



**general progress report
2017**



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»»» special thanks to our sponsors and partners

WBSC
WORLD
BASEBALL SOFTBALL
CONFEDERATION



»»» ESF congress 2018

**Thursday
February 8th** »»»

18:00	20:00	Executive Council Meeting
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All day		Arrival Delegates / Registration
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**Friday
February 9th** »»»

9:00	9:45	Financial Committee
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10:00	11:30	Development Committee
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11:30	11:45	Break
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11:45	13:30	Technical and Competitions Committee
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13:30	14:00	Lunch
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14:00	16:00	CEB/ESF Joint Marketing Committee two parts
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16:15	17:15	WBSC Europe - Joint CEB/ESF Presidents Meeting
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18:30	20:00	Dinner (individual)
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21:00		Welcome Cocktail Sponsor Lee and Polk County
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**Saturday
February 10th** »»»

9:00	10:30	ESF Congress session 1
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10:30	10:45	Break
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10:50	13:00	ESF Congress session 2
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13:00	14:00	Lunch
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15:00	16:00	ESF EC Post Congress meeting
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17:00	18:00	WBSC Europe Congress
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19:00		Gala Dinner for all CEB/ESF Delegates
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**Sunday
February 11th** »»»

All day		Departure Delegates possible sightseeing
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Sponsors:



» » » softball europe

"Softball Europe is all of you coaches, managers, players, volunteers, and fans," said Gabriel Waage during the Opening Ceremony of the Women's European Championship in Bollate.

"It's not just a logo, it's the whole concept, that should help us communicate softball as a sport to everyone, who may not know our sport yet. The logo represents the one thing that is the most typical for our sport - the yellow softball - but there's more into it. The stitching is not just stitching, it shows movement, it shows that we're developing and moving forward, it's dynamic. Together with other graphics, the whole concept of introduction to our sport goes together really nicely. With this strong campaign we're starting a new era of softball in Europe," said John Austin, the ESF VP for Marketing.



Our new brand, Softball Europe is being developed as a way to promote the sport of softball rather than the organizations that administer and run the game in Europe. Softball Europe was created to be used by everyone who loves softball and wants to see it and help it grow and expand.

The campaign is based on strong visuals, which correspond with what softball is like. Pick a photo, choose the right wording, get custom-made promotional visuals for your country in your language at se@europeansoftball.org

#lovesoftball

Hashtag #lovesoftball has its mission - to interconnect everyone who loves softball. Tweets, Facebook posts, videos, photos, articles, emails... if softball is included, #lovesoftball is included. And you can go crazy with it! Join the movement at lovesoftball.org.



ESF logo - logo of the organization - will remain in use for institutional purposes. Official announcements, letters to national federations, ESF Congress, financial matters, legal, etc...

The ESF will always be the organizer of European championships and cups. When there's an official tournament, then there's the ESF flag.

»»» president's report



Dear friends,
Let me welcome all of you, my closest friends, to the most historic Congress. It is exactly one year since our election Congress in Belgrade, a really challenging year is behind us.

I would like to thank all of you for all your efforts in promoting, developing, and making softball the top priority in your country. Your effort is the most important for all of us, for development of softball, for recognition of softball in every corner of Europe, and finally for me and the ESF board. Your initiatives make me and the board members stronger because your enthusiasm and dedication in this hard work is a confirmation that we are working in the right direction.

I would like to mention Andre van Overbeek, who led the ESF for 8 years. I would like to reply to the last paragraph from his last President's Report from the Belgrade Congress: Your leadership was progressive, cooperative and led us in the work we all did but it also included a friendly atmosphere which inspired us to always work hard and dedicate our time for everyone. You have set a great platform from which I will simply continue and evolve with even more inspirational changes.

The new ESF board was elected in Belgrade. I would like to thank all those who dedicated time to their four-year term and decided not to run for another term. I am happy that the current board consists of different flags and we have representation from all corners of Europe. I am more than happy to have experienced players from the past on our Board, Daniela Castellani from Italy and Petra Arends from the Netherlands, they will be responsible for player's forum and top events. The Islands are represented by John Austin, who is responsible for Marketing. Scandinavia is represented by Mette Nissen Jakobsen, responsible for operations and also Kristian Pälviä is responsible for Development. The Balkan region is represented by our most experienced board member, Youri Alkalay, who is our 1st Vice President. Integrity of our work

is guaranteed by two very important people on our board, treasurer Eddy van Straelen and Secretary General Ami Baran are my close fellow workers.

