Yasemin Can in the 5000m and 10,000m and Slovakia’s Jan Volko in the 200m.

In the end it was Germany who topped the medal table with four golds – Marius Probst and Konstanze Klosterhalfen in the 1500m, discus thrower Claudine Vita and the men’s 4x100m relay – to go with their six silver medals and eight bronze medals for a total of 18 from Great Britain and Poland, who were joint second with 10 apiece. In total, 23 Member Federations won gold medals in Bydgoszcz along with Klavdiya Afanasyeva in the 20km race walk, who was competing as an Authorised Neutral Athlete.

History was made in the triple jump when Nazim Babayev of Azerbaijan became the first male athlete from his country to claim gold in U23 championship history and Simo Lipsanen of Finland smashed his country’s national record set in 1968. The championships were a springboard to immediate stardom at the World Championships for Norway’s Karsten Warholm who won the 400m hurdles in a new championship
“It is hard to go from youth straight to seniors. Championships such as this one are a transition”

Ojie Edoburun
"Wherever you looked in Bydgoszcz there were amazing stories"

Ewa Swoboda claimed gold on home soil in the 100m and she will still be eligible to defend her title in 2019.
Yasemin Can did the double by winning both 10,000m and 5000m.
“It is a dream. I have made that podium in the past but not won the gold. I am so happy”

Carlos Mayo

Left: Spain’s Carlos Mayo sprinted to victory in the 10,000m

Slovakian sprinter Jan Volko won the 200m in a championship record of 20.33
No fewer than 30 of the 51 Member Federations won medals at the European Athletics U20 Championships in Grosseto, Italy in July. Eighteen countries struck gold demonstrating just what an impact the sport has had among the new generation across the continent.

The weather was beautiful and the scenery picturesque but what will live longest in the memory were the quality of performances. History shows that the medallists at U20 level are often among the top three at the U23 Championships so there will be some new athletes to watch in the Swedish city of Gävle in 2019.

Two world U20 records were set, both on the final day. Germany’s Niklas Kaul put together a stunning tally of 8435 points in the decathlon, a triumph clinched with a personal best by more than six seconds in the 1500m at the end of two gruelling days. His compatriots Katrin Fehm, Keshia Kwadwo, Sophia Junk and Jennifer Montag were on scintillating form in the 4x100m heats knocking 0.02 off a 2006 mark set by the USA and the quartet won gold by more than half-a-second.

Three other championship records were set, all in the men’s field events with Belarus’ Maksim Nedasekau, Sweden’s Armand Duplantis and Ukraine’s Hlib Piskunov entering new territory in the high jump, pole vault and hammer respectively.

The individual male and female performers of the championships were Norway’s Jakob Ingebrigtsen and Great Britain’s Maya Bruney. Bruney became the only person to climb the podium three times in Grosseto with a 200m gold and helped earn bronze for Great Britain in both the women’s relays.

EMERGING TALENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT IN GROSSETO

The European Athletics U20 Championships produced high quality performances and had a big economic impact.
Ingebrigtsen was the only individual double gold medallist with an unprecedented 3000m steeplechase and 5000m double, although Italy’s Vladimir Aceti and Ukraine’s Anastasiya Bryzhina won 400m titles and then helped their countries to 4x400m gold medals.

The prodigious Norwegian is still only 17 and eligible to compete at the next European Athletics U20 Championships in 2019.

A study commissioned by the Italian Athletics Federation after the event revealed that more than €8 million was injected into the local, regional and national economy as a result of staging the four-day event last July. The study highlights the economic and social benefits of staging continental and global athletics competitions.

“Armand Duplantis set a new record and headed to London on a high”
“Hosting the U20 Championships added €8m to the local economy”
Italian Athletics Federation
Cyprian Mrzyglod won the javelin title with a Polish U20 record of 80.52m.
“Jakob Ingebrigtsen delivered one of the performances of the championships”
SAMORIN SPAR EUROPEAN CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS SET A NEW STANDARD

With sustainability and legacy projects on show along with some great racing, Samorin ensured 2017 closed on a high.

Samorin, Slovakia, was the stage for the SPAR European Cross Country Championships in December. A record number of nations and athletes took part in the 24th edition at the x-bionic sphere where just a day before a group of budding young athletes had contested the final of a nationwide Kids’ Athletics project. The event was organised as part of legacy initiatives to introduce young people to athletics and a healthy lifestyle.

When the main event got going it was a superb day of racing. Athletes were greeted by sub-zero temperatures and a biting wind but that did not prevent them from delivering some hot performances. In the first race of the day, Great Britain’s Harriet Knowles-Jones improved on her silver and bronze medals from 2015 and 2016 with a dominant display in the U20 race, defeating Hungary’s Lili Anna Toth and Germany’s Miriam Dattke. In the men’s U20 race Norway’s reigning champion Jakob Ingebrigtsen was the hot favourite but left it late relying on his sprint finish to defeat Turkey’s Ramazan Barbaros.

In the women’s U23 race, German teammates Alina Reh and Konstanze Klosterhalfen were inseparable until the last 70 metres when Reh powered away from her teammate who was looking for a third individual title at the European Cross Country Championships. Reh and Klosterhalfen will now focus on the Berlin 2018 European Athletics...
Left: Harriet Knowles-Jones finally makes it gold
Top: A one-two for France’s Hugo Hay (l) and Jimmy Gressier

“In the past I didn’t have the same confidence as I did today and I have learnt from my mistakes”

Jimmy Gressier
SAMORIN SPAR EUROPEAN CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

[Image of athletes shaking hands]

[Image of two athletes giving thumbs up]
Championships where she will be competing on the track. European U23 track champions Yemaneberhan Crippa from Italy and Spain's Carlos Mayo had to settle for third and fifth in the men's U23 race as France took a surprise one-two through Jimmy Gressier and Hugo Hay. With a fourth place too, France easily won the team title and their teammates joined in with the celebrations.

Turkey's Yasemin Can romped to the women's senior title, becoming just the second athlete in championships history to retain her title. Sweden's Meraf Bahta outsprinted Norway's Karoline Bjerke Grovdal for silver. In the men's senior race, Turkey's Kaan Kigen Ozbilen showed his determination to defeat Spain's European indoor 3000m champion Adel Mechaal and Great Britain's Andrew Butchart.

