DELIVERING CHANGE
January 2018
DELIVERING CHANGE

THIS IS MY THIRD annual review of progress on the agenda outlined in my 2015 election manifesto ‘Leading Change’ and I am happy to say that the 12 months covered have been a great year for European Athletics and for the sport of athletics around the world.

As an organisation, we have made real progress in the work to secure our financial future, modernise our operations and make athletics ‘Your Sport for Life’ throughout Europe. Our sport delivered many great events, the highlight being last summer’s wildly successful IAAF World Championships in Athletics on European soil in London. But most importantly, it really seems like the public’s attention returned to our athletes and their performances after a dark period in which disturbing news from off the track dominated the media.

From my perspective, I see 2017 as a year of success and satisfaction even if we still have a lot of hard work to do and challenges to address in the future. The feedback I have received from our Member Federations and others in the sport during my travels has confirmed my impression.

Much of the content of this brief overview has already been covered on the European Athletics website or in the Inside Track newsletter, but it is important for transparency and accountability to bring the main points together in one document.

The report follows the same basic structure of the manifesto and previous years’ reports and includes scorecards for each of the five priority agendas summarising the current status of the projects promised. If more detailed information is required on any aspect of our work I invite you to contact me, our CEO Christian Milz or any of the members of our Executive Board. We will all be happy to assist you.

Thank you very much for your interest and support.

Svein Arne Hansen, President
AT THE START of 2017 I was convinced that European Athletics and the sport of athletics would be able to build on the turnaround year we had experienced in 2016. I was confident that the reform process to address the sport’s doping and integrity issues and the general optimism of the people I was meeting would eventually see athletics emerge better, stronger and more popular than ever.

However, I did not anticipate the truly wonderful year we had. Characterised by great events, continued organisational development and real progress on the priority agendas of my 'Leading Change' election manifesto, 2017 was a year of success and satisfaction exceeding my expectations.

IT'S ALL ABOUT COMPETITION

Rightfully, the IAAF World Championships in Athletics will be the high point most people remember best. Ten days of sold-out sessions with a total of more than 700,000 spectators, an electric atmosphere in London’s Olympic Stadium and record media audiences provided evidence that athletics is truly back in the game and that our product engages today’s audiences.

The popularity of athletics in the host country and the importance of major events were confirmed in an end of year survey conducted by the respected international market research company YouGov, showing that the British public finds athletics to be the most exciting of all sports (well ahead of football, tennis and rugby). If we can do that in the home of Premier League football, I would say we have a chance in most other countries.

Inspired by the opportunity to compete in a world championship close to home, European athletes rose to the occasion. They won 18 gold medals and took 36% of all the medals on offer, making Europe once again the strongest of the IAAF’s Area associations.

But 2017 was special for so much more than London. Most notably, we in European Athletics staged our programme of successful events, each with its own memorable moments and achievements. These included the European Athletics Indoor Championships in Belgrade, the European Athletics Team Championships in Lille and three other venues, the U23 championships in Bydgoszcz, the U20 championships in Grosseto and the Spar European Cross-Country Championships in Samorin.

They all created headlines about the athletes’ performances and they all delivered real value to the host cities and partners. This was confirmed in one case by the impressive results of a study commissioned by the Italian athletics federation, FIDAL, showing that the four-day European Athletics U20 Championships injected more than €8 million into the local, regional and national economy.

As always, we have to thank our local organising committees for their great work and each of our Member Federations for their support. We also have to acknowledge the much valued contributions of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and our commercial partners Spar and Le Gruyère AOP.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Away from the competition arenas, the year was characterised by consensus, cooperation and productive work to move our organisation forward. A major focus was the European Athletics Congress in Vilnius, where the Council and I were delighted that all of the eight packages of proposals we put forward for updating our Constitution and bringing it in line with the IAAF passed with unanimous votes.
We were also satisfied with the engagement and exchange of ideas in the expanded programme of workshops at the European Athletics Convention and the wonderful atmosphere and spirit of our Golden Tracks awards evening, both of which were also in Vilnius.

The first full year of work in our new, wholly-owned headquarters building, the House of European Athletics in Lausanne, was also gratifyingly productive. We staged the vast majority of our commission and other working meetings in Lausanne to emphasise that the office belongs to our Member Federations and that all the European Athletics Family is welcome.

In addition to the day-to-day administration for our organisation and their tireless work of coordinating our competition programme, the European Athletics staff worked from the office to serve our federations with wide ranging development activities, including two major conferences, and creative communications to promote our events and the sport.

As an example of the progress we are making in communications, during the European Athletics Indoor Championships in Belgrade we worked together with the EBU to offer near-live videos from the competition on social media for the second time (the first being during the previous year’s outdoor championships in Amsterdam). We were very happy with the much increased daily figures, which reached more than 20 million people solely through European Athletics’ own accounts.