One of the key tools of my Presidency is communication and information, which is very important in our current world. You have received my three reports during the last year, which presented you information and comments of the issues at hand. Your feedbacks were confirmation that all this was needed and helpful.

You also received a lot of information from our Communications Director, Helena Novotna. Minutes of the Executive Board Meetings are on the website. Information and transparency is one of the main pillars of our work.

Briefly, here is what transpired over the last year in our softball society. We continued with the Working Plan for our next four years, which was approved at the first EC Meeting in April. This document sets the outline for the next four years and defines the roles and job descriptions of each EC member. Working in line with this Plan will take us to the next level of recognition and progress.

We have arranged another meeting of the ESF Technical staff (March in Rome) with the intention to unify all of our procedures for our competitions. We have established a new position, Technical Director, appointed by the EC ESF. Mike Jennings was appointed and is responsible for all Technical and Competition issues including the preparations for all inspections, tournament assignments, development of competitions for all events and categories of softball. Finally, we ran a total of 10 events with 112 teams.

We had a very successful ESCA Camp, organized by our Development Commission (October in Diessen) with two long weekends for athletes and coaches. Almost 60 players and 40 coaches from 15 different European countries stayed at one facility, and they not only trained together, but also attended workshops, and socialized during their free time. Let me thank Ami Baran and Kristian Pälviä for preparation of this project and to Craig Montvidas for the perfect program. ESCA is moving forward and our coaches will strive to be the best in the World.

Our top accomplishments from this summer, were a few that have been on my mind for years and finally implemented. The new brand - Softball Europe - was introduced during the Women's European Softball Championship. It's not just a logo, it's a concept, that should help us to communicate softball to everyone, who may not know our sport as of yet. I thank ESF VP Marketing John Austin and ESF Communication Director Helena Novotna for making this happen.

Moving on from internal issues to external ones, which need to be mentioned in my report, too. The reason being is that many things have happened outside of the ESF which have consequences to European Softball. The most important action occurred in autumn. The WBSC Congress in Botswana provided us with a crucial decision for the future – the approval of the new Statutes. The main question and my main concern was what is the new situation? The answer is very clear, it is the position of Regional Confederations, which are now described as Continental Associations. They are now a structural and integral part of the whole organization.

We knew it would happen, but the question was what the final version would look like.

Based on previous Memorandum of co-operation between ESF and CEB (issued by November 5, 2015) the new leaderships of ESF and CEB, elected in Belgrade, established a Joint Commission headed by both Presidents with the task of preparing a new European structure based on the WBSC structural changes. This Commission met twice in May, in Prague and in December, in Paris.

With some pressure upon us, the commission did a great job and prepared the structural changes which will be in two steps starting with the WBSC Europe initial Statutes. This process was approved by legal authorities of both ESF and CEB and will be introduced at the upcoming ESF/CEB Congress in Paris.

The WBSC Congress in Botswana also elected a new leadership of the WBSC Softball Division. If our efforts in the new WBSC statutes are considered a success, then regarding the elections, we certainly failed. Europe was inconsistent with its priorities and the result is that I am the only European representative

on the 12-member board. Although I plan on being very active, I am sorry to say that the European voice will not be as strong as for example the Americas, who have in total five members on the board. I know we are stronger and I know we will overcome our differences and Europe will unify.

The Joint ESF/CEB Congress in Paris is just around the corner. Let me invite you to join us and share your ideas with us. Be a part of the creation of our future. We will have a lot of interesting issues as mentioned like the Marketing Workshop, WBSC Europe session and future of our competitions. I am really looking forward to it with pride and strength. I feel that we are on the right way and moving in the right direction.

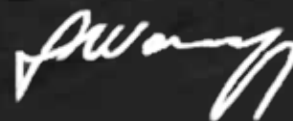
I know some countries, mainly those independent from baseball, are worried about the identity of our sport, of softball. I fully understand this concern. However, being together will make us stronger and we can achieve our goals better and move forward quicker. But we have to be strong enough and it depends on all of us.

We are all Softball Europe and we have to know that in every moment of our lives. We are coming to this union, a marriage if you like, as a self-confident partner with pride in our sport. We have to do the best for our sport without any personal ambitions. This will be our strength.