In the inaugural mixed relay, Cameron Boyek put the British team into a commanding lead on the second leg before Sarah McDonald and Tom Marshall maintained their pole position to claim Britain's fifth gold medal of the day.

“"My opponents were really strong this year and gave me a good run”

Jakob Ingebrigtsen.
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EUROPEANS LED THE WORLD AT THE IAAF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

London 2017 witnessed winning performances, national records and personal bests from Europe’s top athletes.

European athletes took 18 gold medals at the IAAF World Championships London 2017 in August, more than any other Area Association, and won 37.5% of 48 events contested. The titles won by Europeans were split between the genders, with ten golds in men’s events and eight in women’s.

Six gold medals came on the track with Great Britain’s men’s 4x100m relay team taking a stunning win over the USA; eight in the field events where European women took the top eight places in the high jump; two on the roads with France’s Yohann Diniz and Portugal’s Ines Henriques winning the 50km race walk gold medals with breathtaking performances; and two in the combined events with France’s Kevin Mayer and Belgium’s Nafissatou Thiam respectively winning the decathlon and heptathlon titles.

Europe’s throwing strength has not diminished over recent championships, with Europeans winning both the men’s and women’s discus, hammer and javelin. Success was repeated further down the podium with 17 silver and 18 bronze medals achieved by European athletes.
“Proud to offer Belgium its 1st world gold medal ever! Had an amazing time in London stadium: what an atmosphere!”

@Thiam_Nafi
“The guys ran superbly tonight and left everything on the track so it gave me a relatively easy job to bring it home.”

Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake
Four European Member Federations were in the top 10 of the medal table, with France leading the way in fourth place and Russian athletes competing as Authorised Neutral Athletes in ninth helped by Golden Tracks nominee Mariya Lasitskene who took gold in the women’s high jump.

No fewer than 18 European countries celebrated winning at least one medal in London, more than a third of European Athletics’ 51 Member Federations. Another 12 Member Federations had athletes finish in the top eight of an event.

Europeans featured heavily in the superlatives as well. Henriques posted a world record in the inaugural major international championship appearance for a women’s 50km race walk. Her time also went into the history books as a world-leading time, European record, Portuguese national record and championship record.

Diniz also set a championship record in the men’s 50km race walk with the second fastest time ever while Great Britain’s 4x100m winning quartet of CJ Ujah, Adam Gemili, Danny Talbot and Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake combined to run a world-leading time and European record of 37.47.

As well as Henriques’ magnificent world record, European athletes set 12 national records, six world-leading marks, two championship records and two European records in London.
GRAN CANARIA EUROPEAN THROWING CUP

THROWERS SET TOP MARKS

Strong performances on show in Grand Canaria as throwers demonstrated excellent early season form.

European throwers ended 2016 strongly so expectations were high for the first major throwing event of 2017, the European Throwing Cup in a warm and sunny Las Palmas. Julian Weber produced one of the performances of the weekend, setting an early season world-leading mark of 85.85m. Moldova's Adrian Mardare made a breakthrough in the U23 javelin, improving on his own national record.

German throwers were also favoured in the women's javelin but lost out to the experience of Martina Ratej from Slovenia. It was left to an U23 athlete, Croatia's Olympic javelin champion Sara Kolak to set the best mark of the weekend.

Another big name in action was perennial global medallist Melina Robert-Michon, who notched up a noteworthy win in the discus. Her teammate Alexandra Tavernier won the hammer from German veteran Kathrin Klaas with another French athlete, Quentin Bigot, winning the men's competition.

Austria's Lukas Weisscheidinger recorded a top class throw to win the men's discus ahead of Lithuania's Andrius Gudzius and, fresh from defending her European indoor shot put title, Hungary's Anita Marton went past the 18-metre line ahead of France's Jessica Cerival and European indoor bronze medallist Yulia Leantsiuk from Belarus. Sweden's Fanny Roos won the U23 competition.

There was a good quality men's shot put competition with former European U20 champion Mesud Pezer from Bosnia & Herzegovina taking victory with a lifetime best from home favourite Carlos Tobalina. Overall, Italy and France won the men's and women's senior team competitions while Germany topped the standings in both U23 competitions. The next European Throwing Cup will be in Leiria, Portugal in March.
“This is an important competition for me and for the team. It’s like a little gift in winter”

Melina Robert-Michon
The Czech spa town of Podebrady, which has seen some of the most memorable race walking competitions down the years, played host to the 12th edition of the European Race Walking Cup in May. The town, which has been associated with race walking for 120 years, has not rested on its laurels and it organised a top-class meeting which saw Antonella Palmisano, Christopher Linke and Ivan Banzeruk take the three senior individual gold medals.

Italy’s Palmisano was the favourite for the women’s 20km and she dominated from the gun. The Rio 2016 Olympic Games fourth-place finisher took her first senior title with a time of 1:27:57 after coming to prominence at the 2010 IAAF World Cup when she lifted the U20 title in Mexico.

In the senior men’s 20km Linke’s time of 1:19:28 showed how much he loves Podebrady. Three first places and a second on this course in the last two years suggests the German finds this circuit a home from home. Behind him was reigning world and European champion Miguel Angel Lopez and Perseus Karlstrom from Sweden. Spain took the team title with Linke’s win helping Germany get the silver medal.

The senior men’s 50km went to form with Banzeruk playing the waiting game and then striking at 38 kilometres to establish an unassailable lead before finishing in 3:48:15. His team-mate Ihor Hlavan upped the pace in the closing stages to take silver and bronze went to Italian, Michele Antonelli.

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RACE WALKING MECCA IS THE PERFECT STAGE

Palmisano, Linke and Banzeruk take the honours in Podebrady.
PODEBRADY EUROPEAN RACE WALKING CUP

“I love it here in Podebrady. This is my time to shine”
Christopher Linke

Top left: Christopher Linke at home in Podebrady
Right: Antonella Palmisano dominated from the gun
Below: Ivan Banzeruk bidding his time before breaking away from the pack.
IBERIAN ATHLETES TAKE MINSK BY STORM

With gold in the women’s race and a clean sweep in the men’s it was all smiles for athletes from Portugal and Spain in the Belarusian capital.

