

# FESTIVAL OF ATHLETICS IN THE CAPITAL OF SLOVENIA



# SLOVENIA

# BALKANATION 2014



## ABOUT THE ATHLETIC WEEKEND

The athletic weekend “Balkanation” was a 3-day set of athletic events in the capital of Slovenia, comprising of the whole specter of athletics for all generations: kids athletics, international athletics, professional athletics and recreational athletics. With the rich athletic happening the Athletic Federation of Slovenia put efforts in popularization, increase of recognition and promotion of the “queen of sports” in the Slovenian capital and broader. Moreover, the new competition enabled competitors from a broad Balkan region to get a platform for performing and measuring their quality in a new qualitative international event.

## PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

### Pre-events:

- Reception of IAAF Vice President by the NOC President
- Reception of IAAF Vice President and ABAF President, hosted by the mayor of the Municipality of Ljubljana (Ljubljana Town Hall)
- Press Conference (Plaza Hotel)



### Friday 19 September:

- Presentation of Kids Athletics (City Centre)
- Round Table: "The Future of Athletics" (Town Hall)



### Saturday, 21 September:

- ABAF Congress (Plaza Hotel)
- Balkanation Competition (ŽAK Stadium, Ljubljana)





**Sunday, 21 September:**  
- BMW Running festival



## **ABOUT THE EVENTS**

### **Pre-events**

#### **RECEPTION BY THE NOC PRESIDENT**

Sergey Bubka, Vice-President of the IAAF, member of the Executive Committee of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the President of the Olympic Committee of Ukraine was received by the President of the Olympic Committee of Slovenia, Dr. Janez Kocijančič.

In a relaxed conversation, Bubka stressed the great sporting achievements of such a small nation. "You have outstanding athletes and teams in various sports. It's truly amazing how such a small nation can be successful in sport internationally. From Beijing to Vancouver, London and Soči, you have a lot of winners in different sports. Slovenia has a great sporting tradition and a highly successful development model of sport that should be encouraged," said the world record holder in pole-vaulting.



#### **RECEPTION AT THE CITY HALL**

The mayor of Ljubljana, Mr Zoran Janković welcomed some of the distinguished guests of the athletic weekend in the town hall. The event was attended by the IAAF Vice President Sergey Bubka, ABAF President Dobromir Karamarinov and Slovenian Athletic Federation President Gregor Benčina. The eminent guests spoke about the role of sport in the capital and the phenomenon of Slovenian sport successes.



The mayor of Ljubljana also explained the efforts to build a new athletics stadium in the capital.



## PRESS CONFERENCE

The following guests presented the outcomes of the congress and views on competition Balkanation: Sergey Bubka, Hansjörg Wirz, Gregor Benčina and Dobromir Karamarinov





**Saturday, 20 September**

## **KIDS ATHLETICS**

The lively event in the very center of Ljubljana featured more than 50 youngest U12 athletes of Slovenian athletic clubs that practice under the guidance of some of our current and former top athletes. The children presented several disciplines and tested the kids athletic polygon. Also the visiting children were invited to test the polygon. The introductory part consisted of a mini opening ceremony of the Olympic Games with one of the greatest Slovenian athletes Brigita Bukovec to read the oath of athletes. The event was concluded with a visit of the ABAF delegates and the awarding of certificates of the Olympic Committee of Slovenia to the participants by one of the greatest stars in the world of sports – Sergey Bubka together with Slovenian champions.



## ROUND TABLE “FUTURE OF ATHLETICS”

The event featured a number of prominent representatives of Slovenian, European and world athletics to discuss guidelines for the future development of athletics. The roundtable speakers were: Sergey Bubka, IAAF Vice President, Hansjörg Wirz, President of European Athletics, Jean Gracia, Vice President of European Athletics, Dobromir Karamarinov, ABAF President, Svein Arne Hansen, president of the Athletics Association of Norway, Jonas Egilsson, President of the Athletic Association of Small States of Europe (AASSE), Antti Pihlakoski, EA Council member, and Gregor Benčina, Slovenian Athletic Federation President.

"Athletics is still the Olympic sport number one, our advantages are also in numerous and diverse disciplines. Still, its future development needs to focus on dynamics, attractiveness and competitiveness in the market. National federations have different working conditions, infrastructure and financing. Therefore also solutions and development programs are different. Without financing we cannot do much, so we want to do our best to develop the IAAF in the extent that we can more easily support also national Federations for the development of athletics," said the legendary Bubka in his presentation.

The host of the event, Gregor Benčina stressed that for the Slovenian organizers the Saturday contest is a challenge and an opportunity. "Competitions in this format are extremely important for athletes as an opportunity to compete in their own area. We hope that in this way we will contribute to better and faster development of the Queen of sports, and hope that we attract crowds of people to the stands, proving that athletics is a very attractive sport, where team spirit is also very present."