My last words to you here are to believe me when I say, I was, I am and I will always be behind you on this journey.

Best regards

Gabriel Waage
ESF President



»»» history

1976 """ The European Softball Federation (ESF) was established in ROME (Italy) by the representatives of six national Baseball and Softball Federations (Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Spain) with the objectives of promoting and developing Softball in Europe.

1978 """ The first Women's European Premiere Cup was held in Haarlem, the Netherlands.
Winner was: *Terrasvogels (NED)*.

1979 """ The ESF organized its first Senior Women's Championship in Rovereto, Italy, where six countries participated: the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Spain, and Great Britain.
Winner was: *the Netherlands*.

1990 """ The first Men's European Cup was held in Prague, the Czech Republic.
Winner was: *Hilversum ASC (NED)*.

1991 """ The first U-19 Women's European Championship was held in Prague, the Czech Republic.
Winner was: *Italy*.

1992 """ The first Women's European Cup Winners Cup was held in Píbram, the Czech Republic.
Winner was: *CUS Genova Coopsette (ITA)*.

1993 """ The first Men's European Championship was held in Prague, the Czech Republic.
Winner was: *the Netherlands*.

Women's European Cup - qualifier for the Women's Premiere Cup - was added on the list of the ESF tournaments. The first establishment took place in Nice, France.
Winner was: *Viladecans (ESP)*.

1998 """ The first U-19 Men's European Championship was held in Prague, the Czech Republic.
Winner was: *the Czech Republic*.

In 1998, Slowpitch finally made it to the list of ESF's official competitions - Coed Slowpitch European Championship was established. The first tournament took place in London, Great Britain.
Winner was: *Great Britain*.

2001 """ During the 2001 Congress in Sofia, Bulgaria the Delegates of the Congress have unanimously accepted the constitution of the ESF as an Association under Swiss Law and have modified the Statutes accordingly.

2002 """ The youngest categories were given their championships; U-16 and U-13 Women's European Championships were held in Collecchio, Italy.
U-16 winner was: *the Czech Republic*.
U-13 winner was: *Italy*.

2002 """ The first Men's European Cup Winners Cup was organized in Prague, the Czech Republic.
The winner was: *Allerød Penguins (DEN)*.

2007 """ Limeil Brevannes, France hosted the first edition of Coed Slowpitch European Super Cup.
Winner was: *London Chromies (GBR)*.

2008 """ The first U-22 Women's European Championship was held in Turin, Italy.
Winner was: *Italy*.

2012 """ The two already existing men's cup competitions were merged into one. The first Men's European Super Cup was held in Prague, the Czech Republic.
The first Super Cup winner was: *Hurricanes (DEN)*.
The first ESF Cup winner was: *Vikings (DEN)*.

The U-13 Women's European Championship was given a new format; the number of teams per National Federation was changed to „unlimited“. This way an U-13 women's cup competition called European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy (EMRYT) was created.
Winner was: *Italy 2*.

2015 """ European Softball Coaches Association (ESCA) was established to support and improve softball coaching in Europe.

The first and so far the only U-19 Women's European Super Cup was held in Ostrava, the Czech Republic.
Winner was: *Arrows Ostrava (CZE)*.

2017 """ The first U-16 Men's European Championship was held in Prague, the Czech Republic.
Winner was: *the Czech Republic*.

The first ESCA Camp - instructional softball camp for players and coaches - was held in Diessen, the Netherlands. Two five-day camps were organized with around 100 softball enthusiasts representing 15 countries.

Boys were allowed to play in mixed teams at EMRYT.

Throughout the years, the ESF has grown and today there are thirty-three national Federations or Associations in the European continent. The ESF organizes a full range of competitions for both men and women, and also for mixed teams. The ESF has also established many training programs for coaches, players and umpires with hundreds of international umpires graduates. The Federations affiliated to the ESF meet each year during the General Congress. The ESF managed by an Executive Council of nine members, elected by that Congress.

