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Report on “4th International Symposium Youth Sport 2008. The Heart of Europe” held on November 14–16, 2008 in Ljubljana, Slovenia

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Summary

14–16, November 2008 in Ljubljana, Slovenia took a place “4th International Symposium Youth Sport 2008. The Heart of Europe” organized by Faculty of Sport of University of Ljubljana, Slovenian Research Agency, and Foundation for Sport. The symposium enabled to present and to acquaint with results and views on the topic of sport and physical education, to exchange opinion on youth lifestyle, sport activities, education, psychology, efforts, and successes. The symposium gathered participants from all around the Europe, mainly from Slovenia but also from Iran and South Africa. Agenda comprised of four thematic areas focused on Competitive Youth Sport, Medical Aspects of Youth Sport, Youth Lifestyles, and Physical Education for Younger Children. During three days presented around 100 lectures and presentations by scientists, teachers, and proficient experts of sport and physical education.

Key words: youth sport • scientists networking • physical education

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Figure 1.

The 4th Symposium was organized under the patronage of President of the Republic of Slovenia. The main theme of the symposium Youth Sport 2008 was the care for healthy development of children and youth. The purpose of the symposium was the exchange of knowledge and experience of various professionals and experts who work in the field of youth sport and physical activity: from physical education teachers, podiatrists, trainers, classroom and kindergarten teachers, etc. The symposium was focused on some possible solutions of the problems which can be resolved only by cross-disciplinary cooperation, especially the problems of physical inactivity and obesity, promotion of healthy lifestyle, education of children with special needs, excusing from PE classes, finding the appropriate sporting exercise, etc. The symposium welcomed researchers from different areas of sport, physical education, children and youth health, physical education and classroom teachers, sport trainers, paediatricians, health workers, graduate and undergraduate students, and other experts who work in the field of children and youth sports and physical education. Symposium was co-financed by the Slovenian Research Agency and Foundation for Sport.

The main purpose of the Symposium was:

- Youth lifestyles (leisure sports, obesity, health promotion, fitness training, the role of media, physical and motor development).
- Trends in PE teaching (teacher training, classroom management, working with children with special needs, curriculum development, teaching methods, planning, evaluation and assessment).
- Competitive youth sport (working with talented children, ethics and fair play, sport training in youth, psychological aspects).
- Medical aspects of youth sport (injuries, nutrition, obesity, diabetes, asthma, excuses, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, cooperation between teachers and physicians).
- University sports (organisation, competitions, trends).

The symposium opened speeches of Andreja Kocijančič – Rector of University of Ljubljana, Tone Jagodič – General Secretary of Olympic committee of Slovenia, Association of sports federations, Milan Žvan – Dean of Faculty of Sport of Ljubljana and read out a letter of Rose-Marie Repond – President of EUPEA (European Physical Education Association). The opening ceremony graced performances



Figure 2.

of women gymnasts, after that invited speakers presented their topics. First lecture *Relevance and quality issues within PE in schools and PETE programmes in the European context* presented Ken Hardman from University of Worcester, UK. According to speaker the Quality Physical Education (QPE) in schools and Quality Physical Education Teacher Education (QPETE) should be seen in the context of life-long participation in physical activity and should be related to quality programs, which provide meaningful experiences and attract young people to the joy and pleasure of physical activity. The speaker considered that the nature and quality of physical education at school is fundamental to the future both subject in schools and active life-styles over the full life span on condition that Physical Education (PE) becomes a regular part of daily life in behavioral dimension.

Next lecture *The role of physical activity in the prevention of overweight and obesity* presented Marjeta Mišigoj Duraković from University of Zagreb, Croatia with focus on active way of life, from medical point of view. It showed the results of studies that investigated possible correlation of cardiovascular disease risk factors with the level of physical activity in children and adolescents and gave recommendations for the prevention of risk factors for chronic diseases. According to authors, health protection and prevention of obesity should be started as early as possible with special attention to the correct nutritional habits and physical activities.

Next lecture *Lifestyle, physical fitness in the Czech young generation – changes during the last period* of Antonin Rycycky from Charles University in Prague, Czech presented the results of study COMPASS (Coordinated Monitoring of Physical Activities and Sports) of the leisure time activities among 9–19 year old Czech.

