



THE 8TH ORDINARY CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN CANOE ASSOCIATION

**Saturday 24th March 2007
Palm Beach Hotel, Larnaca**

MINUTES

1. OPENING OF THE SESSION

Mr Marios Karapatakis, President of the Cyprus Canoe Association opened the 2007 European Canoe Association Congress by introducing the invited dignities to the delegates. He extended a warm welcome and hoped that everyone present would take the opportunity of this gathering to get to know the ECA family.

He explained that the Cyprus Canoe Federation is a member of the ECA and ICF and that the development of the sport in Cyprus began in 1998 with some financial support from the Cyprus Sport Federation. 2004 seen a turning point for Canoeing in Cyprus, as the Government permitted the use of reservoirs to paddle on.

The Deputy Mayor of Larnaca and the Treasurer of the Cyprus Olympic Committee then welcomed all delegates to the country and wished everyone a pleasant stay.

Mr Albert Woods, President of the ECA then thanked the Cyprus Canoe Federation for the splendid organisation of the Congress, from arrival at Larnaca airport to the current Congress activities. Albert thanked the ICF, Mr Ulrich Feldhoff for attending and confirmed to the Congress that 34 countries were present; the most ever at an ECA Congress.

The Congress was then addressed by the ICF President, Mr Ulrich Feldhoff who also extended a warm welcome to everyone. Mr Feldhoff then stated that the recent ICF Congress in Hong Kong had been very successful and had been an opportunity to discuss developments within the sport and the Olympic programme beyond 2012. He explained that Canoeing has a very strong place on the Olympic programme and its presence there will not be subject to questioning. In fact, tickets have already sold out for the Slalom events in Beijing in 2008 and demand for tickets in the Sprint

events is also very high. Mr F concluded by wishing everyone a successful and prosperous Congress and 2008 Olympic Games.

2. ROLL-CALL OF DELEGATES AND ESTABLISHING THE QUORUM

Mr Branko Lovric, ECA Secretary General did the roll-call of the 34 present National Federations as follows;

ARM, AUT, BEL, BIH, BLR, BUL, CRO, CYP, CZE, ESP, FIN, FRA, GBR, GER, GRE, HUN, IRL, ISR, ITA, LAT, LTU, NED, NOR, POL, POR, ROU, RUS, SLO, SRB, SUI, SVK, SWE, TUR, UKR.

In addition, he explained that the absolute majority is 18 votes and 2/3 majority is 23. He confirmed that all countries present have paid their ECA membership fee.

3. APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS FOR THE PERIOD OF THE CONGRESS

The President proposed John Leukemans (BEL), Serghei Shabluka (BLR) and Victor Cirini (ITA) as Scrutineers during the Congress. The proposal was accepted.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONGRESS

The President gave a brief history of Mr Otto Bonn to the delegates; Mr Bonn was elected to the ICF Board in 1954 and for many years was Vice President. In 1990 he was elected as ICF Secretary General and is an honorary member of the ICF.

The President then proposed Mr Bonn as the Chairman of the Congress; this was accepted unanimously. Mr Bonn then thanked the delegates, stating that this was a great honour for him. From this point on, Mr Bonn will Chair the Congress.

5. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

The Spanish delegates requested confirmation that no Federation can vote, unless they are in current ECA membership. The President ensured the Congress that this was most definitely the case and is stipulated within the statutes. The agenda was then formally accepted.

6. REPORT BY THE PRESIDENT AND BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON BEHALF OF THE ECA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The report was supplied to the delegates prior to the Congress. It was unanimously accepted.

7. ECA BALANCE SHEET 2005-2006

The Congress unanimously accepted the 2005-2006 Balance Sheet which was presented to the Delegates prior to the Congress.

8. REPORT BY THE AUDITOR

The Auditor's report was also unanimously accepted by the Congress.

9. ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW MEMBER FEDERATIONS

1 application was received from Azerbaijan who are already members of the ICF. Azerbaijan's application was then proposed by the President and was unanimously accepted.

10. ECA BOARD ELECTIONS

The Voting System: If a tie occurs, another ballot will take place. If a tie situation arises again, then the position will not be elected at this Congress.

