ACHIEVING TOGETHER OUR SHARED AMBITION

Candidature for the presidency of European Athletics
Jean Gracia

www.shared-ambition-athletics.eu
Vision

Europe, a driving force for World Athletics.

Athletics is a universal sport that combines emotion, excellence, performance and aesthetics. We all love our sport. It has made our heart pound with excitement, it has helped us grow up and become the women and men we are today. We owe a lot to Athletics.

European Athletics is a front-runner in World Athletics. This is obviously true from an historical point of view, but it has also always known how to reinvent itself.

We must continue to build on our strengths and develop them. The world is changing, needs are changing and we must always be one step ahead.

The progress we have achieved in recent years should enable us to be more innovative and to be able to better anticipate future challenges. European Athletics must position itself as a real incubator for ideas and new projects.

If I may speak frankly, the main idea is not merely to make European Athletics a stronger Federation. My project is first and foremost to make its members, the Federations, stronger and better prepared to meet tomorrow’s challenges. It is European Athletics’ role to accompany them and help them, of
course, but also to benefit from the ideas of those that succeed. No two Member Federations are alike. Each has its own personality, and we will need tailor-made programmes to move ahead together and give Athletics the means to remain a major – essential – sport. **We will be stronger together. We will leave no Member Federation lagging behind.** We will show solidarity to one another. When our Federations grow in strength, with the appropriate resources and projects for development, European Athletics will be even more effective and hold all the cards to remain a key player, recognised throughout the world of European sports and international Athletics.

**Three factors should, in my opinion, form the basis of the work to be accomplished:**

- **Consultation** – decisions should never be taken unilaterally.
- **Solidarity** – we must help Member Federations build their development projects, and support them in their structural decisions.
- **Pooling ideas and good practices** – providing technical resources, sharing good practices, especially in marketing, coaching, education, communication and public relations.

European Athletics should also continue to set the tone and the direction, by proposing an ambitious development plan that can be easily adapted by the Member Federations. The key to our success will depend on a harmonious development policy, a balance between high-level sport, education, health and the growth of activities such as road-running.

The aim, of course, is to avoid the Member Federations developing at different speeds, with the risk that some won’t keep up. But it is also to diversify, to grow, to secure our income, to submit projects to public institutions and private sponsors and thereby increase our eligibility for national and European funds.

As you know, the work that has been accomplished up until now has enabled us to put together a number of outstanding projects, thus confirming our organisation’s position and stabilising our financial resources. And I would like to thank Hansjörg Wirz and all his team for that! We cannot, however, sit back and consider these achievements as an end in themselves. We have successfully completed a major stage in our development, but a stage nonetheless. **We must now share our ambitions and move forward together to pursue our growth.**

With your approval, this is the direction I would like to commit to, with you, and for you. I will put this project into practice by bringing in the largest number of key players in European and International Athletics, to listen to them, share with them and develop strong ethical standards.

“This is my project for our sport, Athletics.”

Jean Gracia
Candidature for the presidency of European Athletics
Experience

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**EDUCATION**
Languages: French, English, Spanish and Catalan

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**
Professional experience at Texas Instruments (semiconductor design and manufacturing company) from 1977 till 1992. Different positions within this company: Technical Officer, Engineer, Business Analyst and IT Project Manager.

**IN ATHLETICS**

**ATHLETE**
National level athlete from 1972 to 1984, member of the local club in Cannes (Athletic Club de Cannes) since 1972. National record-holder of 50m indoor in 1979 (5’82) and still National University record-holder of the 4 x 100m relay with the performance of 39’07 realised during the University Games in Mexico City in September 1979 (bronze medallist).

