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WORLD KARATE CONFEDERATION

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6th European Championships Banja Luka, Republika Srpska 6th – 8th June 2008

The *Karate Savez Republike Srpske* KSRS joined the WKC in 1999 and hosted the very successful 2008 European Championships. In competition they have been very successful in all WKC Championships. The KSRS is one of the few WKC member federations who participate in both kumite disciplines Shobu Ippon and Shobu Sanbon. The KSRS male and female athletes were almost always in the medal ranking. Everyone in the WKC was delighted that at long last the KSRS applied to host a championship.

The expectations of the European federations participating in Banja Luka were more than fulfilled. The organising committee under the leadership of *Rajko Vučićević*, KSRS Secretary General and WKC Senior Referee, as well as KSRS President *Dr. Siniša Gatarić* made this tournament one of the best held in WKC history.

The Referee and Coach Seminar was conducted by Chief Referee *Gerold Reifenauer* with the assistance of Technical Director *Ladislav Klementis* as well as the members of the Referee Commission *Dr. Viatcheslav Timofeev*, *Thomas Specht*, *Franco Sebenello* and *Pavel Trnka*. 41 new judges, judges and referees were appointed after successfully accomplishing the championships.

On Friday the mayor of Banja Luka gave a reception for the presidents of the WKC federations and the Presidential Board at the City Hall.

After the reception the WKC European Meeting took place. KSRS President *Gatarić* welcomed all teams and the officials and reported on the preparations for the championships. WKC President *Nicović* gave an overview on the development of the WKC since the World Championships held last year in Bergamo. He sincerely welcomed the new member federations participating for the first time at a WKC event: Mr. *Yurij Khomenko* from the *Federation of Shotokan Karate of the Samara Region* (FSKSR, Russia) and Mr. *Vitaliano Morandi* from the *Federazione Italiana Karate* (FIK, Italy).

The delegate of the WKC Slovenia, Mr. *Franc Peterka*, gave a summary on the preparations of the 6th *WKC Junior & Cadet World Championships and World Cup for Children* in Novo Mesto 23rd to 26th October 2008. At this moment everything is running smoothly and the organising committee as well as the city of Novo Mesto are well prepared to welcome young people from all the five continents.

The delegate of the *Shikon Budokai SKB*, Mr. *Martin Nožička*, informed the meeting that his federation would apply officially to host the 2011 World Championships in Liberec, Czech Republic. Liberec has a very big and professional sporthall with all facilities and huge hotels nearby. Liberec can easily be reached from the international airport of Dresden (Germany) one a half hours by train or bus and also from the capital Prague taking approximately two hours. This announcement of this application was warmly welcomed.

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Also Mr. *Vitaliano Morandi* from the *Federazione Italiana Karate FIK* stated that his federation is ready to host the 2010 World Cup for Children in Venice, Italy. The delegates warmly accepted this declaration. WKC Director *Maurizio Micheli* gave a report on the WKC Presidential Board meeting held this morning. The Presidential Board proposes to split the Juniors and Cadets from the Children Championships after this year because of the large number of entries and the difficulty for the hosting federations to organise such big events catering for a thousand to two thousand participants.

This time only 21 federations participated at the European Championships. The reason lay in the difficulty of many teams to get to Banja Luka. The capital of the Republika Srpska has an airport but it is served only by a very few airports, none from central or western Europe. All those who took part in this event experienced a very high standard of organisation, a perfect venue and the best facilities possible. The Italian federation FIAM had the most successful team with 10 gold medals followed by the KSRS team with 6 gold medals and the SKU team (Serbia) with 5 gold medals. In this regard one has to mention that the FIAM entered three kata styles and therefore also had more chances for medals. In the contrary the KSRS practises only one kata style. And the German federation DJKB practises only Shotokan and the kumite discipline Shobu Ippon and can achieve only medals in these categories.

For the first time Kobudo was displayed at a WKC championships. Only the Slovakian federation SFKBU brought athletes in this discipline. But after experiencing this traditional art several federations will also bring competitors with them next time.

On Sunday, 8th June, the second day of the tournament, our Technical Director *Ladislav Klementis* celebrated his 60th birthday. WKC President *Marko Nicović* and the members of the Presidential Board congratulated this outstanding karateka at his special anniversary, by wishing him all the best for the future and presented him with a gift from the WKC.

We can truly say that the federations not participating in Banja Luka missed a great event.