»»» national federations



»»» hall of fame

member of honour:

Patrice BIENFAIT (ITA)

meritorious service:

Michael STAPLETON (NZL)

Jens TERKELSEN (DEN)

Renzo RAMIERI (ITA)

umpires:

Gilbert TOBBACK (BEL)

Franco BORGIA (ITA)

Pavel PRACHAR (CZE)

Gerard GILIS (BEL)

Bert BREBDE (NED)

players:

Lubomír VRBENSKÝ (CZE)

Vera VAN DE VEN (BEL)

Zednek ZYMA (CZE)

Zuzana ZYMOVA (CZE)

Nora VERMANDER (BEL)

Rita RAMIERI (ITA)

Patrizia CAROTI (ITA)

Renée VAN DEN BERG (NED)

Annemiek VAN KAPPEL (NED)

Caroline SMIT (NED)

Carol LIDFELDT (SWE)

Ludy VAN MOURIK (NED)

coaches:

Ernesta MESCHIERI-CAMPIONI (ITA)

Arnoldus HOUTKAMP (NED)

administrators:

Massimo ROMEO (ITA)

Güller ERIKSEN (DEN)

Jacques REINENBERGH (BEL)

Enrico BERTIOTTI (ITA)

Anny REINENBERGH-HEUSSCHEN (BEL)

Svend ERIKSEN (DEN)

Renato GERMONIO (ITA)

Theo VLEESHOUWER (NED)

executive council



Gabriel Waage

President

What was your favourite moment of the 2017 season?

The strongest moment for me was the launch of the Softball Europe campaign. Its conception and its purpose. We are all Softball Europe, and that's what to be proud of. I was also very excited to see the growing interest in EMRYT it's become the real Festival of Youth.

What are you entering the 2018 season with?

With a hope that the marriage of softball and baseball in Europe is a marriage of two equal sovereign sports with a mutual respect.



Youri Alkalay

1st Vice President

What was your favourite moment of the 2017 season?

European Championship with 23 nations participating, which proves the spread and interest towards our sport in Europe. I liked the

WBSC Congress in Botswana, too. Being an Olympic sport again brought back a lot of positive emotions and hopes for better future of our sport.

What are you entering the 2018 season with?

With some great expectations for the establishment of WBSC Europe which has to be an example to the world of how the two sports should work together in common interest.



Ami Baran

Secretary General

What was your favourite moment of the 2017 season?

Watching the players compete at their best, realize their own potential, seeing the looks on their faces when they won games, watching their

coaches supporting them when they lost and were able to get up and play again.

What are you entering the 2018 season with?

Hope. Hope that we will be able to see the progression of the plans that we all have begun and watch the development of our sport grow to what everyone dreams about every day.



Daniela Castellani

Vice President Athletes

What was your favourite moment of the 2017 season?

Becoming a part of the ESF family.

What are you entering the 2018 season with?

Looking forward to transforming all the athletes' projects into something real.



Kristian Pälviä

Vice President Development

What was your favourite moment of the 2017 season?

To see the Botswana team competing in the European Cup in Montegranaro together with the European teams.

What are you entering the 2018 season with?

I am excited to continue working for European Softball and also seeing more teams in the ESF competitions than ever!



Eddy van Straelen

Treasurer

What was your favourite moment of the 2017 season?

To see the enthusiasm and quality at our ESF youth tournaments. Very hopeful for the future!

What are you entering the 2018 season with?

To find this great enthusiasm and quality at all our 2018 ESF tournaments.



Mette Nissen Jakobsen

Vice President Operations

What was your favourite moment of the 2017 season?

The energy, support and friendliness of the whole ESF family when we all met at the successful Congress in Belgrade i February.

What are you entering the 2018 season with?

Being eager for the grass to grow green and getting out to greet as many softball people as possible all around Europe. Can't wait.



Petra Arends

Vice President Top Sport

What was your favourite moment of the 2017 season?

My first tournament as EC - U16WECh. To observe closely the commitment and passion of all the ESF volunteers, umpires, TC's doing

everything they can including their own growth regarding their professionalism to make it possible for the young players to prosper in their sport. It made me proud to be a part of that.

What are you entering the 2018 season with?

All my experience and observations of the last year I take with me to work on the innovation of our tournaments. Important to me is the balance and dependance between top and recreational sport. Together our sport will flourish and grow!



John Austin

Vice President Marketing & Media

What was your favourite moment of the 2017 season?

Germany winning the Coed Slowpitch European Championship title. It was the first time that a country other than GB has won the title and was a good indication of the development of slowpitch softball in Europe.