With a turn of speed her rivals could not match, Portugal’s Sara Moreira won the women’s race for the third time at the European 10,000m Cup in Minsk in June while Antonio Abadia led a Spanish clean sweep in the men’s race also securing the team title. But there was equal delight for the host nation as their women took team gold. Olympic marathon runner Volha Mazuronak led the way, finishing second individually on a day to remember for Belarus.

This year was the first time that Belarus played host to this annual event which marked 20 years since it was staged for the first time – under its former name of the European 10,000m Challenge – in Barakaldo, Spain. For Moreira, it was a second major win in less than a year after she claimed the inaugural half marathon title at the European Athletics Championships in Amsterdam.

Reigning champion Esma Aydemir from Turkey took third spot with German veteran Sabrina Mockenhaupt finishing fourth.

Spain arrived in the Belarusian capital with a strong men’s team on paper and so it proved as Abadia pulled away from compatriot Juan Perez on the last lap to finish in 28:31.16 while Carlos Mayo finished third in a lifetime best time to ensure a Spanish clean sweep for the first time in event history.
“I was delighted the stands were full for a brilliant afternoon of athletics”
Svein Arne Hansen
KAMNIK MOUNTAIN RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIPS

In July, the European Mountain Running Championships was staged in Slovenia for the first time since the event came under the European Athletics banner in 2002. The town of Kamnik in the north of the country played host to the 16th edition of the championships with over 200 athletes competing on the demanding, predominantly uphill, course in the adjoining Kamnik-Savinja Alps.

The men’s competition had been dominated by Italy for many years and their flag was flown in 2017 by Xavier Chevrier. He led Portugal’s Luis Saraiva with another Italian, Francesco Puppi, a close third. However, two in the top three was not enough to lift the team medal which went to France ending a 15-year Italian reign.

In the women’s competition, Switzerland’s Maude Mathys emphatically defeated one of the all-time greats of the discipline in Austria’s Andrea Mayr. Mathys won from Great Britain’s Sarah Tunstall, who led her nation to team gold as she finished second with Mayr a distant third. Mayr has worn this crown on four occasions, including her hat-trick of wins between 2013 and 2015, but this time it was Mathys who showed such tenacity in a championship where so much was about going uphill.

The U20 men’s route followed the same course as the senior women over 8.5km, with Romania’s Gabriel Bularda taking gold. Bularda had a battle with Italy’s Daniel Pattis but was 23 seconds ahead at the finish.

The U20 women’s race over 4.5km brought the most comprehensive win of the day for 17-year-old Lisa Oed of Germany; and there was a second women’s team gold for Britain, even though none of their athletes made the top five. Oed won by a minute as she crossed the line ahead of Turkey’s Bahar Atalay.

Macedonian capital city of Skopje will stage the 2018 edition of the European Mountain Running Championships on 1 July.

PICTURESQUE BUT PUNISHING MOUNTAIN RUN

The Kamnik-Savinja Alps in Slovenia were the spectacular backdrop for the European Mountain Running Championships.

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Top and bottom Xavier Chevrier shows the way in the mountains
Top left; Junior winner Daniel Pattis
Left; Senior women’s team winners Great Britain flanked by Italy and Austria
MULTI-EVENTERS BATTLE IN TALLINN AND MONZON

July was the turn of the combined event specialists to represent their national teams in the Super League, First and Second Leagues.

Tallinn, Estonia was the scene for Europe’s top decathletes and heptathletes to compete for their national teams in July. The European Combined Events Team Championships featured four decathletes who had scored over 8000 points in their careers with the two most in-form being Ukraine’s Oleksiy Kasyanov and Estonia’s own Janek Oiglane.

Kasyanov went out strongly in the men’s event on day one of the competition, historically his strongest, but had rivals still in sight as day two dawned. Behind him, two Estonians were looking to deliver the team medal for locals to celebrate but it was all to play for. By the end of day two the positions had reversed with Oiglane delighting crowds by winning the individual title after putting in a score of 8170 points, and high-scoring Ukraine taking top spot in the team competition.

In the women’s competition, reigning world U18 champion Geraldine Ruckstuhl from Switzerland led after the first day and started strongly on day two. However, Ukraine’s Alina Shukh was the star performer across the final three events and moved from fourth overnight to first place before finishing with a lifetime best score of 6208.

In the European Combined Events Team Championships First League held in Monzon, Spain, there was a victory for the Netherlands in the team competition but celebrations for Spain too, as second place earned them promotion to the Super League. For the Netherlands, it was Nadine Broersen who led the way for the team with a score of 6236 in the heptathlon whereas it was Spain’s Jorge Ureña who inspired the hosts in the decathlon.

In the Second League, also held in Monzon, Lithuania and Latvia made it a one-two for the Baltic states as they earned promotion to the First League.
“Alina Shukh hit the heights in Tallinn with a lifetime best score”
Switzerland’s Geraldine Ruckstuhl had a strong championships.

Ukraine’s strength in depth delivered the team gold medal in Tallinn.

“I had a good first day and lots of positive energy to take into day two”
Janek Oiglane
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It was tight at the top in Brno, Czech Republic on a wet Saturday in September, as U20 athletes from Europe’s top clubs fought it out on the track and in the field. Although Turkish club Fenerbahce Sport Club was triumphant in both the men’s and women’s competitions, the margin of victory was four points for the men and just three for the women.

Fenerbahce’s men left it late but did just enough in the final event of the day, the 4x400m, to ensure the title was theirs. Although there were some individual performances to celebrate, victory was ultimately down to consistency throughout the team who scored valuable runners up points in the last race on the track to top the table.

The women of the Turkish club scored a fourth successive victory beating host club AK Olympic Brno. They achieved four individual victories and a points total which put them ahead of the field. There were some brilliant individual performances with Belarusian hammer thrower Aliaksandr Shymanovich showing his class in the field and European U20 champion Maya Bruney and clubmate Isabella Hilditch winning the 200m and 100m hurdles.

By contrast with the rain of Brno, the clubs of Group B competed under cloudless skies in Leiria, Portugal. Leiria has staged a group of this competition for six consecutive years and rolled out the red carpet once again.

The men of ASK Slavia Praha and women of PAC from the Netherlands triumphed. ASK Slavia Praha were winners by 24 points ahead of Slovenia’s AD Mass Ljubljana who join them in promotion as some compensation for the relegation of their female colleagues. It was closer in the women’s competition, as Rotterdam-based club PAC took the glory by seven points from Finland’s Tampereen Pyriinto.