**SPORT ADMINISTRATION**

**Local level:** Council member, Vice-President and President of the Athletic Club de Cannes from 1973 till 1996, Vice-President of the Côte d’Azur Regional League from 1984 till 1992.
**National level:** Member of many national commissions from 1987 till 2014, Executive Director at French Athletic Federation from 1992 till 2001, General Director from 2001 to 2014, Director of President’s office since 2014.
**European level:** Vice-President of European Athletics since 2011, Member of Development Commission since 2003, Member of Reflection Commission from 2007 to 2011, Chairman of EA Development and EA Clubs Commission since 2011.
**World level:** Member of IAAF Competition Commission from 2007 till 2011, Member of IAAF Development Commission since 2011, Member of IAAF Masters Commission since 2013


**General Director of other EA Events organised in France** such as the EA Congress in Paris in 1995 and in Cannes in 2007.

Born on 23 September 1955 in Sabadell, Spain
French nationality
Married, one child
The key to our success will depend on a harmonious development policy.
We must now share our ambitions and move forward together.

With 40 years experience in Athletics and following my visit to all 50 European Athletics Member Federations and exchanges with their Federation Leaders, I am ready to propose a programme based on four main areas:

**COMPETITION & HIGH PERFORMANCE**  
Read pages 8 & 9

**YOUTH & HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**  
Read pages 10 & 11

**GOVERNANCE & ETHICS**  
Read pages 12 & 13

**PROMOTION & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**  
Read pages 14 & 15

To achieve this programme, we have to continue to strengthen the European Athletics head office as well as the future commercial strategy of EA, which needs to be reviewed and consolidated.
Competition & High Performance

Europe is the historical birthplace of Athletics and continues to host the world's biggest competitions. Competition is, and will continue to be, our core business. It is the very essence of our sport: high performance, major championships, competitions between our European elite and the rest of the world. And athletes constantly seeking to surpass themselves.

And yet, the framework of its organisation and development is constantly changing, technically, economically and in terms of media coverage, and we must adapt our approaches to this environment, while guaranteeing ethical practices.

**Concrete Proposals**

- **Continue to change the qualification process for European Championships**: our top competition should not be an isolated one every two years, we should integrate the top national competitions and create a circuit of European Trials.

- **One-Day meetings in Europe have to be reviewed** in order to increase the participation of European athletes. They should also be totally integrated in the qualification process for European Championships.

- **Continue the work with IAAF** in order to allow Member Federations to include their sponsors on the national uniform during World Championships.

- **Initiate special programmes** to help the Member Federations to improve weaker European events.

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**Achieving together our Shared Ambition**
media, and sports spectators, who know beyond their passion for sport, have a growing range of entertainment to choose from.

Heightened competition from other sports, which may appear better suited to television coverage, or easier to follow, should convince us of the need to adjust some of our regulations to make Athletics even more attractive. European Athletics must take an active approach to this and put forward concrete proposals.

We will learn from everything we attempt to address on a European level, rules and regulations, competition formats, whether the changes are put into application at world level or not. European Athletics must play an active role in structuring our competitions, by adopting a determined, innovative approach in connection with the IAAF. In the same way, the various European Championships must be developed in terms of planning, budget, image and organisation. The way the international calendar is organised must be the subject of a general discussion with all stakeholders.

Once improvements have been made and Athletics competitions are easier to follow, they will be of greater interest to audiences, partners and media. Beyond simply adapting the regulations, the challenge lies not only in securing financing, but above all in coming up with solutions that will enable European Athletics to mobilise more resources. Among the tools we can use to generate interest in our sport, the integration of new information and communication technologies must be stepped up, not just for one event, but throughout the season, to maintain exposure to the media and our audiences.

If European Athletics competitions are more appealing, our finest youngsters will be more interested in following them, and more motivated to pursue Athletics intensely. This is essential, as today’s young athletes will be the stars of tomorrow. A major effort to seek out and accompany the finest young talents in all our Member Federations must be strongly encouraged. To that end, and in close cooperation with the existing bodies in each country, we must be able to suggest some simple tools that can be implemented on a European scale.

Despite willpower and energy, competition and outstanding performances are difficult to achieve without the appropriate facilities. We must establish the most comprehensive inventory possible in each country to enable us to draw up a European infrastructure plan. In certain areas, Athletics facilities need to be created or renovated. European Athletics must help the Member Federations involved in their discussions with national authorities, so that in the medium term, each country, however small, will have its own Athletics stadium.