What are you entering the 2018 season with?

Optimism, for the continued growth and development of our sport.

»»» champions of 2017

The Netherlands

European Champion - Women



Germany

European Champion - Coed Slowpitch



The Czech Republic

European Champion - U19 Men



The Netherlands

European Champion - U16 Women



The Czech Republic

European Champion - U16 Men



Brasschaat Braves (BEL)

Men's Super Cup Winner



Bussolengo (ITA)

Women's Premiere Cup Winner



Amager Vikings (DEN)

Men's ESF Cup Winner



Olympia Haarlem (NED)

Women's Cup Winners Cup Winner



Carrousel (RUS)

Women's Cup Winner



Italy 1 (ITA)

EMRYT Sport Division Winner



Catalunya (ESP)

EMRYT Future Division Winner



»» competitions

»» 10 Tournaments

»» 112 Teams

»» 48 663 Spectators

»» 472 Games

»» 1533 Balls

»» 108 Umpires

»» Botswana gains experience at the Women's European Cup



Following junior Black Sox in 2015, another non-European team participated in our cup competition. Titans from Botswana competed this year in Montegranaro, Italy in Women's European Cup.

"Titans softball club is honoured to have been part of such a big tournament. This has exposed our players to international softball standards and we are sure they have adopted so much and will be performing very well back home." Tshepiso Ramolapong

»» U-19 Argentina steps up the competition at the Men's Super Cup

One more non-European team came to make European tournaments even more exciting. Argentinian U-19 National Team performed incredibly and they placed 6th in the Men's European Super Cup.

"This tournament was the best thing for us. We're in a process of preparation and this is exactly the level we need now. It was a perfect event." Andres Gamarci



»» Slowpitch: Germany dethrones Great Britain



Germany changed the history of slowpitch championships. Germany won the European Coed Slowpitch Championship in Sofia, Bulgaria. Until 2017, it was always the National Team of Great Britain who took the title (10 times).

"We were facing both excellent players and teams, and we absolutely enjoyed trying to outplay them. It was very rewarding to finally find the flow as a team on the last day of the tournament and to perform like we needed to, to win the gold medal." Felix Schwan

»» Six teams from three countries compete in Euroleague IV.

2017 was the fourth year when Euroleague helped countries with not enough games in their national leagues to spend more time with competitive softball. There were two teams from Slovakia, two from Hungary, and two from Croatia, in the 2017 edition.

"We are really happy that we can play in the Euroleague project. In Croatia, we have only three women's teams and Euroleague helps us to develop, build the team, make international contacts, travel, play, and have fun!" Petra Cizmic Pokrajac



»» Baltic Open continues to support softball development in Nordic countries



For the 4th time the Baltic Open was hosted in Skövde, Sweden with teams from Denmark, Lithuania and Sweden.

"A very positive tournament. Men's softball got a new hold in the Stockholm area with the Venezuela Softball Club which will go much good for the development of men's fastpitch in the other Nordic countries." Kristian Pälviä

»» Turkey debuts in international competitions

Four teams represented Europe at the Men's World Championship: Turkey competed at the world level for the first time ever (placed 16th), the Czech Republic (9th), Denmark (12th), and Great Britain (13th). Junior Women's Worlds saw seven teams from Europe: The Czech Republic (8th), Italy (12th), the Netherlands (14th), Great Britain (15th), Ireland (18th), Turkey (25th), Israel (26th).



»» The ESF has nine newly licensed umpires



In May, nine out of eleven participants of the Basic Umpire Clinic finished the course successfully and they have become members of the ESF umpiring family. The newly licensed umpires are: Barbora Sládeková (CZE), Vojtěch Machovský (CZE), Rostislav Milata (CZE), Sebastian Hallstein Mortensen (DEN), Darrell Pitman (GBR), Robin Stoevelaar (NED), Bianca Dweelaard (NED), Ibon Arevalo Lafuente (ESP), Anzhelika Marakhovska (UKR).

»»» slowpitch

»»» Tournaments

2017 was another good year for slowpitch in Europe. As well as the usual busy schedule of tournaments all across Europe, the big event of the season was the Coed Slowpitch European Championships held in Sofia, Bulgaria. Despite the disappointment of only 6 nations participating, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain (GB), Ireland, and Slovenia, the tournament was a great success and we were treated to a feast of high level and competitive slowpitch softball that highlighted the continued development of this softball format from across the continent.