On one platform, Twitter, the global public relations firm Burson-Marsteller announced early in the year that our account was the fastest growing of any international sports federation. By October we passed the benchmark of 100,000 followers and then saw continued increases through the end of the year.

CHALLENGES

In my recent travels I have found that the feeling of optimism and determination I sensed among our Member Federations and others in the sport at the beginning of the year evolved. There is now a level of satisfaction and even pride in what our organisation and sport are accomplishing. There is also a widespread realisation that 2017 was a big step forward and that if we keep working together we can repeat the success and achieve even more in the future.

For all the positive news, however, there are still serious challenges to be faced. From a financial point of view, we can be happy that European Athletics’ results for 2017 were better than planned but the coming years will be tougher, at least until we can secure a long-term broadcast rights agreement and one or more new commercial partners. Together with our sponsorship sales agency, European Athletics Marketing AG, the Executive Board, the staff and I are working hard in these areas and I am expecting to make one or more welcome announcements before our European Athletics Championships in the summer.

Although doping and integrity stories did not dominate the headlines as much as in the previous two years, these issues have not gone away. The Russian federation remains suspended from competition by the IAAF and we can almost be sure that the coming months and years will bring new scandals and disappointments as there is more success in the much needed efforts to clean up our sport. For our part, we must remain vigilant, continue our zero tolerance policy, speak out when necessary and do everything we can to educate athletes, their entourages and the public about our values. In 2018, following a resolution by the Congress in Vilnius, we will roll out a strategy to support our Member Federations as they address governance issues at their level.

Finally, our biggest challenge, perhaps, is to remain open to positive change. Athletics has a great history and great traditions that must be respected, but we cannot let them hold us back from adapting and innovating. To reinforce this message I have asked that the theme for our 2018 CEO Conference in Minsk be ‘Embracing Change’. It is my hope that we can bring the spirit of the dynamic changes of the last two and a half years to all our Member Federations and thereby strengthen and develop the mindset that prioritises meeting the ever-evolving tastes and needs of our athletes, audiences and partners.
WE ARE NOW into the second half of my term as President of European Athletics and large parts of the vision I expressed in my 2015 election manifesto ‘Leading Change’ are becoming reality. But I continue to look forward and my personal mission for the coming year will be to build on the current positive mood in athletics and make sure that as a sport we keep adapting, innovating and moving forward.

The next big opportunity to exchange ideas will be our biennial CEO Conference for the leaders of our Member Federations in April, where the theme will be ‘Embracing Change’. As the conference is being prepared I would like to share some brief thoughts on four long-term impact projects that will feature in the programme.

BERLIN 2018

This year’s European Athletics Championships in Berlin will be our biggest showcase and I am sure the German federation and the local organising committee will deliver an event that fills the stadium and captures the attention of large audiences across Europe. The championships will also be the highlight of the first edition of the multi-sport European Championships – a key element in the strategy of our partner the European Broadcasting Union.

Everyone should be aware that European Athletics is in a pivotal moment that could well shape the future of our organisation and sport. Our support for the European Championships concept is, I believe, already paying dividends in our discussions with the EBU: both in terms of the EBU’s offer to increase the value and extended the duration of the contract for the broadcast rights to our events – which is vital for successfully promoting our sport in the 21st Century.

But our Member Federations should be fully informed about the evolution of our future collaboration with the EBU and to this end we will invite leaders from both the Berlin 2018 local organising committee and the EBU to the CEO Conference share their thoughts with us.

ANTI-DOPING EDUCATION

I am proud to report that in 2017 European Athletics launched the I Run Clean™ anti-doping education platform as promised in my election manifesto. This innovative e-learning programme, which is offered in more than 20 languages, represents a big step forward in the work to strengthen the culture of clean sport. It highlights European Athletics’ leadership and has attracted interest from the IAAF, the World Anti-Doping Agency and other sports.

As completion of the programme will be a mandatory condition for athletes wishing to participate in the 2018 European Athletics U18 Championships in Győr as well as future European Athletics events, it is essential that all Member Federations understand the procedure their athletes
must follow. It is also important that we discuss how federations might use the platform in the future to fight against doping at the grassroots and to enhance the image of the sport, as I believe there is great potential for promotion in this way.

For these reasons, the CEO conference programme will include an update on I Run Clean™ and an opportunity for participants to get information that is specific to their federation’s situation and needs.

**NEW COMPETITION FORMAT**

For some time now, there has been interest in developing new ways to present athletics to young people, a demographic with very specific tastes and notoriously short attention spans. In early 2017 the Nitro Athletics series in Australia grabbed the headlines with a two-hour, team-based format while others around the globe, including the IAAF, are exploring ideas such as city centre competitions, franchise teams and ‘pop-up’ tracks in football stadiums.

