

Leiria - Portugal : 8-9-10 November 2019

Opening speech

Dear members Meet Organizers of the European Athletics Promotion circuit, dear candidate to join our organization, dear Tatiana congress organizer and dear Juventude Vidigalense, organizer club member,

We decided, 5 years ago, to organize the Convention into our new members' location and we had a sort of waiting list which obliged us to accept quite a long delay before assigning this destination: Leiria !

It was in Biella, November 2014. At this time, the candidates were Dour, former member, who re-presented their meet after 4 years absence, Valence and then Leiria presented by Daniel Pereira and Diogo Correira.

We had already booked congresses in Nivelles 2015, for the 25th EAP anniversary, Amsterdam 2016, Budapest 2017, Valence 2018 and finally Leiria 2019. And here we are !

In 5 years you organized a traditional meet, then a Throwing tournament and finally, *finally*, a youth meet. For the reasons you have just explained to us, you have taken the decision to put into brackets your organizing activity. I fully understand the reasons, but I personally regret it. I think that all of us would like to come back to you here in beautiful Leiria. So, yes, keep the door wide open and build a new project. We would like to help you again, and better, with the promotion of a new meet in the near future.

Some of the reasons of your decisions are maybe to be found into what I call, misunderstandings. The misunderstandings are something our circuit has to face. In truth, the clarification of our regulations is part of a huge project that I undertook with the project EAP2020, announced at the 2017 Budapest Convention.

We have the need and the urgency to define ourselves and define our fundamental identity. Athletics is being devoured by the same principles that govern the consumer economy and the needs of the general public and mass media. The formatting of our sport is in my opinion a drift to which we do not want to go. This is becoming a sport in which we do not recognize ourselves anymore.

It is *athleticism* that changes some fundamental principles of the competition itself, which eliminates trials, it is not our *athleticism*.

I know why, Noël Levêque, Giorgio Ferrando and myself have thought in 1989 of a circuit of meets and then created in 1990 this independent organization. We had a precise idea. There's no day in which I have a doubt of the authenticity of our principles and I know Noël and Giorgio who still firmly think and believe the same.

The EAP2020, as a sort of milestone, is a project in which I want to reaffirm those principles by giving the opportunity to be better understood and shared. It's our identity we want to express through it.

TrueAthletics is not always a hashtag you systematically find on our digital communication. Is part of our claims and “the athletics we are proud of” is not a simply a slogan.

What is an EAP meet and what is *not* an EAP meet?

What are the key points, what are our values? What an EAP meet do better than other meets, why is an EAP meet, ... an EAP meet. In what we recognize an EAP meet? What are our particularities? Why facilitating, *promoting*, the participation of your athletes into other meets in Europe is to be considered a real privilege?

All this will be part of our discussions, our projects, and finally our “toolbox” and “starter kits”. The EAP will have his Manifesto, the declaration of what we are and how we will do athletics in Europe.

Define who we are, what and the way we do it, give us the opportunity to measure it and improve our “EAP lifestyle”.

In what we are different, in what we can consider us TrueAthletics ?

Moving forward, together: this is today’s program.

Thank you for your attention. I wish you an excellent congress to all !

Pablo Cassina
EAP president