TURKISH DELIGHT IN BRNO

Men’s and women’s team honours go to Fenerbahce at the European Champion Clubs Cup Track and Field U20 Group A.
“We take this competition seriously as a club; we’ve fielded a really strong team”

Maya Bruney

Athletes representing clubs from Turkey, Denmark, Portugal, Spain, Great Britain and the Netherlands battling for honours in track and field.
The Portuguese coastal city of Albufeira hosted the 54th staging of the European Champion Clubs Cross Country event in February putting on a great spectacle and some sunny weather into the bargain. So it was with temperatures close to 20°C as the event got underway over a twisting course, passing through forest stages and a valley between close-packed hills.

In the men’s event, the strength in depth of Turkey’s Istanbul BBSK meant another top team finish was always on the cards although they were edged out of the individual medals by challengers from Italy, Portugal and Spain. Italy’s Yemaneberhan Crippa, who was a U20 gold medallist at the 2015 SPAR European Cross Country Championships, achieved a major senior title with a powerful win. He won by nine seconds from Sporting Clube de Portugal’s Rabah Aboud and Atletismo Bikila’s Ayad Lamdassem with the team title going to Istanbul BBSK.

Turkish club Üsküdar Belediye were chasing a hat-trick of team titles in the senior women’s race. Last year in Kastamonu, Üsküdar won courtesy of a one-two from Irene Cheptai and Özlem Kaya. Both were in the squad again but only Cheptai was able to repeat her 2016 result as she won a third gold at this event.

Anna Mark Helwigh secured a memorable win from Pınar Demirtaş and Gülnaz Uskan.

There were some familiar names and some young challengers in Albufeira for the European Champion Clubs Cross Country.
Yemaneberhan Crippa achieved a major senior title in Albufeira

Irene Cheptai and Özlem Kaya make it a one-two for Üsküdar Belediye when finishing comfortably ahead of Trihas Gebre of Bilbao Atletismo and Esma Aydemir of BBSK. Kaya’s fifth place meant Üsküdar retained their team gold.

In the U20 men’s race, a close-run victory by 19-year-old Ramazan Barbaros was one of the best results of his career. Running for Fenerbahce Sport Club, Barbaros came home just 0.74 ahead of Spaniard Mario Garcia, whose run helped bring team gold for Playas de Castellon.

In the U20 women’s event, Denmark celebrated individual glory and team bronze with Turkey taking team gold and silver. 16-year-old Anna Mark Helwigh, running for Sparta AM, put her best foot forward to secure a memorable win from Pinar Demirtas of Fenerbahce Sport Club and Gülhnaz Uskun of BBSK who retained the team crown.

“Yemaneberhan Crippa came of age in this competition”
The programme of Outdoor Permit Meetings promised an exciting summer. The reality was even better.

The curtain was raised on the European Athletics Outdoor Permit Meetings season with a double date in June in France and Greece. The Paris suburb of Montreuil staged its regular international meeting and Athens held the 5th edition of its popular Street Pole Vault event.

French sprinters took the plaudits on home turf with Christophe Lemaitre winning his first 100m of the year in 10.18 and Carole Zahi following suit in the women’s event with a time of 11.26. In the field, French athletes were beaten off the top spots with Paweł Fajdek showing fine form in the hammer and Natalya Semyonova holding off Melina Robert-Michon with a throw of 60.97m in the discus.

At the 17th European Athletic Festival in Bydgoszcz Justyna Święty and Damian Czykier were among the local athletes who thrilled the home crowd on the track and Konrad Bukowiecki showed rivals his strength in the shot put.

Local talent was on show in Prague where Tomas Stanek claimed victory on home soil with 20.98m and Barbora Spotakova (62.88m) and Jakub Vadlejch (87.21m) delivered a Czech double in the javelin. Then in Marseille, Jimmy Vicaut continued his early season form with 10.02 in the 100m.

Poland’s athletes set the standard in Szczecin with European indoor 1500m champion Marcin
Lewandowski winning over 800m in 1:47.06 and beating his compatriot and rival Adam Kszczot, while hammer throwers Anita Wlodarczyk and Pawel Fajdek extended long unbeaten runs in the field.

Croatia’s Sandra Perkovic was back to winning ways throwing 69.58m in Velenje, Slovenia setting up a realistic tilt at the world title and, at Sweden’s Sollentuna Grand Prix, history was made as Daniel Stahl broke a national discus record that had stood since 1984 and moved up to ninth on the world all-time list with a throw of 71.29m.

The season reached a dramatic conclusion as five European athletes took victories in Rovereto, Italy. Spanish triple jumper Pablo Torrijos, equalled his national outdoor record, Ukraine’s 2013 European U20 champion Kateryna Tabashnyk hit the heights with 1.95m in the high jump, Great Britain’s Dwayne Cowan won the 400m in 45.63, Germany’s Tobias Scherbarth cleared 5.35m in the pole vault and Latvia’s Lina Muze was the women’s javelin winner with a throw of 60.18m.

“It was a great atmosphere in Velenje. It was good training for the world championships”

Sandra Perkovic
French athletes Jimmy Vicaut and Melina Robert-Michon impress on home turf in Marseille.

Poland saw some of the best Permit Meetings action with the Janusz Kusocinski Memorial in Szczecin (top right) and the Athletics Festival in Bydgoszcz.
“It feels wonderful, a legendary day at Sollentuna”
Daniel Stahl
INDOOR PERMIT MEETINGS

2017 was the year of the European Athletics Indoor Championships so the series of Indoor Permit Meetings took on added significance as European athletes worked to find their form under the roof.

Iceland’s former European U20 800m champion Anita Hinriksdóttir delighted her home crowd winning over four laps in 2:01.08 at the Reykjavik International Games. It was her sixth successive win at Iceland’s annual indoor multi-sport festival.

In the field, Ásdís Hjálmsdóttir – although better known as a javelin thrower – won the shot put just outside her own Icelandic indoor record. The highlight of the men’s events saw Denmark’s 19-year-old sprinter Kristoffer Hari speed to a 60m time of 6.69 in his first ever indoor race. Great Britain’s Daniel Gardiner won the long jump while Iceland’s Guðni Valur Guðnason took the shot with a personal best.

