



3RD EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND SPORT "WOMEN, SPORT AND PARTNERSHIP" - ATHENS

This 3rd European Conference on Women and Sport has covered a wide range of topics. All the presentations, from the keynote speakers and from the floor, have again confirmed the value and quality of the contributions which women can make to the development of sport. Sport cannot afford to ignore these contributions any more; and, of course sport, like other areas of life, must respond positively to women's wish to play, achieve in and work in sport.

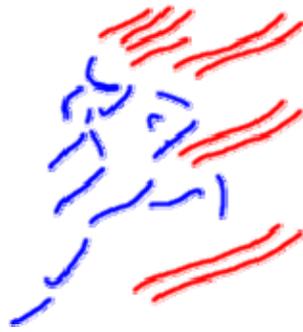
The Conference has shown, again and again, the need for continued commitment by governments and non-government agencies, to improve women's opportunities in and through sport. While much has been achieved since the Brighton Declaration in 1994, there is a great deal still to be done. Targets have been set, like the IOC minimum 10% of NOCs as well as other of administrative and executive bodies of Sport to be women by 2001 and here in Greece, a minimum of 20% women. But these targets are only steps on the way towards full equality, and we will need to continue to work to change not only the structures, but the culture of sport.

When the Conference opened 4 days ago, I mentioned the honour which Greece has, both to host the Conference, and to be host city for the Olympic Games in 2004. The success of our bid for 2004 was not only rooted in our classical historic and sporting heritage; it was also a recognition of the capacity of modern Greece to manage the most complex and exciting sporting festival in the world today. As President Samaranch said, this will require partnership - the theme also of this Conference. I hope that Athens 2004 will play its part in further developing equality for women in the Olympic and international sports communities.

The Conference has reminded us that different countries and different organizations are at different stages on this path to gender equality. But all of us need help and support from the various individuals and organizations which have played such an important part in the success of the Conference. And there are common themes which need to be addressed in different ways in different societies:

Inclusive and sensitive sports policies - inclusive of different population groups; of different organizations and structures; and of all aspects of sport and physical activity;
The need for basic information, data and research, so that we may evaluate progress and identify problems accurately;

A strong ethical framework which includes respect and protection for everyone taking part in sport, and commitment to the principles of the Brighton Declaration. It is clear that an equitable sport is a better sport for everyone;
Understanding of the ways in which different strategies and programmes can bring



about change, including careful decisions about the use of women's committees and conferences, and the strategy of mainstreaming. We can only manage such difficult decisions if we continue to speak with each other, to share good practice, and to support each other through the network of contacts which are developing through the European Women and Sport movement;

The fundamental need for partnerships - partnerships between sport and other sectors; between women and sport groups and other women's groups; between governmental and non-governmental organizations; between those working in elite sport and those developing sport at community level; and most important of all, between men and women. Women and sport is our shared responsibility. The need for sustained investment in the development of sporting opportunity for all women and girls, at all levels, across a whole range of activities, as well as investment in those women who excel and achieve in their sports; The need to encourage the media into better quality, more respectful and more accurate coverage of women's sport and which celebrates women's athletic achievements;

The need for research and scientific work which is gender-inclusive and which takes into account the well-being, values and concerns of women and girls, which challenges social and cultural stereotypes and breaks physiological myths; The need to protect and support systems on which the development of sport for women is dependent, like school physical education.

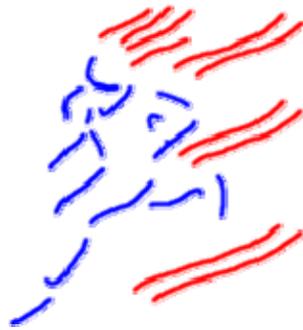
CONCLUSIONS

During these last 4 days, have emerged several important issues on which the 3rd European Conference wishes to make recommendations:

☐ Conference endorses the 1998 Windhoek Call for Action, and encourages all European and national governmental and non-governmental organizations working in sport, to identify specific actions which can be taken to implement the principles of the Brighton Declaration;

☐ Urges that all organizations in sport work closely with partners in other sectors to meet the objectives of the Windhoek Call for action;

☐ Supports the development of a European network of women in Physical Education, to work with International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education, the European Women and Sport Group and European Physical Education organizations to address the issue of the World Crisis in Physical Education;



☒ Commends to the International Working Group and the European Women and Sport Group, the need to encourage the development of effective networks, sources of information and bilateral relationships to support work for women and sport across Europe and the world, especially in countries facing crisis or reconstruction;

☒ Commends to national sports organizations and international federations, the production and implementation of positive guidelines for media coverage of women's sport; Submission of an annual report to the country holding the women's sports chair, on the part of representatives of all member-states regardless of whether they belong to government or no-governmental organizations about the degree to which the above have been achieved and.

☒ Establishment of a meeting every two years of representatives of government and non government organizations exchange views, strengthen institutions and promote positions on the progress of women's sport. It is proposed that this meeting is held, after consultation with the International Olympic Academy, at the latter's facilities in Olympia, where for 3 or 4 days the progress be assessed of cooperation in the domain of Women and Sport

☒ Commends the leadership shown by the International Olympic Committee and the Greek Government for setting minimum percentage targets for women in NOCs and government committees; urges that the targets are reviewed and re-set at regular intervals; and recommends the use of effective persuasion and/or sanctions, for countries or organizations which fail to meet these targets;

☒ Strongly recommends to the Medical Commission of the International Olympic Committee that it reconsider its position on gender verification, and cease the practice immediately, since it is a source of embarrassment and humiliation for female athletes; is antithetical to gender equity; and is not scientifically reliable or ethically acceptable.

These recommendations, which I hope you approve, illustrate the capacity of women to change sport for the better. We in Greece are proud to have Chaired the European Women and Sport Group for the last 2 years, to have been involved in the Group since its inception in 1989, and to have hosted this Conference. We look forward to supporting the Group under its new Chair in Finland, and hope to continue our relationships during the 2 years before the 4th European Conference in Helsinki in the year 2000.