

Final conference of the SUCCESS project entitled
“Sport Governance and Women in Leadership”
13 September 2017 in Bratislava, Slovakia

Welcome speech

By Anton Siekel, President of the NOC of Slovakia

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here today at the final conference of the SUCCESS project called Sport Governance and Women in Leadership. I am pleased to see that this topic has raised interest in so many European sport organizations and I believe that we will see exponential increase of interest in this area in the future.

As some of you know I am in the position of the president of the Slovak Olympic Committee since November 2016, before that I was involved in sports as an athlete and volunteer but I never worked in sports.

The matter that has caught my attention after starting to work in sports was the level of professionalism in the sport organizations.

Coming from the business environment it was a big surprise for me that the gender unbalance in the leadership positions in sport organization is even more substantial than in the corporate world. It is difficult to say why this situation is so significant in sport organizations but it could be because of the history, the competitiveness of the environment or many other factors. From my experience I believe that the more diverse top management team the bigger is its capacity to provide more effective strategic leadership.

Therefore, I was glad that our NOC was able to be part of an educational programme that helped women in sport organizations acquire necessary leadership skills to ensure higher

numbers of women in leadership positions. I learned from the feedback from the Slovak participants of the programme that the value of the programme was not only in the acquired knowledge but mainly in the community this programme created.”

Despite the exponential growth in women’s participation in sport, women are under-represented as high-ranking decision makers in sport organisations compared to their male colleagues.

I am confident that strong learning community is a ground for successful operations therefore our plan is to continue in educational activities for people involved in sport to ensure strong learning community and them to be competitive in the demanding environment.

Education is the base of every community hence I am excited to welcome here all the expert speakers on gender equality, education and good governance matters. I believe that with the educational programmes and the general passion for knowledge in the sports community the good governance and gender equality will become a reality of every sport organization and not only an abstract term.

Moreover I would like to welcome here members of the project team and congratulate them on the success of the project and namely I would like to express my gratitude to Mrs. Alma Papic – project leader from the Croatian Olympic Committee who not only put together the project team but also came up with the project concept at the beginning.

I hope that this project and all the initiatives put in force by the EU Commission and IOC will make the sport environment a community that will lead by example in terms of gender equality. Furthermore I have a strong believe that we will become a community with so called “gender blind” approach where gender won’t play any role and main focus will be on knowledge and skills.

With this I would like to wish you a successful and inspirational conference.