Teenage prodigy Alina Shukh won the International Combined Events Meeting in Tallinn with a world U20 pentathlon record of 4542 points. Another impressive teenager on display in Tallinn was Sweden’s Bianca Salming in second place. Estonia’s Kristjan Rosenberg won a thrilling heptathlon duel against Austria’s Dominik Distelberger with a personal best 5986 points.

The third of the season’s nine indoor permit meetings was the All Star Perche in Clermont Ferrand. The pole vault spectacular, promoted by three-time European champion and world record holder Renaud Lavillenie, saw Canada’s Shawn Barber clear 5.83m to take the honours while Sandi Morris from the USA won the women’s competition with 4.71m. European champion Ekaterini Stefanidi from Greece and Switzerland’s Nicole Buchler were second and third.
Łódź, Poland was the venue for the first Orlen Cup athletics meeting. Among the highlights Czech vaulter Jan Kudlicka and USA high jumper Inika McPherson both impressed. In the pole vault, two phenomenal Poles: Piotr Lisek and Paweł Wojciechowski wowed the crowd along with other great Polish stars Ewa Swoboda and Kamila Lićwinko.

Ruth Beitia, Orlando Ortega and Adam Kszczot all showed fine form with impressive wins at the Villa de Madrid indoor meeting. Beitia dominated the women’s high jump at the last of the Indoor Permit Meetings this winter winning on home soil with a season’s best of 1.98m.

Ortega delivered a confident performance setting up an eagerly anticipated duel in Belgrade between himself and Great Britain’s 2017 world leader Andrew Pozzi. Kszczot was an impressively easy winner of the 800m in 1:46.38, running away from the rest of the field in the last lap.
Ewa Swoboda storms to victory in Łódź while her compatriot Konrad Bukowiecki continued to hit his marks at the same event (below right).

Guðni Valur Guðnason, another local favourite to win in Reykjavik.
“I always feel pressure competing at home but I’m very happy with the way I finished the race”
Anita Hinrikisdóttir

French champion Renaud Lavillenie at his own pole vault show in Clermont Ferrand
At the Nordic Cross Country Championships in Middelfart, Denmark in November, Sweden’s Napoleon Solomon won the men’s senior race comfortably. Over 9km, he took control and won by 17 seconds from fellow Swede David Nilsson, the pair helping Sweden to the team title.

In the senior women’s 7.5km, 20-year-old Sara Christiansson had one of the best results of her young career, winning by seven seconds from Finland’s Camilla Richardsson and fellow Swede Maria Larsson. Their performances gave Sweden the team crown as well.

At the Sparkassen-Cross in Pforzheim, Josina Papenfuss earned her place on the German team for Šamorín winning the women’s U20 ahead of Lisa Tertsch. In the men’s U20 race over 6.6km, Somalia-born Ilyas Yonis Osman was the runaway winner but Markus Gorger and Nick Jaeger booked their tickets to Slovakia finishing second and third.

In the senior men’s 9km, Patrick Karl sprinted home ahead of Jannik Arbogast who did claim the German University Championships title as a consolation. The women’s senior race went to Germany’s Elena Burkard who beat Kenyan Betty Chekwony. Elsewhere, Germany’s Alina Reh and Konstanze Klosterhalfen went head-to-head at the Darmstadt Cross with Reh the narrow victor.

Germany’s Richard Ringer and Czech Republic’s Simona Vrzalova took the honours at the CrossAttack 2017 in Salzburg. Austria’s Albert Kokaly won the men’s U20 race over 6.49km while Hungary’s Lili Anna Toth took the women’s U20 race over 4.6km.

At the Cross L’Acier in Leffrinckoucke, France and the Campo a Través Internacional de Soria in Castilla-Leon, Spain the senior victors were runners from East Africa with Bahrain’s Ethiopian-born

Kenya’s Margaret Chelimo took the honours in Leffrinckoucke
Below: In Soria Ayad Lamdassem led home the European contingent with compatriot Daniel Mateo
“Running is the most beautiful thing I know and it is an honor to be standing on the podium”

Napoleon Solomon
Sweden’s Sara Christiansson with one of the best wins of her career in Middelfart.

Nuria Lugueros took a brilliant second place in Soria.
“Next year, I hope to return to the track and want to run in the European 10,000m Cup”

Nuria Lugueros
RACE WALKING MEETINGS

Ahead of the European Athletics Race Walking Cup there was a great deal at stake in Dudince, Slovakia and Podebrady, Czech Republic which both staged Race Walking Permit Meetings.

Norway’s Havard Haukenes recorded what must be regarded as the biggest win of his career to date at the 36th staging of the famous race walking event, the Dudinska 50, in March. Haukenes finished fourth in this race last year but is improving with every race at the 50km distance. His performance in the Slovakian town twelve months ago was a precursor to a seventh-place finish in the Olympic Games - by far his best placing in a major event - and the 26-year-old made another big improvement here setting a world-leading mark and lifetime best of 3:43:40.
History was made in Dudince as Agnieszka Ellward became the first woman to complete the 50km there finishing in 4:52:56.

While the 50km walk took centre stage, there were also 20km races on the programme. Lithuania’s Gennadiy Kozlovskis won the men’s event while his compatriot Zivile Vaiciukeviciute won the women’s race in a national U23 record of 1:33:23.

The following month it was the turn of the home of race walking, Podebrady, to stage its meeting. Germany’s Christopher Linke won over 20km on the course which would also stage the European Race Walking Cup the following month. Linke won in some style beating his previous best by 20 seconds with France’s national champion Kevin Campion producing a lifetime best of his own in second ahead of Hagen Pohle, also of Germany.

Vaiciukeviciute led the way for Europe in the women’s race by finishing third as she increased her reputation with a national U23 record as Colombians Sandra Galvis and Yaseida Carrillo landed a one-two. And, after Linke’s glory, there was further success for Germany in the 10km races. Leo Kopp won the men’s race from France’s David Kuster and Poland’s Łukasz Niedzialek, while Teresa Zurek triumphed emphatically in the women’s almost three minutes faster than France’s Camille Aurrier and Finland’s Enni Nurmi.
NEW RACES, NEW RECORDS

With more races being certified and more runners than ever, Running for All had a big year in 2017.

Running for All and the European Athletics safety and quality standards continued to show their relevance and importance in 2017 as new races were added and record numbers showed their support for certified races.

