

INTERVIEW with PATHE leader from Associate Partner



Name: Iztok Retar
Position: Expert Director
Organization: Sports Union of Slovenia
Country: Slovenia

1. ISCA's and ISCA's members philosophy is that sport is not just about competition and exercise, but also involves having a good time and making friends.

How do you see international activities such as festivals, exchanges and sports tournaments making special means of creating international understanding?

SFA Organisations play very important role in Europe, we play Sport for all to become a popular tool used to further integration, inclusion and the development of society. One of the most important tools is international cooperation, international meetings, festivals, Congresses... SUS opinion is that the young generation perceives international cooperation not only as a tool, but as a culture, because the future requires a global view and a culture of international cooperation. And PATHe is one of those important activities: to share, to change and to give knowledge, experiences and ideas.

I would like that Sport for All is not seen as a by-product of development but as an engine.

2. What do your national Health initiatives include and what are the preliminary results?

Sport Union of Slovenia has developed a quality label "**HEALTHY CLUB**" for health directed movement and for exercise offers by the SUS members. The introduction of this label helps realise our efforts to ensure and offer quality and health beneficial exercise programs in sport societies and to constantly improve these programs.

With the label "Healthy Club" the societies are able to prove to the outer public that their offer of "healthy exercise programs" is of high quality. The label is enable the people who are interested in exercise to find an exercise program that suits them best.

All activities in the field of healthy movement – sport need to be carried out carefully and with feeling, the same goes for dealing with the participants. This can be ensured with properly qualified trainers who have the knowledge, the teaching skills and psycho-social abilities needed and who will also take into account the criteria of "Healthy Club" to:

- developing a culture of physical activity for health strengthening with the entire SLO population, especially with children and youth,
- introducing physical activity for health strengthening for all age groups of the Slovene population and for the disabled while taking into consideration the actual state of health,
- ensuring the access and conditions to carry out a safe, efficient and pleasant physical health beneficial activity in living, tourist, school, sports and other environments.
- introducing competent planning, coordination and performance of activities and projects connected with physical activity that are in the interest of the public – for education, research, media and action projects, ensuring access, quality and safe exercise, maintenance of sport facilities, etc.,
- introducing connecting and cooperation among medical and sport experts and science in encouraging the population to start a regular and systematic physical activity,
- developing a culture of the field of nutrition
- introducing planning of cross-sector policies implementation

3. Lack of physical activity among Europeans is significant and has become a huge societal challenge. What does your association plan to do in 2009 and further on to overcome this challenge, to promote physical activity and mobilise larger population cooperation?

SUS plans for 2009 are:

- to upgrade the "Healthy club" project on the national level with more specific Education program for trainers and club managers
- development of the "Handbook of the good examples" which will be the basis for the future activities on the local level
- to give initiatives and guidelines for the "National strategy of diet, nutrition and physical activity" as a national partner

4. If we suppose that you would become a "Minister of Health and Sport" in your country, what would you suggest to SFA Associations in your country and to European Commission in the filed of Health and Physical activity?

SFA Associations have to be encouraged for networking within the NGO sector , not just in the »health and sport« field. This way they get more possibilities also for developing the projects on the EU level. EC has to ensure communication between the Government and NGOs at the national, regional and local level for cooperation among NGOs at the local, national and international level. SFA Assoctaions have to

increase public awareness about the significance of SFA Associations and civil society in Slovenia, but without making common steps with GOs that is impossible. As Minister I would encourage and support the development of SFA Associations in Slovenia, advance cooperation and networking among all NGOs and GOs and local authorities, develop the »national strategy for promoting voluntary work and solidarity«, analyse and address the needs of target groups, share information, knowledge and experience and ensure effective lobbying.