The survey focused on the frequency of physical activities among youths, which decrease year by year. An author identified the dynamic changes in youth leisure habits related to the spreading of new technologies and their availability.

The final lecture *How can physical education influence on lifestyles of Slovenian youth?* presented Gregor Jurak who defined lifestyle as a number of practices, activities, cultural orientations, and desires, reflecting in habits of dressing, consuming food, manners and popular sports for meeting with others. Speaker presented changes in the lifestyles of young



Figure 3.

people conducting to overweight in population and deterioration of motor potential. The conclusions based on two studies of the physical and motor development of Slovenian children, where identified the following key changes: increased sleeping time, improved dietary habits (regularly and healthy meals), decreased work obligations during holidays, decreased time spent on watching TV. Unfortunately, at the same time increased the consumption of intoxicating substances, increased time spent for new media.

The plenary session summarized discussion with key conclusions.

At the end of the first day **Zoran Janković**, the Mayor of the City of Ljubljana, hosts a banquet for invited guests in the City Hall. Banquet was an opportunity for establishing new acquaintances, of numerous conversations with participants and promotion of own opinion, journals, institutions.

During the next two days, the participants of the symposium could hear interesting speeches. The realization of the first aim of the symposium i.e. fulfilled by *Progressive model of the physical education*, which was presented on behalf of the team of authors by **Roman Maciej Kalina** (Poland) and *Many Dimensions of Sport* presented by **Galia Vasileva and Tania Vasileva** (Bulgaria). **Leskošek Bojan** (Slovenia) was taking in his report *The effect of obesity on physical fitness of children and youth about the relationship between obesity and physical fitness*. **Silvio Dorigo** (Italy) was presenting *The problems of sedentary habits and nutrition in the Italian elementary school system*. **Franco Merni** (Italy) showed the results of researches about *Performance differences among children of middle school about class, gender, town and country*. **Bogdan Rață** (Romania)

in *Developing general and specific force in the physical training to junior football players – 17–18 years*, **Samo Masleša** (Slovenia) in *Comparison of mentally challenged people's knowledge of selected elements of martial arts before and after five weeks of training* or **Agnieszka Dabrowska-Perzyna** (Poland) in *Psychomotor abilities in yearly cycle of sport training of young figure skaters* outlined most important issue about the progress in training.

Some works such as: *How can physical education influence on lifestyles of Slovenian youth?* by **Gregor Jurak** and co-authors (Slovenia), *The role of talent ID in PE teaching* by **Mohammad Fahim** (Iran) and also works *Physical education and sports – social issue of national interest* by **Gheorghe Balint** (Romania) show the variety of Symposium's problems and its character.

Next to the great scientist there were works presented by PhD students from different countries. To show the variety we mention a few of them: *Situation of Motor Abilities among Slovenian Regions* by **Katarina Bizjak** and co-authors (Slovenia), *Hypothesis of research on motor sport opportunities for disable people in the school and extra-school environment in the Campania region* by **Francesca D'Elia** and co-authors (Italy) or *Involvement in sports activities among school and university students* by **Jelka Gošnik** (Croatia).

There were also the young scientists' presentations like the one about functioning of *Index Copernicus* portal by **Bartłomiej Barczyński** (Poland). This system makes possible to enable the evaluation of scientific, didactic, and organizational achievements of particular people, and the evaluation of scientific magazines and institutions.

The 4th Congress "Youth Sport – At the Heart of Europe" was an excellent opportunity to exchange opinions, to present the most recent scientific and expert knowledge on the role and importance of exercise and sport for young people as well as to discuss their lifestyles, fair play, a friendly environment for inclusion into sport activities, the medical, social, pedagogical and psychological dimensions of various types of sport, and the values and risks resulting from improper work with young people.

The new lessons learned by various researchers from around the world and the examples of good practices presented in the supporting part of the Congress was significantly contribute to the development of kinesiology. They was also a welcome guideline to finding new ways of offering all children and young people what they are missing out on due to today's sedentary lifestyle.