One of the earliest races of the year, the 5-star certified Seville Marathon was bigger than ever with a record 13,700 runners taking part in February. The Spanish city welcomed runners from a record 77 countries - and five continents - who came in search of fast times and personal records on the famously fast and flat course that finishes inside the stadium which played host to the 1999 World Championships.

The 5-star certification guarantees a large number of runners a comprehensive level of safety and security, and high quality services, and gives them confidence that the experience will be a positive one. The European Athletics Quality Road Race standards act as an assurance for road runners throughout Europe. They distinguish between races that respect the standards and those that haven’t sought certification or assessment. They form the foundation of Running for All which has become a strong recognisable brand for running activities throughout Europe.

The Seville Marathon was first staged over 30 years ago but one race determined to carve out its own piece of history was the new Birmingham International Marathon held for the first time in 2017. The event hit its marks from the start with 5-star certification part of the appeal that saw 20,000 runners sign up for its inaugural edition, making it the biggest ever running event staged in the city.
Birmingham had regularly played host to top-quality half marathons in the past but this was the first time the city had gone the full distance. The marathon reached capacity months ahead of the start in October after attracting entrants from across the globe. The runners set out on their journey from the famous Alexander Stadium which stages the annual IAAF Diamond League event and British Championships.

As the year came to a close many thousands of European runners were celebrating the festive season the best way they know: by running. From the 5-star Mersin Marathon or the São Silvestre in Lisbon to the 1-Star Nytårsløbet in Odense, Running for All races were getting Europeans moving everywhere.
Above: The Seville Marathon attracts record numbers.
Top right: Runners in Odense get fit in the festive season.
Right: Children first at the Mersin Marathon in Turkey.
European Athletics events continued to be a great platform for spreading the message of environmental sustainability.

The message of Green Inspiration was on the lips of organisers of European Athletics events in 2017 as it has been for the past several years. One of the biggest events on the 2017 calendar was the European Athletics Indoor Championships and organisers worked hard to incorporate high environmental standards throughout their preparation. This was clearly demonstrated through the Belgrade volunteer programme where 450 volunteers took part in a 'Jump 2 Score Green' a sustainability drive initiated by ENGSO (European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation) Youth in cooperation with European Athletics and inspired by the Green Inspiration initiative.

The goal of the initiative is for all participants to generate fresh ideas about how they can contribute to their own neighbourhood in order to keep the planet more green, more safe and more inclusive. Volunteers will also have the chance to understand how sporting events can be more sustainable from an economic, social and environmental standpoint. Working with volunteers to spread positive messages about the environment affects not just them and their families but reaches potentially thousands of fans who come into contact with the event.

At the end of the year, Samorin’s state-of-the-art x-bionic sphere was the venue for the SPAR European Cross Country Championships in Slovakia. As well as being a modern sporting facility used by athletes from across the globe, x-bionic sphere prides itself on its sustainability credentials. The facility produces green electric power from an on-site biogas power...
plant which powers the facility’s aquatic sphere and the x-bionic hotel – where athletes and officials stayed during the championships – and a cogeneration unit based on natural gas covers the demand for heat within the resort.

The venue is also an exclusive user of mineral thermal water pumped from a well some 1400 metres below ground. Not only is it a source of natural healing power for the site’s planned medical spa house, it is another foremost source of heat in the resort.

As a consequence of these features, the environmental footprint of the event was much reduced. The championships were a prime example of how European Athletics events and nature preservation can work together.
SPAR, the principal sponsor of European Athletics Indoor Championships in Belgrade, once again organised its SPARK Kids’ Athletics Park alongside the main event. The popup area was based around an indoor track and field concept called Sportshall aimed at kids aged 4-16. There were workshops at the SPARK tent and the area also included the popular Nutrition Zone tent dedicated to promoting and encouraging healthy eating.

SPARK was first launched at the 2010 European Athletics Championships and has appeared at several events including the Amsterdam 2016 European Championships. SPARK is run in partnership with the Female Coaching Network (FCN) and included training guidelines for young athletes and their parents.

At the other end of the year, organisers of the Samorin 2017 SPAR European Cross Country Championships used the event to run a dedicated children’s event. The Kids’ Athletics initiative run just ahead of the Championships was the climax of a nationwide project involving 118 Slovakian schools and athletics clubs contesting a mixed relay race similar in style to the inaugural mixed relay being staged at the championships. There were eight regional heats with the final involving 96 Slovak children running on the championship course at the x-bionic sphere.

The initiative, which embodies European Athletics’ mission statement of Your Sport For Life, was a key component of the Slovak Athletic Federation’s presentation which helped win them hosting rights to the SPAR European Cross Country Championships.
Special running events for children and families are a popular feature of mass participation events around Europe. The trail blazed by these and many other European Athletics events was followed at mass participation runs around Europe especially the many hundreds of Running for All events. There were dozens of children running 1km alongside the Sommerløpet in Kristiansand, Norway, in August, there were kids distances organised as part of the BIGBANK Run Latvia, a Mini Marathon in Copenhagen and a wide range of children’s athletic activities alongside the Running Festival in the U23 Championship host city of Bydgoszcz. European Athletics Council is keen to support more Kids’ Athletics activities into 2018 and beyond. In its first Focus Federation Programme presentation from the Belarus Athletic Federation, the Council studied its highly regarded 300 Talents for the Queen Kids’ Athletics national schools’ competition as an example of good practice.
2017 was the year of I Run Clean™ across all of European Athletics activities, meetings and events. The idea of athletes making the pledge has been familiar for a while as bibs have been worn at each recent event. But last year that message was given more substance when, after two years of work with athletes and experts, the I Run Clean™ anti-doping e-learning platform was launched.

Developed with input from athletes, sport officials, educationists and doping control experts, the easy-to-use online programme can be accessed through computers, tablets and smartphones from the I Run Clean™ platform (www.irunclean.org). It was designed to reinforce and support the anti-doping education programmes offered by federations, national anti-doping agencies and other organisations. It is part knowledge base and part diploma giving every athlete the chance to learn and to play their part in the fight against doping.

Starting from now, all athletes are invited to stand up for their sport and make the I Run Clean™ pledge by completing the programme and earning their diploma. Language versions are being launched and, from 2018, the diploma will be a mandatory qualification for European Athletics' age group championships. By 2020 all athletes will be expected to have completed the programme if they want to compete in European Athletics events.