10.a) ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

Branko Lovric explained to the Congress that the ECA Board of Directors had previously agreed that the election for President should be conducted separately. New voting papers were therefore distributed to the delegates.

There were 2 candidates for the position of President: Mr Albert Woods from Great Britain and Mr Francois Ryffel from Switzerland.

The French delegates then asked for permission to ask the candidates a question. This was allowed by the Chairman. Both candidates were then asked to highlight their priorities for the ECA's development in the coming years and explain the financial and human resources required to implement them.

Mr Ryffel stated that he would concentrate on the following:

- Improving administration and communication.
- Re-boot the services of the ECA to offer more value.
- Look for new ways in which to operate.
- Improve television coverage.
- Work with the ICF to encourage them to increase the financial ratio given to the ECA.

Mr Woods then stated the following in answer to the question:

- Work on the continued development of the ECA.
- Prioritise television coverage – to be increased at European Championships, as well as at Olympic Games.
- Increase Womens' participation.
- Increase Marketing and Sponsorship.
- Increase income and support less well off countries.

A delegate from the Swiss federation then addressed the Congress and stated that he felt that the ECA was losing its impact at an International level, and that new ideas and human resources are required to improve this. He felt that Mr Ryffel could provide this service if elected. He also clarified that if Mr Ryffel is elected as President, he would resign from his current position on the Dragonboat Committee.

Mr Ryffel then introduced himself to the delegates and stated that he felt that the ECA needed a new business model, and clear concepts and guidelines to cope with recent changes. He felt that a change of President would provide a bright future for the Canoeing world.

The result of the ballot was then announced:

Mr Albert Woods	19 votes
Mr Francois Ryfayell	15 votes

34 votes were cast.

Mr Albert Woods was then re-elected as President of the ECA.

Mr Woods then thanked everyone for their support and expressed his condolences to Mr Ryffel.

10b) ELECTION OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

There were 2 candidates for the position of ECA Vice President: Mr Jorn Cronberg from Denmark and Mr Marios Miguel Oliveira dos Santos from Portugal. Mr Woods explained that Mr Cronberg was absent from the Congress due to a family illness.

The result of the ballot was then announced:

Mr Jorn Cronberg	14 votes
Mr Marios Santos	20 votes

34 votes were cast.

Mr Santos was then elected as ECA Vice President.

Mr Santos then thanked all delegates and promised to work hard for the ECA in an effort to take it to a higher next level.

10c) ELECTIONS OF THE ECA BOARD MEMBERS

A delegate from Slovakia asked the relevant candidates if they could give a brief presentation, highlighting their priorities for the ECA Board. This was allowed and the candidates proceeded as follows:

- **Mr Olaf Heukrodt from Germany** – Stated that he thought that the successes of the ECA should be demonstrated more outside of Europe.
- **Mr Marios Karapatakis from Cyprus** – A founder member of the Cyprus Canoe Federation, he stated that he would like to help unite the ECA family and make canoeing links with Mediterranean and African countries.
- **Mr Geir Kvillum from Norway** – Explained that he has a broad knowledge of the sport, as an athlete, coach and President of the Norwegian Canoe Federation. He is now on the Norwegian Olympic Committee and would specifically like to improve and develop the ECA, concentrating on media and sponsors and achieving a clear and common goal within the Association.
- **Mr Santiago Sanmamed Lora from Spain** – Stated that he would like to support the ECA and its President. He further stated that Spain is open to hosting many competitions.

- **Ms Elly Muller from the Netherlands** – As Ms Muller is currently on the ECA Board, she was not required to give a presentation.
- **Mr Gheorghe Toth from Romania** – Proposed to support the ECA Board and would like to give special consideration to the Olympic disciplines. He stated that he would also consider the costs of competing as a priority and would like to work on ways to reduce these.
- **Mr Istvan Vaskuti from Hungary** - As Mr Vaskuti is currently on the ECA Board, he was not required to give a presentation.
- **Mr Bojan Zmavc from Slovakia** – Stated that his priorities would be improving media coverage and increasing sponsors.