## ABAF CONGRESS

The second day of the athletic weekend began with the first Congress of the Association of Balkan Athletics Federations in Slovenia, which was after the latest enlargement of the organization attended by the largest number of members so far. More than 45 delegates discussed the future of the ABAF competition system and placement of various athletic events in the system. Further operational decisions were made and the ABAF Calendar introduced. All members were represented by their highest representatives, among them there were 12 Presidents of National Athletics Federations. The Congress was chaired by the President of ABAF, Mr. Dobromir Karamarinov, who also expressed satisfaction with the concept of Balkanation, the novelty of the competitive system of the Association.





## BALKANATION

In an innovative team competition "Balkanation" 8 national teams of the ABAF member states competed in a team athletic spirit. The team victory stayed in Slovenia with a victory of the home team.

The Slovenes were competing with their best individuals, including the Beijing Olympic Champion Primož Kozmus and Martina Ratej, the most successful Slovenian competitor in the Diamond league.



Full stands of spectators enjoyed in the performances of the home team, who achieved 6 victories and 6 second places in the 16 disciplines of the meeting, attended by teams of 8 countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Rumania, Serbia, Turkey and Slovenia. The 800 m race went to Žan Rudolf (148.62), in which the Slovenes in a more attractive concept of competition competed with a joker and thus achieved a doubling of the maximum number of points. Other home victories went 100 m h Marina Tomič (13,30), Martina Ratej in the javelin (60.00 m), Tina Šutej pole-vaulting (4.00), Maruša Mišmaš in the 800 m (2: 08,40) and captain Primož Kozmus in the hammer throw (70.66m).

Slovenian athletes collected 102 points. The second was Croatia (84) ahead of Turkey, which finished third (80).

Captain Kozmus was pleased with the victory and the competition "Today it was nice to be an athlete Ljubljana. I like team competitions most. Individual results don't count, only the team ranking matters, which is very positive for the atmosphere in the team. Such competitions are also very interesting for spectators, I'm happy that so many came to see the event. I'm also pleased that I finished with a result over 70 m after a month break. This is a good starting point for the next season," said Kozmus, the best Slovenian athlete in history.





The central star of this year's home athletic Martina Ratej was also pleased with the result: "I had a very good season, although the European Championships did not end as planned. Now I'll take a break, and then the preparations for the new season will begin, in which I will compete in the Diamond league and world Championships. "

Slovenia was the best in both men as well as women's competition, performed it with all the best in the individual disciplines. The event was watched by several other eminent guests, including Sergey Bubka, Hansjörg Wirz, Janez Kocjančič, President of the Olympic Committee of Slovenia, Ahmad Al Kamali, IAAF Council member, the best Slovenian sportsmen in history Miro Cerar and several home champions of Slovenian athletics, among them Brigita Bukovec, Britta Bilač and Alenka Bikar, who were also included in the programme of the competition by individual interviews and greeting full stands of spectators.



## BMW FEST – RUNNING FESTIVAL

6,000 runners, families and fans gathered at the running festival - BMW FEST. The premiere event was implemented in cooperation with the Slovenian Athletic Federation.

The event also concluded this year's Running challenge "BMW Race to Berlin". Nearly 1,500 recreational runners registered for the competition run and competed for 8 entries for the Berlin Marathon 2015. The runners were encouraged by words of Gregor Benčina, President of the Slovenian Athletic Federation and Lothar Schupet, Managing Director of BMW Group Slovenia. Among the 102 runners on the course were also top Slovenian sportsmen Jure Košir, Klemen Bauer, Jakov Fak and Maruša Mišmaš.

Nearly 1,500 runners successfully crossed the finish line of the 600 meter family run. All children received at the finish line a medal. The event was also accompanied by concerts of famous Slovenian groups and accompanying activities, playgrounds and creative workshops.





## ABOUT THE ATHLETIC WEEKEND:

**Sergey Bubka**, IAAF Vice President: "We welcome the idea of a new athletic event and for it to become traditional. The development of new, innovative competitions is certainly one of the priorities in the philosophy of IAAF. Federations who have a more professional and active approach and treat their organization as a business company have more chances to be more successful. We need to develop new ways of competitions and include all generations to our sport."

President of the European Athletics **Hansjörg Wirtz** expressed his support to the Balkan Team Competition: "The idea of a Balkan team competition is very encouraging, because we do not only need a large meetings and competitions, but also the competition of neighboring and nearby countries, which do not require long travels. It is a great contribution to greater and faster development of our sport."

Vice-President of European Athletics **Jean Gracia** highlighted two aspects of how to attract young people from behind the computers to nature and in athletics as well as how to attract spectators to the stadium: "Execution of such meetings as Balkanation involving famous current and former athletic names helps to increase popularity, and this allow clubs and associations to attract funds to develop athletics. The preparation needs to include sponsors to feel that they are part of a large local or global stories. "

**Svein Arne Hansen**, president of the Athletics Association of Norway: »Europe is faced with the need for investment and development in athletics in order to insure its stability and growth. Investment and work must be directed in youth. Therefore such attractive new competitions are of extreme importance, since we need to show young people that athletic is very dynamic and motivate them for our sport.«



# BALKANATION PARTNERS



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