

Dear Reader!

Numerous important international sports events, as well as scientific and professional meetings of kinesiologists or sport scientists are scheduled for the year 2004. Yet, the most important of them all are, undoubtedly, the Olympic Games that are going to be held in Greece. The Games have travelled a long way all over the world and returned to its cradle, to the place of its origins where everything started back in the ancient times of Hellas. That is why these Olympic Games are far more than a global sports competition event – they are a homage, a tribute, and a memory paid to the roots of sport, to the sophistication of the sports spirit in a pursuit for improvement, mastery and success, and to beauty of the body in movement, with its harmony, technique and power, that aspires after perfection, achievement and progress. It is the eternal human yearning for the balance between spirit and body which has lived in sports culture from ancient times till today.

At the same time we must understand the influence the modern Olympic Games and all other forms of competitive and non-competitive sport, like the ever growing movement of “Sport for all”, has on governments, responsible ministries and state departments, local administrations, public media, state and private foundations, research and professional associations and institutions encouraging them to cooperate in a joint effort to improve all the segments of sports by means of legislation and policy introduction, political stands, information dissemination, state grants, various sponsorship and promotion modes, research studies, and the implementation of scientific findings and inferences. The purpose of the activity is not only the achievement of adequate sports results, but it is preferably a way in which a country and its citizens can be presented to others; it is an opportunity for profitable investments in efficient procedures of public health perseverance and enhancement; it is an

opportunity to conduct numerous fundamental and applied research studies in various fields of science like social sciences, biomedicine, technical science and all interdisciplinary fields of kinesiology. That is why, due to its prominent political, social, economical, educational, public health-related and scientific potential, sport has nowadays become an unavoidable factor of everyday living of both communities and individuals, a factor which enriches the spiritual and material living standards.

No wonder then that the European Parliament and Commission have designated 2004 as the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES), meaning that the attention of the world will not only be on the major sporting events (the Olympic Games in Athens, the Paralympic Games in Athens, the UEFA Championships in Portugal), but on the general value of sport in life, particularly in the formal and informal education of young people. The most important objectives of EYES are: encouraging participation in sport for educational, social and cultural purposes; bringing learning and sport together to benefit young people; using sport as a means of social integration and the last, but by no means the least important aim is to increase the levels of activity to improve health.

In many milieus a broad basis of numerous sports, as well as the one of sports recreation, is founded on liking sport and the enthusiasm of numerous well-trained volunteers. Their élan, tirelessness and charm appeal to children, the youth, adults and senior citizens who join them in sport and exercise activities. In that way volunteers help educated professionals with animation, and in performing less complex professional jobs as well. In order to improve the efficiency of exercise and sport, to enhance responsibility and to avoid mistakes (some of them even fatal), the training of volunteers should be carefully planned and conducted. Therefore, several global and regional meetings

have already been held across Europe which addressed the political, organisational and professional issues regarding the training of volunteers working in sport.

None the less important is the professional training and education of personnel for sport which has become almost exclusively the responsibility of the institutions of higher (or tertiary) education. Namely, the amount of new findings and insights into the regularities and issues of sport and exercise, as well as the aspects of practical implications are growing very fast. Therefore, a critical approach and careful selection of information is indispensable prior to any lecture on sport and exercise to students of training courses, undergraduate and graduate studies. Such a tendency is clearly noticeable in the higher education curricula across Europe, which are becoming ever more convergent.

Numerous professional and scientific journals in kinesiology and in cognate and adjacent scientific fields pursue the same goal: to convey the advances and to enlighten their readership on the multidisciplinary and vast number of issues regarding sport and exercise. We hope the articles published in this issue will

contribute to the enlargement of the body of kinesiological (sport science) knowledge. The published contributions deal with: dynamic rigid-body modelling in motor learning, protein supplementation in rehabilitation following knee arthroscopic surgery, personality in high-risk sports athletes, the leaping performance of 7-year old novice rhythmic gymnasts, tactics in cross-country skiing, the volume and intensity of cyclic movements in handball, performance parameters decisive for sets winning or losing in volleyball, ventilation during swimming, efficacy in soccer game, differentiation of skeletal muscles in 9-year-olds, and sport for the elderly. A great variety of topics is apparent as is apparent the vast field of research interests in kinesiology.

The number of contributions submitted for evaluation and publication is growing steadily, but we are equally eagerly looking forward to having your articles, dear Reader, in the future. Please notice that the Guidelines for Contributors have undergone certain changes – the cover letter has become obligatory and we have defined its contents, a short abstract in German is also required, and we have standardised the quality minimum of digital photographs.

Editorial Board