The results were as follows: (3 to be elected)

Ms Elly Muller	17 votes
Mr Istvan Vaskuti	23 votes
Mr Olaf Heukrodt	19 votes
Mr Marios Karapatakis	5 votes
Mr Geir Kvillum	21 votes
Mr Santiago Sanmamed Lora	4 votes
Mr Gheorghe Toth	5 votes
Mr Bojan Zmavc	8 votes

The ECA Board members were then elected as:

Mr Istvan Vaskuti (re-elected)
Mr Olaf Heukrodt
Mr Geir Kvillum

11. ELECTIONS OF THE ECA AUDITOR

The only candidate for the position of the ECA Auditor (a re-election) was Mr Andrew Vandeput from Belgium. *Mr Vandeput received 32 votes and was duly re-elected to the position of ECA Auditor.*

Mr Vandeput then thanked everyone for their support, especially the Secretary General and the Treasurer for keeping their books in order.

12. ELECTIONS OF THE CONTINENTAL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ICF BOARD

After the elections for the ECA Board positions, there were 2 candidates for consideration: Ms Irina Siraeva from Russia and Mr Mario Miguel Oliveira Marques Dos Santos from Portugal. The voting went as follows:

Name	1st Ballot	2nd Ballot	3rd Ballot
Irina Siraeva	15	17	17
Mario Miguel Oliveira Marques Dos Santos	11	17	17

In addition, 8 votes were invalid, therefore the election was repeated.

The President then announced that due to the above results, no candidate for the Continental Representative to the ICF Board would be elected. However, many of the delegates considered this situation to be unsatisfactory and Mario Dos Santos

then withdrew his application. *The Portuguese vote then went to Irina Siraeva who was then elected for 2 years.*

13. FIXING THE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FEE FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS

It was proposed that the Annual Subscription Fee remains at 250 Euros. This was unanimously agreed.

14. ESTABLISHING THE WORKING (DEVELOPMENT) PROGRAMME FOR YEARS 2007/2008

The Development Programme was distributed to the delegates prior to the Congress for their consideration. The President invited questions and comments from everyone. Comments and questions arose from various delegates as follows:

- Great Britain - asked if the ECA Board had received any indication from the ICF that they will facilitate discussions with other continents. The President advised that an opportunity to do this will be given prior to the next ICF Congress.
- Russia - highlighted the importance of measuring and evaluating the ECA's results in key areas. It was agreed that this was a very constructive comment and the intension was to do this in future.
- Hungary - asked how they can help to deliver the Development Plan and advised that they have secretarial support available, should it be required. The President advised that the Programme will be successful when supported by the people in the ECA.
- Germany – Thought that the first step in the Development Programme is good, although they were disappointed that David Goldstrom and Paul Owen were unable to attend the Congress as they had some Marketing ideas to put to them. In general, the German delegates thought it important that the profile of the sport and the athletes is raised significantly in the coming years. In order to see these goals fulfilled, they suggested a sub-committee to work in this area. The President agreed with the suggestion 100% - this will be discussed by the ECA Board.
- Sweden – The Swedish delegates supported the idea of working groups and would like to see this develop.
- Belgium – Access issues must be raised and discussed more often.
- Slovenia – Requested a regular update for all member federations on how the ECA's progress is developing, across all issues. With regards to media, they felt that the organizers are crucial in terms of attracting as much attention as possible.

Mr Feldhoff then explained that Canoeing has an excellent presence in the Olympic Games, but this diminishes between Olympic years. Therefore, it was felt that the contract should be extended for TV rights, although EBU President has advised that Slalom is not part of the discussion because of the spectacular scenes it generates.

If Flatwater's presence is to be improved, then its programme must be changed as its current format is unattractive to TV. This is currently being looked at in an effort to make the World Championships more compact which in turn should make it easier to sell to TV.

Unfortunately, non-Olympic disciplines are not interesting to TV and a new concept is therefore required. This must be improved to develop serious sponsors.

Olympic sports remain the most important and still attract viewers. If we could attract the same number of viewers to World Championships as we currently do to Olympic Games, then there would not be a problem. It is the ECA's responsibility to design the future programme to make more progress.