In the end we were delighted to welcome a new champion to the winners club, Germany. Deserved champions, Germany defeated GB in the final to become the first country other than GB to win the title (GB having held the crown since the tournament's inception), and bodes well for the future development of slowpitch softball in Europe.



In this regard, the coming season doesn't disappoint. 2018 will be a season of firsts for the slowpitch community in Europe. The first time we head to Italy, as Riccione plays host to the Coed Slowpitch Super Cup next July. A first for Super Cup entries as a record 19 teams will compete for the title of European Coed Slowpitch Club Champion. And another first, as 2018 sees the inaugural Men's Slowpitch European Championship taking place in Choceň, Czech Republic in June.

In short, thanks to the continuing efforts of those involved in slowpitch development in 2017 and before, 2018 is looking like a season not to be missed for slowpitch community.

»»» Clinics

Thanks to the considerable spend and effort in development clinics in 2016, there were no official clinics held in 2017. Development efforts were rolled into and co-ordinated with the European Softball Coaches Association (ESCA). For more detailed information, please see the ESCA update.



»»» Communication

2017 saw us continue to use social media, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to communicate with our community throughout Europe. We continued our efforts to provide our slowpitch community with interesting and engaging content, but also focussed on more co-ordinated content across all our softball communities in order to tie in with our Softball Europe brand launch and to demonstrate that the slowpitch community is part of the bigger softball community and vice versa. We feel that this strategy has been successful for us, with increasing numbers of followers and engagement across all our social media platforms.



»»» marketing & media

»»» Softball Europe

The European Softball Federation introduced its new face Softball Europe. A successful launch and running of the Softball Europe campaign was our main goal for 2017. We're happy with the start, but there is a long way ahead of us with implementing the new branding, new projects, more assistance to the National Federations... All of it leading towards our goal of all goals - general increase in knowledge of softball.

 **7 165** »» **9 040**

 **1 821** »» **2 269**

 **327** »» **1 654**

 **27 new videos**

»»» Media Coverage

Media coverage of all the official competitions has become a common thing for Softball Europe. Facebook pages, photo galleries, updates, articles, press releases, video interviews... With every season, we're getting better. Interest in our top events increases. 47 journalists, photographers, and videographers requested media accreditations for the Women's European Championship in Bollate, Italy. Now it's time to set up certain standard and to make sure that at least the minimum coverage can be delivered for all our tournaments. *"My goal for the next season is to develop cooperation with the organizer - the locals - to assure that the event's media attention is as beneficial as possible for not only the club, but for awareness of softball in the country in general,"* says Helena Novotna, ESF Communications Director.

»»» European Softball Life Inside and Out



We kicked off the year cooperating on Eva Voortman's blog project „European Softball Life Inside & Out“. 21 players from 21 European countries took part in this project where they wrote a blog post about what their softball life is like. They not only introduced themselves, but also the sport of softball in the particular case of their country. The whole project was meant to be a preview of the Women's European Championship, however it turned out to be much more for European softball community.

»»» Live-streaming

Women's European Championship was brought to the fans by Playo.tv again. In 2017, we have also agreed on sharing the video stream with an American company FloSoftball, who became the holders of exclusive rights for America and Asia. Playo.tv also broadcast the U-16 Women's Championship from Ostrava, the Czech Republic.

Our media department listens to the voice of the public and what we heard this year was „We want to watch the games.“ Some of the National Federation's representatives were able to live-stream their games from the Women's Championship using Facebook Live or another software. And we did the same...

Women's European Championship

 **19 972 viewers**

14 408 viewers in 2015

 **30 277 viewers**

viewers in America and Asia

U-16 Women's European Championship

 **6 778 viewers**

Organizers can't always afford to live-stream the event, but with technology moving forward, bringing the games live to the fans becomes easier and easier. Our Facebook Live offered also games of the U-16 and U-19 Men's Championship, Co-ed Slowpitch Championship, and the Men's Super Cup. The plan for 2018 is to increase the number and the quality of these "simple" live-streams.



Softballdino was the producer of the Women's Premiere Cup live-streaming.