Britain's 800m 1990 Commonwealth Games champion Diane Modahl and Estonia's 2000 Olympic decathlon gold medallist Erki Nool are both ambassadors for this platform as European Athletics takes another big step in the battle against drugs in the sport. They encouraged all athletes to take the programme.

“European Athletics have been very brave to launch this e-learning platform,” said Modahl. “It is very much focused about the athletes themselves making a pledge to run clean. And you cannot get any more simple than that.”
Estonian Olympic decathlon gold medallist Erki Nool shares a platform with Great Britain’s 800m Commonwealth champion Diane Modahl to promote I Run Clean™.

Nool said: “I think right now we have a very good and very simple platform for all ages, from young kids of 10 or 11 upwards. It is very easy and simple to handle and this main point, the first step is education which is so important.”

The I Run Clean™ education programme comprises eight user-friendly modules covering anti-doping rules, doping control procedures and issues such as dietary supplements and Therapeutic Use Exemptions. The programme starts with an innovative unit stressing values and good decisions, making it unique among current anti-doping education programmes. Athletes who complete all eight modules earn their diploma. Both Modahl and Nool supported extending the programme to cover coaches, volunteers and medical teams too and this is a development which is sure to follow.

“*We have a very good and simple platform for all ages. The first step is education which is so important*”

Erki Nool
GETTING EUROPE RUNNING

International melting pot of ideas at the 1st European Running Business Conference.

A truly international speaker panel was assembled for the first ever European Running Business Conference in Frankfurt. Almost 300 delegates joined them to share ideas on the main theme of the event: the commercial expansion of mass participation running events.

Delegates were from a wide variety of backgrounds – international federations, national federations, race organisations, sports industry specialists, sponsors and other stakeholders – but they were united in exploring the future of running in Europe and helping the community to grow.

Speakers from as far afield as the USA and Japan gave presentations and facilitated discussions over two information-packed days culminating with a look behind the scenes at the Mainova Frankfurt Marathon.

Day one was focused on Running For All and boosting the involvement of non-elite or recreational runners. After opening addresses from European Athletics President Svein Arne Hansen and IAAF CEO Olivier Gers, the first presentation, from Carlo Capalbo, President of the RunCzech organisation, addressed the question ‘The World of Running – Where are we Heading?’

He presented data which suggested that the number of marathon runners in many European countries has plateaued since 2013 and identified opportunities over shorter distances, especially 10km and half marathon.

After a breakout session of workshops on topics as diverse as trail running and beer miles, delegates reassembled for a hugely entertaining address from Søren Runge of the Mikkeller Running Club. He showed how to engage recreational runners by combining running with beer drinking – stressing, to huge applause, that both should be enjoyed extensively but in moderation. ASICS’s Jan Erik Kruse also explained his company’s FrontRunner project which uses role models to combine community values into an effective business model.
We are asking the question: ‘Running - where are we heading?’

Carlo Capalbo
Guy Horne, Lagardère Senior Director of Media Production and himself a former international marathon race director, and Running USA CEO Rich Harshbarger provided additional insights into the present and future of the running movement in the Asian and North American markets, and how they might influence or impact on Europe.

The day concluded with two business-orientated case studies with Golazo CEO Bob Verbeeck, himself a top class middle-distance runner in the 1980s, and former Senior VP of the US-based Competitor Group Tracy Sundlun – the inspiration behind the Rock ‘n’ Roll series of road races – relating their own experiences as senior executives of for-profit companies focused on running events.

AN INSPIRATIONAL SECOND DAY

Mainova Frankfurt Marathon race director Jo Schindler opened day two and reflected on the innovations that have made his race one of the most prestigious in the world.

Analytics, digital technology and media were next on the agenda with a quartet of different speakers approaching the subject from four different angles.

It was then the turn of some of the top minds in the industry to take the stage. Bob Verbeeck joined London Marathon CEO Nick Bitel, Tokyo Marathon race director Tad Hayano and AIMS President and Valencia Half Marathon race director Paco Borao to provide insights into the way they manage and stage their races.

In the afternoon a series of 10-minute pitches from a group of new businesses and innovators in the running industry was followed by a look at Sport for All strategies. This brought to the stage Burson-Marsteller’s Alexander Bielefeld, IAAF Road Running Manager Alessio Punzi, Danish Athletic Federation director Jakob Larsen and German Athletics Federation Vice President Matthias Reick.

Verbeeck and Borao closed proceedings along with IAAF Road Running Commission Chair Carlo Capalbo, Competitor Group former Senior Vice President Tracy Sundlun and European Athletics Vice President Jean Gracia for a high-level Leadership Panel Q&A.

Some of the delegates were interviewed for TV at the end of the conference and the word used most often in reply to the question: “What do you think of the conference?” was “Inspiring!”

It is hoped that inspiration will be followed by local innovations which can be showcased at future editions.
The ever-popular Coaching Summit Series was as well supported as ever in 2017 with dozens of coaches from around Europe attending. And with scholarships available to cover fees and travel there was no excuse for coaches not to take advantage of what was on offer.

The series started in October with the International Festival of Athletics Coaching in Formia, Italy where among the speakers were Danie Cornelius, Head of Programme at TuksAthletics. His organisation was responsible for one of the most inspirational stories in sport and Danie retold it brilliantly recounting Luvo Manyonga’s journey from drug addict to long jump gold.

Cornelius was joined by Danny Kerry who coached Team GB women’s hockey team. He gave a searingly honest account of his experience of building and developing a team, of giving them ownership and the kind of responsibility that took them from 11th in the world to Olympic gold at the Rio 2016 Games.

The Series continued in November with the European Horizontal Jumps and Hurdles Symposium which saw 125 coaches making the trip to Falun, Sweden where they were greeted by an impressive lineup of speakers. They included the USA’s Loren Seagrave, one of the most renowned speed coaches in the world who gave a very well-received practical and theoretical presentation.

One of the highlights was a keynote speech from Dr. Wolfgang Ritzdorf where he shared the results of his report examining results from the first edition of the IAAF World U18 Championships and how the top-eight ranked athletes in each event developed over the following four years.

