

2011 World Gymnaestrada

THREE CANDIDATE CITIES!

Moutier, November 7, 2005: When the registration deadline expired, three cities had bid for organisation of the 14th edition of the World Gymnaestrada in July, 2011. The cities are Lausanne (SUI), Brussels (BEL) and Amsterdam (NED).



These cities and the countries they represent all boast a long-standing gymnastics tradition and, on occasion, have already hosted this kind of event, as was the case in 1991 in Amsterdam. The Netherlands organised the inaugural edition of the World Gymnaestrada in Rotterdam in 1953. Thus, the country is aspiring to a third mandate.

Switzerland is also a country steeped in gymnastics tradition, an integral part of its cultural heritage. The World Gymnaestrada made a stop in Basel in 1969 and a second in Zurich in 1982, making this a third candidacy for Switzerland as well.

On the other hand, Belgium and Brussels are in the running for the first time. But the candidacy has blossomed out of a country that has a high regard for gymnastics and that has

been cultivating the values of the sport for ages. More precisely since ... July 23, 1881, when the FIG was founded in Liège, Belgium!

The World Gymnaestrada is the most significant event on the FIG calendar. It is held once every four years and brings together nearly 30,000 gymnasts, three times more athletes than the Olympic Games! This sociocultural event commingles show, games, competitions and forums. It unites gymnasts of all ages, from all continents, who, over a period of two weeks, present group productions, sit in on courses and seminars on education, training and health and have fun talking about their experiences as gymnasts in a unique, multicultural environment.

The World Gymnaestrada is also a demonstration of an enormous output of energy and coordination for the host country and city. In 2007, Dornbirn (AUT) will host the 13th edition. The organisers are already getting into position, with record participation expected.

To date, 22,600 gymnasts have registered!

The President's point of view

We asked the General Gymnastics Committee President, Mrs Margaret Sikkens Ahlquist to make a comment. Here is her reaction: "I am happy to give you my thoughts about this. First of all. The three candidates are "Gymnastics nations" They have a lot of experience in General Gymnastics and also in organising big events. This makes me happy. Again we have candidates from Europe and I am not surprised. The last couple of years I have heard about federations outside Europe that would like to candidate but they were hesitating. I have had discussions with Australia, Japan, USA, and South Africa, just to mention some of them. All federations I have been talking to have the capacity of organising a World Gymnaestrada and I am sure they would do it very professional. The fear is of course to lose participants. This will probably be the case but if we get some new federations in, by moving it outside Europe we win something else. The main problem today is the political situation in the world. It has changed a lot the last couple of years and people are more careful with travelling. Most of the World Gymnaestrada participants today, come from Europe and the majority is adult people with money. So the economy is not the problem. The thing is they don't want to be too far away from home. Everyone is aware of this and I think that that is the main reason we have no candidate from outside Europe.

Personally I am aware of that the "travel behaviour" is beginning to change again but we only need one terrorist attack somewhere and this will change again. It is not a stabile "behaviour" among travellers today. So for the future we can only guess and hope of course. The World Gymnaestrada is an international event and it should be possible to place it anywhere around the world."



In 2003 in Lisbon (POR), the IOC President, Mr Jacques Rogge, personally extended his message to the 25'000 gymnasts attending the closing ceremony.



The General Gymnastics Committee is responsible for the management of the World Gymnaestrada within the FIG.



The World Gymnaestrada is a unique phenomenon which affects all categories of age groups, all cultures. Dornbirn (AUT) is expecting to welcome a record of participation. Contact: <http://www.gymnaestrada.at/>