»»» European Championships Logos

Moving forward with the promotion of softball events in Europe, and following the launch of Softball Europe, our senior championships are now getting a new face, too. New logos for Men's and Women's European Championships are ready. These logos will remain the same that each competition from now on. Depending on the hosting country the colors and the style is interchangeable.



»»» This Is How We Do

During the last month of the year, we came closer to our public again. Our Instagram Stories featured every-day lives of various players and softball personalities from all corners of Europe. The followers followed softball stars such as Greta Cecchetti or Britt Vonk, and also male players from Germany - Felix Schwan, or Lucas Lohmann from Denmark throughout one of their regular days. The project has been going on in 2018 and will keep popping up during the whole year.



»»» Media Partners

It would be difficult to push our news without good relations with our media partners. Thanks go to WBSC, European Baseball Softball Magazine, Inside the Games, Mister Baseball, we're also starting cooperation with Around the Rings, and we're not planning on stopping there. Most of the softball promotion is in National Federations' hands though. *"We have to learn what National Federations' needs are, and we want to offer assistance and help,"* says John Austin, ESF VP for Marketing and Media. The major goal for 2018 is to arouse interest in what each club or federation can do to make softball more popular in their country and to actually start doing it.

EBSM

European Baseball & Softball Magazine

»»» Media Team



Dominika

Felix

Romy

To deliver the best possible news service and to not to cut back but step up promotion of our sport, the Softball Europe (ESF) media team needs to grow. In 2017, Dominika Měšťanová from Slovakia joined Helena Novotná to take care of our Instagram account, and Romy Marinus from the Netherlands hopped on board at the end of the year to administrate our Facebook page and to create more content for our website, just like Patrik Knechtle from Switzerland. Felix Schwan from Germany has offered to help with video editing, while many photographers all over Europe do excellent job making our event more visible and unforgettable.

The team keeps growing, the newest members are Chelsie Robinson and Sian Wigington from Great Britain.

These are very exciting news. Let's keep it up. This is where the future begins!

»»» development

»»» Malta, Croatia, The Netherlands



Three clubs from Malta, Croatia and the Netherlands embarked on a special project this year through the Erasmus+ Sports project, Inclusion & Gender Equality Through Softball (IGETS). The ESF assisted Joseph Scicluna was providing support with recommendations to receive funding for the IGETS program.

During the first five months of the implementation of IGETS, the main focus was capacity building for the three partner organizations. The 2nd phase involves using the knowledge gained to improve the skills of the youth players of the three clubs. There are plans for a mentoring program to start in each club whereby players from the senior team will mentor a player of the youth teams. This will encourage volunteering while at the same time help the athletic development of the younger players. Coach Tara Henry, former player from UCLA, was sent by the ESF to help implement the objectives of the project.



The successful implementation of the 1st phase of the IGETS project gives the three partners much confidence going forward. The knowledge gained from this experience will be passed on to other softball clubs from all over Europe so that they too would be able to learn from the results of this project and discover how they too could benefit from EU programs such as Erasmus+ Sports: Small Collaborative Partnerships.



»»» Turkey



The new President of the Turkish Federation, Pazan Murat, decided to take on the World this year and signed up for the Men's World Championships in Whitehorse, Yukon as well as the Junior Women's World Championships in Clearwater, Florida.



The teams were a group of beginners that felt that this had meaning for the future of their development of Softball in Turkey. Coach Thomas McDermott called on the ESF development commission to come and see how we could assist in this special vision. The meetings went well and the federation decided to take the chance and head out to the championships. After the experience, they all headed home with more enthusiasm to continue their dreams of playing higher level softball. We already have planned for this year, as 1st VP Youri Alkalay has met with the president, to bring in coaches and provide materials for their development.

»»» Hungary



Equipment is one of the most important issues that many of our Federations struggle with on a daily basis. Hungary has been trying to build their program for years and are in need of equipment to implement some of their plans. Pitch in For Baseball and the ESF have shipped equipment in the last month and hopefully we will see more activity coming out of Hungary.

»» Germany, Great Britain, and Switzerland



ESF and ESCA continued the new format of partnering with our Member Federations who hold yearly Coaches conferences. These important conferences help our coaches develop in all aspects of the game with the top clinicians showing up to create the enthusiasm that is needed to build our sport throughout Europe.