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

Frank Dick
A combination of keynotes, lectures, theoretical and practical sessions in Italy, Sweden, Great Britain and Finland.
“Athletes think differently today so coaches must revise their methods to remain effective”

Frank Dick
Next in the Series was the inaugural European Throws Conference at the National Performance Institute in Loughborough, Great Britain. Consultant hammer coach for British Athletics, Tore Gustafsson, kicked off the speeches with insight into how to take an athlete from good to great before the ‘Father of Functional Sports Training’ Vern Gambetta spoke on developing the complete throwing athlete.

In between the keynote speeches, Gustafsson and Gambetta along with Ryan Spencer Jones - the man behind Paralympic champion Aled Davies - Goldie Sayers’ former mentor Mike McNeill and top British coach Andy Neal delivered practical sessions.

The series concluded with the Pajulahti Endurance conference held at the Olympic Training Center in Pajulahti, Finland. One of the leading names at the conference was renowned Italian middle distance coach Gianni Ghidini, coach to 2008 Olympic 800m champion Wilfred Bungei from Kenya and 2015 world 800m bronze medallist Amel Tuka from Bosnia & Herzegovina. His keynote speech focused on the different training methods he employed in the build-up to their lifetime best performances.

The conference also included a lecture from Johan Wettergren, the head coach of Swedish distance running. Wettergren outlined the key points of the training programme followed by Lovisa Lindh in the build-up to her Swedish 800m record: a focus on endurance combined with strength-training and race pace-running as well as the importance of training in a group environment. The feedback from all the events was uniformly positive and plans are already being made for the next series in 2018.
Members from around Europe gathered in Vienna for a meeting of high performance coaches.

A total of 84 participants from 50 countries gathered in the Austrian capital for the European Athletics High Performance Conference in March. The three-day conference was jointly opened by European Athletics President Svein Arne Hansen and Austrian Athletics Federation President Sonja Spendlhofer before a wide range of topics covering all aspects of the sport were addressed by some of the continent’s most respected and renowned coaches.

The opening day focused largely on national systems and best performers with the chance to compare notes and review the practice of some of the most successful athletic nations. Former German national coach Wolfgang Ritzdorf focused on jumps; FIDAL high performance director Elio Locatelli focused on the best national systems for sprints, running and walks; while leading German coach Rene Sack focused on the throws.

Renowned coach and speaker Frank Dick began the second day by providing medal analysis from major championships last year within the framework of the current Olympic cycle. He was followed by DLV head coach Idriss Gonschinska looking at the transition from the U20 to senior ranks. Former Polish 400m runner Piotr Haczek then used case studies of three medallists to present their career path through timelines and performance targets before Head of Sports Physiology of the Aspire Academy in Doha, Marco Cardinale talked about the development of high performance systems.

Performance factors featured throughout the event and alongside presentations there were workshops on the role of therapists, doctors and physiologists; clubs, federations and managers; and media and sponsors in the context of high performance.

European Athletics Vice President Jean Gracia closed the conference saying: “This conference is important for the development of European Athletics and its Member Federations in the field of athletes’ high-performance.”
November saw the Coaches Management System Seminar held in Cologne, Germany, but before that, in May, it was the final edition of the Women In World Athletics (WIWA) Seminar in London. This annual development programme has been running since 2013 and has been a source of support and advice for women who are transitioning into leadership positions in athletics.

With seminars on a range of important areas including action planning, leadership career development, mindfulness and vision it has been attended by 120 women since its inception. The closing seminar in May attracted 55 delegates from 22 countries and mood was one of celebration. It focused on the success of the programme with discussion points ranging from sharing individual journeys, focusing on vision, inspiring others, how to effect change and becoming an agent of change.

European Athletics and British Athletics have collaborated on the event to ensure a mix of female coaches, officials, event volunteers, competition administration staff and event management staff have been represented on the programme. The purpose of the final three seminars was to move participants from reflection to action in pursuing their goals. A number of delegates shared their journeys with others outlining the impact that WIWA has had on their personal development.

Speaking about the WIWA programme, Cherry Alexander, Major Events Director at British Athletics and Managing Director of London 2017, said: “The Women in World Athletics Seminar has been an incredibly successful development programme for all of the women who have attended from around the world.”

“A strong network has been an important part of the journey throughout the programme, and it is inspiring to see the strength of that network grow, providing an invaluable tool for the development of each delegate.”
AWARDS

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The annual European Athletics Coaching Awards celebrates the important contributions made by coaches to the sport of athletics and are the centerpiece of European Athletics’ strategy to promote coaching at all levels of the sport. Coaches of each European champion in the senior category are automatically nominated for an awards. Member Federations are also invited to nominate one additional male and female candidate who in their view represent excellence in coaching. Last year, a total of 40 coaches representing 25 Member Federations will receive the award.

Aldona Dobregiene and Viktoras Meskauskas from Lithuania were invited to the Golden Tracks to be the first to collect their awards as representatives of all the winners. They received their awards from European Athletics Vice President Jean Gracia and the remaining winners will receive their awards at national ceremonies in the upcoming months.


As he received his award from Lord Coe, President of the IAAF, Alekna said: “Twenty years and big sport! It was the best time of my life and thank you for this award.”

COACHING AWARDS

The central role played by coaches was rightly celebrated with awards together with the very first lifetime achievement honour.

IAAF President Sebastian Coe presented discus legend Virgilijus Alekna with the first Golden Tracks Lifetime Achievement award.

In 2018 the European Athletics Championships will be part of the 2-12 August multisport European Championships.

Join us in Glasgow and Berlin to celebrate Europe at its best!

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Athletes of the Year were not the only ones to be given awards at the Golden Tracks gala in Vilnius. Joining them was special guest Nijole Medvedeva from Lithuania who accepted an award on behalf of women’s leaders at Member Federations throughout Europe.

The biennial European Athletics Women’s Leadership Awards were created in 2009 to promote the development of women leaders and gender equity in the sport and recognise their achievements.

Each Member Federation was asked to identify one woman whose work and accomplishments as an administrator, coach, volunteer or elected official marked her out as a leader in athletics. The main criterion was “a significant contribution that serves as an example of leadership and other values of the sport of athletics” and women’s leaders representing 19 Member Federations will be honoured for their contributions.

Medvedeva received her award and artwork prize from Vice President Jean Gracia. She was representative of all the national winners who will receive their awards and artwork prizes in local ceremonies organised by their national federation.
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