

REPORT ON THE 9TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF SPORT HISTORY “SPORT AND CULTURES”

Crotone, Italy, 23 – 26 September, 2004

The European Committee for Sport History (CESH) has been annually organizing International Congresses of Sport History in different European cities since 1996. The Committee started its mission as a small Working Group for Sport History of the European Network of Sport Sciences Institutes in Higher Education (ENSSHE) in Lisbon in 1991 later it became a Section of Sport History in Cologne in 1993, and then the European Committee for Sport History at the Third Forum of the European Network of Sport Science Institutes in Higher Education in Bordeaux in 1995. The aim of CESH is to coordinate historical research projects in the field of sport in Europe and to implement and facilitate an exchange of information and ideas between historians, particularly between young researchers.

The 9th CESH Congress of Sport History was held in the ancient Italian city of Crotone from 23rd to 26th September, 2004. The main theme of this annual meeting was “Sport and Culture” emphasizing the role sport has played in shaping national and, indeed, universal culture. The city of Crotone has a great sporting tradition that dates back to the time of Magna Graecia and Milone, one of the most popular athletes of ancient times. Crotone, Pythagoras’s city, is a cradle of European civilization and most of all, a point of intersection of various cultures since ancient times. I could have hardly imagined a more proper place for my first participation in the CESH Congress.

During three and a half days about 80 abstracts in 17 sessions were presented. About a hundred Congress participants provided a friendly and good working atmosphere. An opportunity to meet, discuss and exchange ideas with almost all of the most distinguished sport historians and scholars from Europe was an extraordinary experience for me. But one thing impressed me most – it was the Young Scholars Awards competition, which was one of the highlights of the CESH Congress. According to the announcement, young researchers (up to 35 years of age), who had sent abstracts for the Young Scholars Awards, were asked to send a full paper (up to 6000 words) almost two months before the commencement of the

Congress. The papers were peer-reviewed and the best five were selected. It is my great honor, pleasure and privilege to report that the paper under the title *Introduction of Compulsory Physical Education in Elementary Schools in Croatia* was among the five equally awarded papers and both authors (me and my colleague Srećko Mavrek) received the Young Scholars Awards.



From the left: Srećko Mavrek, MEd; Prof. James W. Riordan, PhD, President of CESH; Prof. Angela Teja, PhD, President-Elect of CESH and President of the Organising Committee of the 9th CESH Congress of Sport History, and Zrinko Čustonja, BEd, after the Young Scholars Awards competition announcement

Among the many presented papers I would like to outline one, for me very interesting, under the title *The Evolution of the European Union’s Involvement in Sport*. The paper was presented by Marta Arevalo Baeza from Spain. She tried to explain the evolution of the European Union’s involvement and its present state of development. According to her, the European Union’s involvement in sport has been developing from the mid-seventies to the present. That involvement has been guided by the political will to promote the social dimension and by the conflicts between the professional sports and the laws of the Common Market. At the moment, the issue of currently non-existent sport-related legislation is being debated in the European Union and some issues have been discussed during the

European Year of Education through Sport 2004. Other sessions and papers were devoted to various topics ranging from Olympism and anti-Olympism, sport and politics, physical education and nationalism and internationalism to symbols and sporting images, water and land, institutions in history, etc.

The 10th European Congress for Sport History (CESH) will take place in Malaga, Spain, November 2 – 6, 2005. The Congress

theme will be Sport and Violence. Violence has been jolting the world much longer than 9/11. The history of Europe and, until very recently, of Spain is a long history of violence. What is the nature of the relationship of physical education and sport with violence? Does sport generate violence? Is it a remedy against violence? Is there something in the idea of an Olympic Truce? That is to be seen and heard in Spain in November 2005.

Zrinko Čustonja