The Paderborn Conference is a well known venue for the partnership between the International Sports Group (ISG) and the ESF with the German Baseball and Softball Federation (DBV). Coach Craig Montvidas led the softball aspects of the Conference and had great attendance due to the hard work of the DBV staff and as we mentioned last year this will become for sure one of the major conferences for the future of both baseball and softball coaching.



Great Britain also continues their impressive yearly Summit with top notch coaches coming in to prepare the GB coaches for the future. This time Mark Smith, Softball Canada's High Performance Director and Women National Team Coach. ESF and ESCA are proud to continue to be a partner with BSUK and are looking forward to the upcoming projects.

The big surprise of the year came when we finalized an agreement of sending two coaches to the Swiss Baseball and Softball Federations Coaches Conference. Ben Ten Pas and Judith Van Den Berg made an appearance in the town of Magglingen. Ben and Judith, from the Netherlands, brought a bit of Dutch expertise to the Swiss and we for sure will be looking forward to more future cooperation with them.

»» Sweden



Yet again Sweden is on our development list of countries who are looking to expand the game in their country both on the Men's and the Women's side. The Baltic Open which 5th turn will expand to the next regional Euroleague has become an annual event that has led to a men's team to be at the European Championships in 2016 and have already registered for 2018. The best part is that they have found new players, immigrants from Venezuela, who will help establish this growing Swedish team and we can be sure that the talent from these players and their children will only add to the numbers. Thanks goes again to VP Mette Nissen Jakobsen and Krisitain Pälviä who have spearheaded this project for the past few years. Lee County has also continued their support of Sweden as Swedish Head Coach Mattias Grimstoft yet again had a great training camp in Florida and had the opportunity to use the facilities.

»» Euroleague



Growing, Growing, Gone, Homerun! This project is catching on and as ESF provided again the balls and some funding for this, with the intent to continue growing to other regions. The concept is growing and we are looking to continue to develop in the Island Region [GB, Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey], adding into the Baltic northern region, Eastern[Balkan] and Southern. 2018 is already planned for the eastern/southern European region and it looks like it will be a great tournament.

»» Equipment for Europe

The ship is still sailing and more equipment coming in from the USA. More agreements, especially with ISG and Turn 2 for Youth. We have equipment coming in as Hungary has received their shipment and we have already a few more federation requests on their way and hopefully soon will be in Europe. VP Youri Alkalay is heading this project for some time now and deserves a lot of credit.

»»» development

»»» European Softball Coaches Association



WOW is the word for this year in the ESCA movement. Let's start with the ESCA Camp which was held for two long weekends, each with their set of coaches and players. The first weekend we had a small number of 13 players and 9 coaches.

"I'm glad I attended this year's camp and got the chance to learn so much in such a short amount of time. I met incredible people and made loads of new friends who I still talk to." Ilyana Tertzanlis, Germany

"When I came back and explained everything we had done and how much we had learnt, my friends were jealous! I think next year some of my teammates will try to come. And I hope they will because I'm sure they will enjoy it as much as I did!" Cloe Galiano, Spain

The second weekend we saw the true colors of European softball with 38 players and 24 coaches from 15 different countries. The hard work of the ESCA staff really made this first ever ESCA Training Camp a success. Big thanks to Craig Montvidas who is spearheading this effort and Helena Novotna for her great job.

As mentioned above, ESCA has been involved with the Coaches Conferences in Great Britain, Switzerland and Germany.

»»» Development at our Championships

The Packaged Deal is not a grocery store deal but a true and incredible experience with the top coaches from the USA.

Players from all the different countries at the European Women's Championship in Bollate, Italy experienced an incredible time even with only 50% of the Deal, Amanda Scarborough and Jen Schroeder.



The clinics, because of rain, that were held in a nearby gymnasium, went well and many thanks goes also to the WBSC Softball Division who helped create an atmosphere of fun and professionalism.

The ESF has been conducting these clinics on a yearly basis at our Championships for a few years now and has been described as one of the biggest successes in the implementation of development throughout Europe.

History was also made in the ESF this year, as the U16 Men's Championships were held in the Czech Republic. The interesting part here is that it was held at the same venue and same time as the U19's. Although this was just a start we are sure that the future for our Junior Men will be growing is the Men's program. The Development Commission is working for you and we will continue to move forward in the enhancement of the game of Softball throughout Europe and will make sure that every federation receives the attention it deserves. See all of you in 2018!





»» Photo credit

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