In partnership with the European Olympic Committees, a European Athletics project team has developed and tested our own product for the market, which we call Dynamic New Athletics (DNA), and kept the Member Federations informed throughout the development process. How will any of these concepts integrate with the current or future competition system? Nobody can say at this time but I believe all the projects are a healthy sign that our sport is not standing still, that innovation is alive and that there is a willingness to take risks.

At the CEO conference the project team will give an update on the details of the new product, which will be unveiled at the 2019 European Games, and the implications for our Member Federations. They will also discuss ideas for where the project goes after the Games.

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION SYSTEM**

As a former meeting organiser and a former Member Federation president it is no surprise that the topic of the competition system is particularly close to my heart and something I really want to see radically improved. The reality, however, is that although we in European Athletics have made some advances on issues and areas we can control, the really big changes will require the participation and power of the IAAF.

The integrity and governance issues that have occupied the IAAF in the last two years have limited the time that could be devoted to addressing the very complex challenges such as rationalising the international calendar, improving the one-day meetings system, uniform advertising regulations and changing the major events qualification system.

Representatives of European Athletics, myself included, have stayed engaged with the IAAF on these and other issues over the last two years and some progress has been made. In 2018 we will push again. These efforts will include inviting one or more representatives of the IAAF to the CEO Conference to share their thoughts.
PRIORITY AGENDA
2015 - 2019

Member Federations
Commercial Strength
Athletes
Competition
Relevance
MEMBER FEDERATIONS

Progress Report

2017 saw coordinated work on all four of the projects of our agenda to help increase the financial stability and operational competence of Member Federations. Perhaps the greatest progress was on the customised development support programme, the design of which was completed by our Member Federation Development Commission and then approved by the Council for implementation starting with a transition year in 2018.

Other work included the delivery of a great programme of educational measures for Member Federation personnel – including two major conferences and our most extensive offer of workshops ever at the European Athletics Convention in Vilnius – as well as the launch of our Focus Federation programme, where we invite representatives of a selected federation for a working visit to our Head Office and then to take part in a Council meeting to discuss their circumstances, needs and ambitions.

Activity on other Leading Change projects in 2017 included:

- **New team uniform advertising rules**: The IAAF Council is currently considering the request from Europe for changes that will help all federations serve their sponsors. We are expecting a response and action in 2018.

- **Coordinated marketing of the athletics brand**: At the end of the first year of operation for our marketing partner, European Athletics Marketing AG, we asked for the company's strategy to include stronger engagement and cooperation with our Member Federations. The new concept is anticipated in early 2018.

- **Strategy for accessing European Union project funding**: We welcomed the award of Erasmus+ grants for two projects where we will be delivery partners in 2018 and 2019: POINTS (Single Points of Contact for Sports Integrity) and ONSIDE (Innovative education to enhance the skills of Sports Officials in Europe). Work on the strategy itself continued with the staging of a second workshop for Member Federations interested in partnering in future project proposals.
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n/a - not applicable as the work is part of normal operations
COMMERCIAL STRENGTH

Progress Report

Bringing our sponsorship sales agency, European Athletics Marketing AG, up to full speed was the focus of work to secure the financial sustainability of European Athletics. After some months of testing the market for interest in our commercial rights, we have begun to refine the strategy, restructure the company and bring in new personnel for a concerted effort to find new partners in 2018. To support the company, we created the European Athletics staff position of Head of New Business Development to coordinate the many proposals and ideas we receive.

The new Head’s first assignment was our Dynamic New Athletics (DNA) project, an extension of the 2015 Innovation project and 2016 Athletics 2020 project. In partnership with the European Olympic Committees, and with input from audience research, entertainment product experts, event presentation specialists and, of course, athletes, the project team designed and tested a youth-friendly competition format that promises to be the highlight of the 2019 European Games in Minsk.

Activity on other Leading Change projects in 2017 included:

• **Special promotional measures for years without major events in Europe**: Preparations continued on the Europe vs USA match, planned for Minsk in the period between the 2019 European Games and the IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Doha. We have reached an agreement with the authorities in Belarus to host the event and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with USA Track and Field.

• **PR, digital and social media strategy**: Our continuing work on this project started to produce tangible results in 2017 with a reach of more than 20 million through our use of content published on our social media platforms during the three-day European Athletics Indoor Championships in Belgrade and the announcement that European Athletics’ Twitter following increased by 125% in 12 months, the fastest growth by any international sport federation.

