



EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY SPORTS ASSOCIATION

## **EUSA President's Speech upon receiving the European Fair Play Plaque of Merit**

Riga, October 10, 2014

Dear delegates and guests of 20th European Fair Play Movement Congress and General Assembly,

first of all let me express commendation on standing here. We appreciate the recognition of the EUSA endeavours in promoting Fair Play in sports. We feel an integral part of this movement as the EUSA has fair play principles laid down in its statutes. But the important thing is not only to be aware of them but to realize and pursue them.

There are not that many fields that could compare to sport in forwarding general human values and effective up-bringing. Each of us can recollect many examples when youth from disadvantaged background feeling abandoned by the whole world called in sport to find a place of care, solidarity, tolerance and respect. Considering that a today's student-athlete can become tomorrow a world star, an example to follow, the EUSA inspires fair play spirit by granting annually a Fair Play Award for student-athletes.

Time goes by and the original prerequisites of fair play movement may change or develop. Yet, we have challenges and we will have them. But this doesn't discourage us. In 2009, the EUSA set up the "Gender Equality" working group. In collaboration with FISU and EUSA Member Federations it aims to tackle the issue of "Gender and Sports" at the University level. Their findings were presented on different occasions by Mr Sanchez. The study was also published in the FISU and EUSA Magazines. The obtained data gives better grounds for tackling and estimating the reality of university sports, not only in quantitative terms, but also from the perspective of the quality and variety of programmes related to gender equality.

Fair play is not only equal opportunities but also respect and care. Thus, the EUSA participates as a partner in the project "Prevention of sexual abuse in Sports – Impulses for an open, secure and sound sporting environment in Europe" which is carried out by the German Youth Sports and in cooperation with ENGSO Youth and other partners. The project's central aim is to sensitise and raise awareness about the prevention of sexual abuse at all levels of the European sports environment. The project was supported by the EU Funds.

Sport can publicize Fair Play values like nothing else. People will attend stadiums if they are sure in fair result. The European Fair Play Movement is spreading these ideas all over the continent and the EUSA feels an integral part of this process. EUSA is organizing and giving patronage to university sport events, aiming to promote through their networks the foundations of respect, equality and tolerance.

Sports in general and top-level sports in particular presuppose that an athlete exceeds the limits of human abilities and tries to succeed by all means. All of us, managers, referees, coaches, authorities, audience promote this persistence. But at the same time we should keep in mind that the utmost aim of sport is education and joy. A joy, which athletes share both with their opponents and supporters at the feast of beauty of the body and the power of spirit, competing in a fair play manner.

Thank you for attention.

Adam Roczek, EUSA President