Our goal to optimise competitions and aim for outstanding performance must be achieved within a healthy, well-defined framework, which excludes any form of deviancy.

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The importance of leisure and healthcare has been growing in all sports. Over the past few years, there has been a real change in the way sports are practised: people are more focused than they used to be on the pleasure and well-being procured by a sport activity. European Athletics has adapted to that change and we can be proud of that. Some Member Federations have been experimenting with new initiatives, which are already bearing fruit, in public health, education and social integration. Straightforward, fun ways of running workshops and Athletics programmes open to all can now be used by Member Federations throughout Europe. It is naturally part of our social role to be active players in these areas, but it is also a way of convincing our corporate and institutional partners of just how useful we can be beyond the entertainment and high-performance aspects of sport. It is now up to us to find the financing required to be even more effective and to make European

CONCRETE PROPOSALS

To work closely with IAAF in the expansion of the Kids’ Athletics tool (or similar) and the launch of Teens’ Athletics in Europe.

To continue the Running for All project which includes the Quality and Safety Standards System and the integration of road races within the Member Federations.

To organise European Running Championships including a mass race open to the public.

To develop European programmes models to integrate the masters and to address major issues such as: sedentary lifestyles, fight against obesity, diabetes & heart diseases and social integration.
Athletics indispensable among all those involved in national sports and educational policies.

We must come up with turnkey programmes for all Member Federations, while at the same time taking their distinctive national features and contexts into account. We are fortunate enough to have an image and a range of activities that are widely supported, from traditional disciplines, such as Nordic walking, to physical preparation, and, of course, road running. For these audiences, the main priority is no longer to compete with other athletes, but to improve their physical condition and even to meet new groups of people. The large majority of them do not belong to their National Federation. But this shouldn’t stop us from including them in our approach. These non-competitive activities have major potential for the development of our sport, as well as being a source of financing. They enable us to reach schools, seniors, people who suffer from a disability, and others who are isolated or in difficulty.

Runners form the largest group of these amateur athletes. There are hundreds of thousands of them throughout Europe. It is essential that we have an approach geared towards road-running to gradually bring this practice closer to our European Athletics Federations. Certain national Federations have already done this. We should now expand the project that is common to – and coherent across – all those countries. The Quality and Safety Standards System which has just been launched by European Athletics is the first stage for Member Federations to work closely with the Race Organisers and to integrate road-running within their Federation. Ultimately, a circuit could be created with races in each country, which would bring European runners together. Introducing a range of innovative services and specific advice would demonstrate the know-how of the Athletics Federations.

The stakes are high and the challenge will be a difficult one to take up, but this sector has major potential for development. It is a sure-fire way of diversifying our activities, but also new sources of income. We have the skills. We now have to pass them on and set up new training models that meet the European population’s expectations, in all their diversity. Sports practised at the highest level or for fun are complementary. They couldn’t exist one without the other. If we all agree on that, we will be a lot stronger.

Introducing a range of innovative services and specific advice would demonstrate the know-how of the Athletics Federations.

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EUROPEAN ATHLETICS, A TASK FORCE FOR PUBLIC POLICIES
Governance & Ethics

The World we live in is changing and the pace of that change is gathering speed. It is not technological progress alone, but the political and economic stakes, lifestyles and consumption trends that make us increasingly reactive and mindful of society. Europe’s diversity and different cultures are its strengths. We must take all these differences into account in our project, and ensure that no Member Federation is neglected. To that end, Athletics provides us with an extraordinary asset: it is a universal sport that can be practised anywhere by everybody at any age and in many different ways.

To make European Athletics a success together, we must be able to share our ambition through a development plan that has very specific goals and is regularly assessed. This strategy will ensure lasting growth.

Our structure must be organised so that everyone involved is able to play their role in line with their particular competencies: the Member Federations, the members of the European Athletics Council, the
different commissions and working groups as well as the permanent staff who work in our head office and throughout Europe. Once our development goals have been approved, it will be up to the EA Council to put them into application: each Council member will have an active role and clearly defined responsibilities in line with their areas of excellence. We will continue to strengthen our office in Lausanne as well as the future marketing structure. The orientations we establish will require the integration and professionalisation of specific skills.

