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## **2007 WORLD GYMNAESTRADA**

### ***Already 44 nations to Dornbirn / Austria!***

*Dornbirn / Moutier, April 12, 2005:* On April 08 saw the official opening of the 1st Information meeting being held for the 13th FIG World Gymnaestrada 2007. 44 nations, represented by 76 participants have converged on Dornbirn for the 3 day meeting!

An historical record!

The Organising Committee has prepared very informative presentations and has provided the opportunity for all representatives to visit the various venues and facilities that will be utilised in 2007 for the 20,000+ participants that will take part in the 13th World Gymnaestrada in the Austrian Vorarlberg.

The World Gymnaestrada is the International Gymnastics Federation's largest event with about 25,000 participants attending the last event held in Lisbon, Portugal, July 2003.

### **Historical basement**

The origin of the FIG World Gymnaestrada, the World Gymnastics Festival, can be traced back to national gymnastics festivals. This kind of national celebration already existed in the second half of the 19th century in Sweden, Norway, Austria, Germany and Switzerland. A similar event was the Sokol Festival in former Czechoslovakia. These festivals started out as purely national events, and later on, foreign guests were invited.

The idea of an international gymnastics festival was first realized in 1939. 12 countries attended the first Lingiade and 14 participated with 110 groups at the second. The Lingiades were organized by the Swedish Gymnastics Association. At the FIG General Assembly of 1949, J.H.F. Sommer of the Netherlands proposed to carry out an international gymnastics festival organized by the FIG. In 1950, the FIG General Assembly decided to integrate an International Gymnastics Festival into their official event programme called the "Gymnaestrada". The first Gymnaestrada took place in 1953 in Rotterdam.

The World Gymnaestrada aims at making the value and versatility of General Gymnastics known all over the world and at awakening people's interest in movement and sports activities. General Gymnastics brings together gymnasts from various cultural backgrounds in order to contribute to a better understanding between the peoples. It aims to promote health, fitness and global solidarity.

The 13th World Gymnaestrada will be held in Dornbirn, Austria 8 – 14 July, 2007.

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