
FIRST EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM

Introduction

One hundred and seven young leaders in athletics, representing 37 European Athletics Member Federations, took part in the first European Youth Forum (EYF) staged in conjunction with the European Athletics Championships in Gothenburg from 5th to 10th August 2006.

The aim of the EYF was to bring participants together to share experiences with sports leaders and others from the Athletics family, stimulating further development of European Athletics and make Europe smaller by connections through countries.

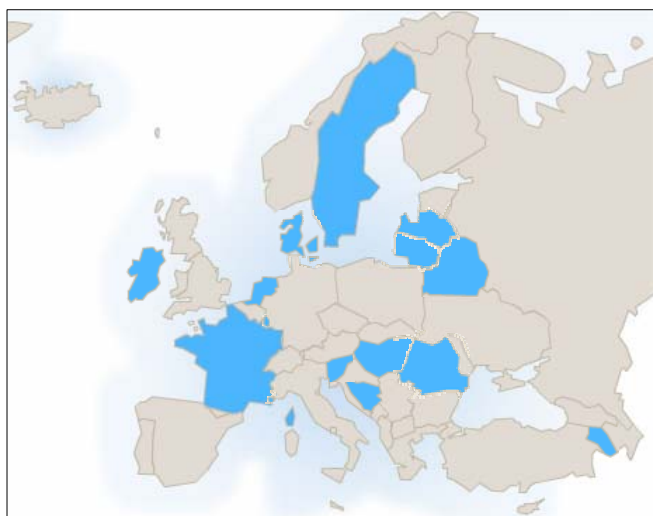
After the EYF, the participating Member Federations were contacted through a questionnaire. The aim of the survey was to give them the opportunity to share their thoughts about the event, so that the European Athletics could assess the value it provided and prepare for similar activities in the future.

Analysis

The survey consisted of ten open questions (see Appendix), which allowed the Member Federations to express impressions as well as quantifiable data.

Fifteen Member Federations answered the survey, representing 40% of those that sent participants to the EYF. Twelve replied before the deadline. All of the responses were considered.

The Member Federations responding were:



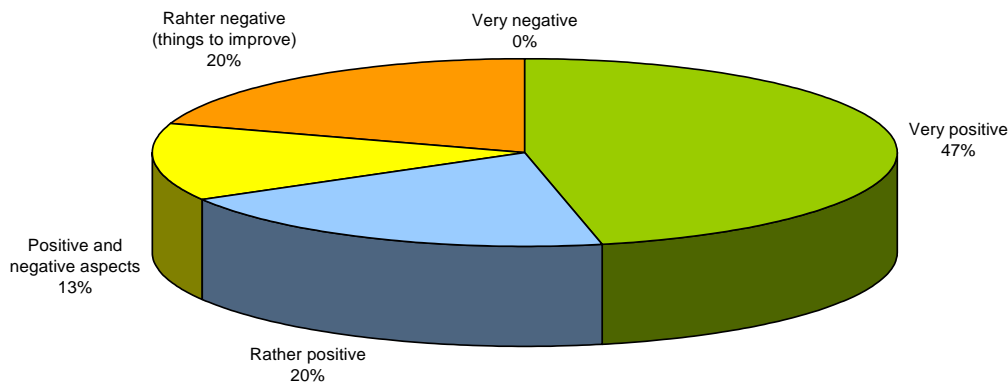
Armenia (ARM)
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH)
Belarus (BLR)
Denmark (DEN)
France (FRA)
Hungary (HUN)
Ireland (IRL)
Latvia (LAT)
Lithuania (LIT)
Luxemburg (LUX)
Monaco (MON)
Netherlands (NED)
Romania (ROM)
Slovenia (SLO)
Sweden (SWE)

Picture 1: Member Federations that answered the EYF post-event survey questionnaire

A. General evaluation of the EYF

The overall impression of the Forum was very positive. Eighty percent of the participants qualified it (taking into account all the information that they received) as "very positive", while the others (3 of them) considered it "rather positive".

Concerning the announcement procedure and organisational aspects, the viewpoints are a little more mixed although still positive in the majority. Two Member Federations saw both positive and negative aspects while 3 clearly identified negative points that need to be improved.



Picture 2: Impressions of the announcement procedure and the organisational aspects of the EYF

The identified strong points are the following:

- Discussion and workshop / sharing and exchanging experiences with other countries 60% (9)
- Meet relevant athletics people (famous athletes, European Athletics' personalities) 53% (8)
- Being close to the athletes / attending the event 40% (6)
- Networking / contact establishment 40% (6)
- Interest given to the EYF by the LOC and European Athletics 13% (2)
- Get to know about the social programme 7% (1)

Fifty-three percents of the participants do not find any weak point, while the others identified the following aspects to be improved:

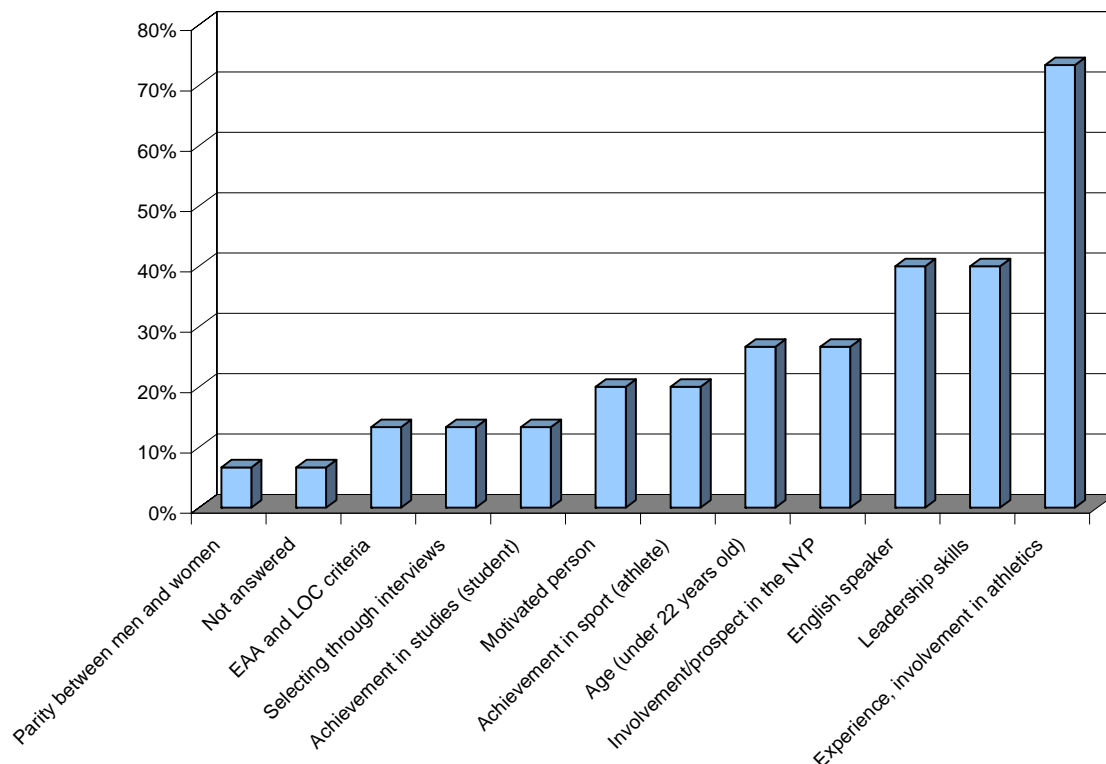
- Seminar too general / too basic level 13% (2)
- Problems related with language 7% (1)
- Questionnaires answered several times without having a proper feed-back 7% (1)
- No proper goodbye after the farewell dinner 7% (1)
- Volunteers in charge of the workshops badly informed and poor in English 7% (1)
- Accommodation (size of the rooms) 7% (1)
- Lack of information before the Forum 7% (1)

- Time management (clash of time for seminar and attendance to the Championships) 13% (2)
- No access to the warm-up area 7% (1)

Remark: The first number indicates the percentage of the cross-section, while the second represents the number of Member Federations having named the criteria.

B. Targeted people

According to the results of the survey, participants of the EYF were, in the majority, people already involved in the athletics family, having experience and involvement in the sport. Almost 40% of the participants also had to show leadership and English skills to be selected.



Picture 3: Selection criteria that were used by Member Federations to select the EYF participant(s)

In general, the criteria that were set to select the participants show that the Member Federations took the EYF seriously and wanted that their best elements take profit from it. 73% said they already had specific plans for utilising the individual participant(s) nominated for the EYF in the future.

The Member Federations showed interest in knowing more about the EYF as 60% required a written post-Forum report from the participants, while the others preferred to collect information through discussion, conference or oral reports.

C. Ideas and propositions

The Member Federations seem to be happy with the first edition of the EYF, as 93% (14 out of 15) said they would be in favour of nominating participants from their country for a future EYF or similar activity.



Picture 4: Group workshop during the first EYF

Interested in the development of the EYF, several participants made comments and gave valuable ideas to improve the next edition.

Concerning the concept of the EYF, the suggestions include:

- Forum, or similar activities, to be held more often.
- Share more experiences of the participants (for example through a short presentation given by all the participants of their situation as leaders and the role of athletics in their country. Those could be prepared before the Forum and published on the website).
- Improve the website to create a real link for young people in athletics.
- Tasks (even small) given to the participants by the LOC during the event, so that the theoretical and practical are mixed.
- More collective activities during the Forum.
- Gather again and discuss all the ideas that came up during the Forum so that to build a mutual plan for the future of athletics in Europe, a basis to keep up the contacts across countries.

Concerning the content of the EYF, the suggestions include:

- Workshop dedicated to coaching, with the participation of great athletes and their personal trainers.
- Workshop dedicated to the organisational aspects of national and international competitions.
- Workshop dedicated to the different kinds of youth structures that exist in the Member Federations, with identification and discussion of their advantages and disadvantages.

Conclusion

According to the results of the survey, the European Athletics Member Federations feel that the EYF was beneficial both for the participants and for athletics:

- The EYF gives credit to the participants for their day-to-day efforts in athletics. They are now given more recognition in their respective countries.
- The EYF opens the way with a real collaboration between young athletics leaders and strengthens the athletics family.

Based on the survey results, we can say that the concept of European Youth Forum is a valuable product that needs to continue to be developed for the general benefit of the European Athletics.

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European Athletics*

Appendix

Feedback questions that were sent to the Member Federations that sent participant(s) to the first edition of the EYF.

1. Taking into account all the information you have received, what is your overall impression of the Forum?
 2. What are your impressions of the announcement procedure and organizational aspects of the Forum?
 3. Were there any particular strong points of the Forum of which you are aware?
 4. Were there any particular weak points of the Forum of which you are aware?
 5. What criteria were used to select the Forum participant(s) from your country?
 6. Did you require the participants to provide a post-Forum report?
 7. Does your federation have specific plans for utilizing the individual participant(s) nominated for the Forum in the future?
 8. Would you be in favour of nominating participants from your country for future Forum?
 9. Are there any points or elements you would like to see incorporated in a future Forum or similar activity?
 10. Are there any other points related to the Forum that you would like to make?
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