

M I N U T E S

ABAF Extraordinary Congress

**Sliven, Hotel Sport Palace
1 July 2011**

Present:

ABAF Representatives

Dobromir Karamarinov	President
Mehmet Terzi	Vice president
Galia Puhaleva	General Secretary

Member Federations representatives

Albania	Nikolin Dionisi, General Secretary
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Djurdjica Sisul, President Milan Pedalo, General Secretary
Bulgaria	Velina Tsekova, International relations Anton Bonov, Coordinator Georgi Pavlov, Meeting Organiser
Greece	Panagiotis Dimakos, General Secretary Athanasios Vogiadzis, Treasurer
Moldova	Constantin Negura, General Secretary Serghei Donets, International Secretary
Montenegro	Milan Madzgalj, General Secretary Miodrag Tomovic,
FYR of Macedonia	Dejan Angelovski, General Secretary
Romania	Zsolt Gyongyossy, Federal Coach
Serbia	Slobodan Brankovic, General Secretary Biljana Danicic, International Secretary
Turkey	Muharrem Or

Also in attendance

Gabriela Szabo/ROU	European Athletics Council Member
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1. Welcome to Sliven

Dobromir Karamarinov welcomed all participants, noting that all the 10 Member Federations were present, as well as Gabriela Szabo, European Athletics Council Member. He expressed his satisfaction of the success of our area on the recent European Athletics elections in London – three Balkan representatives were elected in European Athletics Council and two more in the Development and Competition Committee up to now. Some more Balkan representatives, like Panagiotis Dimakos for instance, are expected to enter the different European Athletics Commissions. He is hoping that Balkan Athletics shall be more successful in future with several major events hosted by Balkan countries – World Indoor Championships 2012 in Istanbul, World Half Marathon Championships 2012 in Kavarna, European Athletics Congress 2013 in Skopje.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was unanimously approved

3. Approval of the Minutes from the last Congress

The Minutes from last Congress held in Belgrade on 15 October 2010 unanimously approved and signed.

4. Change of the ABAF logo

Dobromir Karamarinov briefly gave the reasons for changing the logo - it was old fashioned and not very clear. Galia Puhaleva showed the proposed new design and explained the new elements: the athletes' figures and the abbreviation "ABAF" are kept unchanged, the entire title "Association of the Balkan Athletics Federations" is written around the figures and a vision of athletics track is inserted. Different opinions were given and discussed, for instance the use more colors, or to add more lanes in the track. Finally the logo was unanimously approved.

4.1. Presentation of ABAF flag with the new logo

An ABAF flag with the new logo was presented and approved.

4.2. Proposal for ABAF anthem

Dobromir Karamarinov shared his idea to have an ABAF anthem to be played during Opening Ceremonies of Championships, and various official occasions. Everybody agreed. The ABAF anthem to be composed by a professional composer and presented to the next Congress during European Athletics Convention in Tenerife, October 2011.

5. Most recent information regarding ABAF registration and financial status.

Mr. Athanasios Vogyzdis gave a short summary of the situation: the ABAF registration under Greek laws is active. There is an ABAF bank account which has been blocked. The bank is requiring the official documentation of the last ABAF elections. Mr. Vassilios Sevastis, former ABAF President could assist in the procedure of unblocking the account. He needs the Minutes of the ABAF Congress in Belgrade 15 October 2010 duly signed by all participating member federations. It was agreed to provide all necessary documentation to the Greek Federation in order to enable them to unblock the account. In order

to facilitate the ABAF activities, move the ABAF Headquarters shall be moved from Athens to Sofia and the money transferred to a new account in Bulgaria. The President shall report to the financial activities to the Congress.

6. Change and update of ABAF Statutes and Competiton Regulations.
First proposal was to move the ABAF Headquarters from Athens to Sofia and was approved unanimously.

Galia Puhaleva reported on the ABAF Council Meeting held in December 2010 when the ABAF Statutes and Championships Regulations were thoroughly reviewed and discussed point by point. She summarized the main amendments and changes proposed for the ABAF Statutes, which were circulated in separate document. They include: the addition of a Vice President to be elected, the extension of the mandates from 2 to 4 years office, the admission of European Athletics and IAAF Council Members as ABAF ex-officio members etc.

The changes and amendments of the ABAF Statutes were approved unanimously.

Galia Puhaleva summarized the main changes proposed for the ABAF Championships Regulations, also circulated in separate document. They include the following items:

- to reduce the number of days covered by the host of Balkan events by one day and reduce the number of officials in the teams;
- to set deadlines for sending Preliminary and Final entries for the Balkan events - two months in advance for the Preliminary Entries and 10 days in advance for the Final Entries. Entries should be made by the National Federation only. Any changes after the deadline for the Final entries shall not exceed 1% of the participants;
- for all Balkan events if a team is traveling by bus, the drivers may be added as extra persons, whose accommodation is covered by the host country.