• **Host city support**: Our ongoing efforts included important refinements to our event bidding process and how we work with bidders. During the European Athletics Convention in Vilnius we staged a workshop to explain the value and impact of European Athletics’ age group championships to potential hosts.
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n/a - not applicable as the work is part of normal operations
 ATHLETES

Progress Report

The big news from the agenda was the launch of the I Run Clean™ anti-doping education e-learning platform at the European Athletics U23 Championships in Bydgoszcz and the European Athletics U20 Championships in Grosseto. We also developed the roll-out and implementation plan for making sure that all athletes taking part in the 2018 U18 champs in Györ have completed the programme.

Work on the very important projects to provide financial incentives to athletes for the European Athletics Championships, financial opportunities for U23 Athletes, and post-career scholarships for athletes all had to be kept on hold until we can secure new financial resources to implement them. But I remain confident that as progress is made on our Commercial agenda and we will be able to start seriously discussing plans in 2018.

Activity on other Leading Change projects in 2017 included:

- **European only events in one-day meetings**: The proposal for a system of reserved events has been included in our initial concept for the future of one-day meetings in Europe, which was introduced to key stakeholders and will be developed in 2018.

- **Weaker discipline initiatives**: Although we have not formally launched this project, we did take an interesting step to promote long-distance running with an agreement to stage the 2018 European 10,000m Cup in conjunction with the popular ‘Night of the 10,000m PBs’ in London. The integration of the two events will create a great atmosphere and, I am sure, lead to a higher level of performance for many European athletes.

- **Use of athlete ambassadors to promote European Athletics events and programmes**: The organisers of the 2018 European Athletics Championships in Berlin led the way with their innovative use of athletes to successfully drive ticket sales. For our part, athlete ambassadors have been a key element of the I Run Clean™ programme and we have started work on a partnership to provide content support for top athletes’ to promote our sport through their personal social media accounts.
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n/a - not applicable as the work is part of normal operations
COMPETITION

Progress Report

In 2017 we progressed steadily on the five projects of the agenda to make the international competition system and calendar serve our sport better. Our main advance was to implement the Council’s decisions to restructure the European Team Championships timetable at the Super League in Lille/FRA. We are now in the process of evaluating the results to see if adjustments might be needed in the future and what lessons we can apply elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the organisers of the 2018 European Athletics Championships in Berlin have produced a very well thought-out timetable for their event that is focused on filling the Olympic Stadium each day. At the time this report was prepared, more than eight months before the event, the success of their efforts was becoming evident with a total of more than 130,000 spectator tickets already sold.

Activity on other Leading Change projects in 2017 included:

- **Integrated major events system**: Although we have developed our thinking about major event integration and have been leaders in the work on the 2018 multi-sport European Championships concept, the overall responsibility for the international competition system rests with the IAAF. A priority for 2018 will be to use our position and influence to push for open and serious discussions with the IAAF and other stakeholders on this fundamentally important issue.

- **One-day meetings-championships link**: The idea for rankings-based qualification for the European Athletics Championships and other major events developed by a European Athletics project team in 2016 was taken up by the IAAF. We are currently contributing to that project and expect worldwide implementation in 2018.

- **Support for new and special events**: The focus for the ongoing work in this area was a feasibility study for a European Relays Festival. The Council has also agreed to support the second edition of the Small States of Europe Championships, which will take place in Liechtenstein also in 2018.
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n/a - not applicable as the work is part of normal operations
RELEVANCE

Progress Report

The main feature of our 2017 work to assist Member Federations to reach out to new audience groups was the successful European Running Business Conference in Frankfurt on 27 and 28 October. The programme focused on both the commercial aspects of success in this very competitive business and on bringing the top business leaders together with our federations to develop synergies and cooperation.

Other work included the promotion of greater gender balance in the ranks of our sport’s leadership at national and international level, which we believe will help to make athletics even more attractive activity to girls and young women. The measures included amending the European Athletics Constitution to include places reserved for women candidates starting from 2019, supporting the 5th WIWA (Women in World Athletics) Seminar in London and giving our biennial Women’s Leadership Awards to 19 Member Federation-nominated winners.

Activity on other Leading Change projects in 2017 included:

- **Expanded services for joggers, recreational runners and serious club runners:** The number of races signed up for our Running for All Safety and Quality Standards system continued to grow in 2017, reaching more than 300 across 44 countries. In 2018 we will review and update the system and a project team will develop addition measures to enhance our offerings in this area.

- **Links with the Masters Athletics:** Cooperation with European Masters Athletics (EMA) began to take a tangible form in 2017 with discussions on integrating Masters competitions with European Athletics events and making it possible for the EMA to use our I Run Clean™ anti-doping education programme as a mandatory qualification criterion for its future championships.

- **Young volunteers programme:** Although the plan to work with the French athletics federation on a joint proposal to the European Union’s Erasmus+ programme for funding to strengthen our online Young Leaders Community was delayed by a year, we did start preparations for the next Young Leaders Forum, which will be staged in conjunction with the 2018 European Athletics Championships in Berlin.
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