**European Athletics must turn more towards its Member Federations to listen to their expectations, their specific issues and priorities.** It is essential that we work together more closely to develop and shape the services we can provide for them. No Federation can work without the appropriate structure and legitimacy. Our role is to propose a method and a framework plan that each one can then appropriate for its own development (Federation structure, clubs system, target audience, priority goals, etc.). We must also help our Member Federations to put their case to their national authorities and institutions (Ministry, National Olympic Committee…), to ensure that their projects secure the necessary financing.

We must define and agree on a number of objectives to achieve the best possible cooperation with the Member Federations. Tailor-made education will be necessary to take everyone’s requirements into consideration. Educational programmes and initiatives will be devised for all the people concerned (leaders, coaches, technical officials, …). These will be specific to each Federation or group of Federations, who will then be able to draw on the others’ strengths and experience. Sharing ideas is an essential component of this and must be stepped up across the board.

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Because doping is inequity, because doping is dependence, because doping is unhealthy athletes, therefore **European Athletics will guide and support all Member Federations** to build-up together with both retired athletes community and present athletes community a healthy and equal Athletics world.

**Improving the ways in which European Athletics operates and is run on the strategic, decision-making and operational fronts will enable our structure to progress, and by working closely with our Member Federations be even more effective. Above all, this should empower each Member Federation to pursue its goals in greater harmony.**

**A shared ambition for European Athletics Federations!**
Athletics is a universal sport that enjoys an image of being accessible to everyone, aesthetic, and offering athletes and audiences alike the pleasure of exceptional performances. It is European Athletics’ role to defend and promote that image at European level.

Communication is essential if we are to be recognised by national, European and international authorities. There is a wide and varied range of communication channels, and their number is growing, and becoming more diversified. The media change every year and reach an increasingly wide variety of audiences. European Athletics must become a source of suggestions and proposals in this area, even more than elsewhere, to open up new paths, while at the same time maintaining our expertise in the traditional media, such as television.

Communication and promotion are resources that can easily be pooled and shared. Our overriding objective is for our communications to be

**CONCRETE PROPOSALS**

- To increase our eligibility for European Union subsidies.
- To set up a real lobbying and public relations programme.
- To include the European IAAF Council Members in the strategic choices made by European Athletics.
- To develop corporate communications (and improve our communications on European Athletics’ actions).

**Achieving together our Shared Ambition**
consistent and defend the same values. By creating a “tool box” for Member Federations that will be available on the Internet, we will be even more effective and able to offer a top-quality service, including for those federations with more limited resources.

In conveying a positive image that corresponds to the expectations of the European public, we will continue to inspire vocations and to interest institutions and national decision-makers. We still have too many events and initiatives, which although of a very high quality, are not sufficiently promoted or given enough coverage.

To that end, we must consider setting up a lobbying and public relations programme. We must expand our network of opinion leaders and contacts in all major public bodies, companies in the sports world, and politics to share our know-how and enjoy the recognition necessary to deploying our actions.

We cannot work in a vacuum, and must open up more. European Athletics cannot expand without relations with the world around it, including in Athletics. We must therefore step up our cooperation with IAAF and the other areas. Regular contacts with IAAF should result in joint discussions at all levels of responsibility and on all subjects. There is too little contact for the moment, and we have everything to gain from working together on the choices we will have to make tomorrow for our sport.

If we and our peers from other European Athletic bodies all take on board our distinctive cultural, political and sporting features, we should be able to work together on a shared approach in which everyone participates. We must pool all our experience and good practices. We must understand specific national features and weigh up the benefits in all the areas in which we seek to engage, if we are to gain greater exposure by enjoying a global image that is compatible with national characteristics.

We must not communicate for communication’s sake, but do so in the name of a global development project. In this way, European Athletics will be considered as a first-tier interlocutor, recognised for the quality of its projects and its organisation.

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