It was noted that 80% of members are not involved in competition. Mr Feldhoff advised that this had been given consideration at the ICF Congress in Hong Kong last year and that the general feeling was that this must be taken seriously. The sport of canoeing will grow for all disciplines – not just the competitive ones - in the coming years and this must be embraced and responded to.

Mr Feldhoff then outlined the principles of a TV contract:

- The partner in the contract is the ICF.
- EBU gets a guarantee that World Championships in Flatwater, Slalom and White Water Racing will be broadcast. EBU then offers these images to the national TV Broadcasters for free
- Programme and timing for Slalom is regarded as model plan by the TV producers. Flatwater is the opposite.

15. ESTABLISHING THE BUDGET FOR THE YEARS 2007/2008

The budget was provided to the delegates prior to the Congress. Mr Branko Lovric then invited questions from the delegates.

A delegate from Russia asked what would happen if sponsors were gained and the budget was increased. Mr Woods advised that this would be considered should the situation arise. However, there are obvious ways in which to spend any additional money, e.g. work with developing countries using ICF assistance on their Development Programmes or assist with major championships to increase TV viewing hours.

The budget was then accepted by the majority.

16. CLOSING THE CONGRESS

Mr Otto Bonn thanked all delegates, volunteers and translators for their hard work and officially closed the 8th ECA Congress at 12.45pm.

17. TV, MARKETING, MEDIA AND SPONSORSHIP PRESENTATIONS

Albert Woods advised the delegates that due to unforeseen circumstances outwith their control, Mr David Goldstrom and Mr Paul Owen were not able to attend the Congress and therefore no presentations would be given. However, David Goldstrom will be available at the Slalom and Flatwater ECA Senior Championships to give his presentation then.

18. OPEN DISCUSSION (Max 1 Hour)

Mr Albert Woods then invited any comments from the floor. They were received as follows:

- A presentation from the Serbia Canoe Federation then took place. The presentation gave details of the facilities at Belgrade and the preparations taking place to host events in 2007.
- The President of the Hellenic Canoe Kayak Federation then gave a short presentation. He explained that as a relatively new Federation in the ECA, they are trying hard to get established in the Canoeing world. He explained that after the Olympic Games in 2004 in Athens, sporting legacies were left behind which they now want to benefit others. Although this has not been easy, they are now confident that this will happen. They hope that the Slalom course will be used as well as the rowing centre.
- Albert Woods then stated that the ECA must work to ensure that all Olympic venues have a legacy for the future and stressed that the Hellenic Federation have worked very hard to bring their Olympic venues back into use.
- Mr Woods then conveyed his congratulations the newly elected ECA Board members. In addition, he paid tribute to Ms Elly Muller who had not been re-elected, by stating that she had done a great amount of work over the years and had been a fantastic asset to the ECA. It was hoped that Elly will continue to work with the ECA on some level.
- The delegates from Armenia encouraged everyone to make more regular contact with their ECA colleagues, especially when traveling on non-ECA related business. This would involve all delegates sharing contact details with each other. Mr Woods agreed that this could be possible.
- The delegates from Belgium made a request that in future when documents are sent via email, that they should not be in a 'PDF' format, and requested that instead, they are sent in 'Word' or 'Excel' formats. Many of the other delegates agreed with this.
- A delegate from France highlighted the fact that there is only 1 woman on the ECA Board. In these times of Equality, this must be recognized and more ladies should be put forward. This was agreed by the majority of the Congress.
- Delegates from Slovenia highlighted the poor organization at a recent Slalom competition in Brazil. Mr. Woods stated that the ICF were already aware of what had occurred there, and the facts are currently being investigated.
- The Russian delegates encouraged the ECA to work more closely with its sponsors and explained how the structure works in Russia.
- The Spanish delegates explained that the organising committee for the forthcoming event in Pontevedra is at the Congress, and welcomed all delegates to ask them any questions they had in connection with the competition.
- Delegates from Bosnia stated that they were very glad to be attending the Congress and hoped that the ECA would not oversee poorer countries such as themselves when it came to organizing competitions. Mr Woods then confirmed that there will be a Senior Wild Water race held in Bosnia this year.

Mr Woods then closed the proceedings.

Branko Lovrić

ECA Secretary General



Albert Woods

ECA President