Zsolt Gyongyossy/ROU took the floor and proposed to change the distances for the Balkan Youth Boys' Race Walking from 5km to 10km, in accordance with the IAAF rules for this age group.

All changes and amendments of the ABAF Championships Regulations as proposed were approved unanimously. The new Championships Regulations shall enter in force as from 1 January 2012.

7. Inauguration of "Balkan Athlete of the Year" ranking – procedures.
Dobromir Karamarinov explained the aim of the ranking - to motivate the best Balkan athletes to take part in Balkan Championships, respectively attract more attention from the audience and media, would contribute to finding sponsors. A special award ceremony – Balkan Gala shall be organised to honor the winners, starting from this year.

Only athletes who have taken part in Balkan Senior Championships the same year can be subject to the award, except for the events which are not

included in the championships programme (10k, half marathon etc.). Having in mind that this decision is taken during the Senior Championships 2011, it will be allowed for 2011 only to nominate athletes who didn't participate in Balkan Championships 2011.

Nominations should be made by National Federations – each Federation shall have the right to nominate one male and one female athlete. Nominations shall be submitted in the period 1-15 October.

Voting shall be made online through ABAF website in the period 15 October – 15 November. There will be two voting sections in the website - for fans and for media. Fans and media shall each have one third of the voting strength. The third part of the voting strength shall be consigned to the "experts panel" composed of ABAF Council Members. The ABAF Council shall finally make the ranking and announce the results.

The Balkan Gala shall be staged preferably in the beginning of December each year. Two representatives per Member federation shall be invited to attend in addition to the winners and their coaches. The Ceremony shall be held in elegant atmosphere with VIP guests and large media coverage.

The inauguration of "Balkan Athlete of the Year" ranking and respective procedures were unanimously approved.

8. Starting a procedure for selling the TV rights for the Balkan Championships.
Dobromir Karamarinov asked for the Congress' approval to try selling TV rights for the Balkan Championships. On his opinion it wouldn't be easy though it is worth trying for the Senior Championships only – the other events would hardly be interesting to a potential TV partner. Unanimously approved.
9. Proposal for elaboration of additional ABAF documents
It was decided to wait until the ABAF financial situation is finalized before preparing additional documents.
10. Balkan Seminar
Galia Puhaleva reported that a project is being elaborated in order to provide the finances required to carrying out educational activities such as Balkan seminars. The International Athletics Foundation (IAF) and other institutions have been contacted in this matter. Details will be given on a later stage.
11. Miscellaneous
 - 11.1. Website - National sponsors' logos
All member federations were invited to submit their sponsors' logos in order to be posted on ABAF webpage. All information regarding local activities in the different countries is also welcomed and shall be posted on the website.

Milan Pedalo officially presented the new president of the Athletics Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Mrs Djurdjica Sisul, who is a former athlete, one of the best Bosnian middle distance runners. Djurdjica Sisul thanked the Congress for the warm welcome. She was glad to be part of the Balkan

athletics family and gave high opinion on the work done by the Congress and the important decisions taken.

Dobromir Karamarinov underlined the importance of the Balkan area and the strength we have when we are united. He reminded there are three candidates from the Balkan area for the coming IAAF elections – Gabriela Szabo/ROU for the IAAF Women's Committee, Zsolt Gyongyossy/ROU and Can Korkmazoglu/TUR for the Technical Committee – which we all should support in Daegu. He also emphasized we all should work whenever appropriate in order to influence more federation to vote for our candidates.

Milan Madzgalj took the floor on behalf of Montenegro Athletic Federation - the youngest member of our family. He congratulated Dobromir Karamarinov for the excellent job he is doing as ABAF President and wished success to all future Balkan activities. He also invited all federations to the European Cup Winter Throwing to be held in Bar/MNE 2012.

Dobromir Karamarinov proposed to invite Croatia and Slovenia to join ABAF. Historically their territories used to be part of the Balkan Association and Balkan event were held in Ljubljana and Zagreb. Panagiotis Dimakos and Athanasios Vogiadzis retorted those countries have been invited in the past and have refused to make part of our association; the ABAF should rather wait for them to submit an application.

It was decided that all member federations shall address the question to their respective Boards and during the next ABAF Congress it shall be decided whether to invite Slovenia and Croatia or not.

12. Date for the next Congress:
during European Athletics Convention in Tenerife, 13 October 2011.

Minutes prepared by

Galia Puhaleva,
ABAF General Secretary