

LIGUE EUROPEENNE DE NATATION

AND THE

SWIM THE LANGUAGE INITIATIVE



INTRODUCTION / LEN *



- Founded in 1927
- Governing body of Swimming, Diving, Water Polo, Synchronised Swimming and Open Water Swimming
- 51 affiliated National Swimming Federations
- Organiser of all European Aquatic Championships (Swimming, Water Polo, etc), from junior to masters categories



* *Ligue Européenne de Natation*

THE « SWIM THE LANGUAGE » CHALLENGE

Aside the organisation of championships (...), LEN has an educative mission towards young generations. Within this frame of consideration, LEN decided to support (in collaboration with the EU Socrates Programme) the « Swim the Language » initiative, and promote language learning through European Water Events.

The initiative focused on the importance of the language learning material for intercultural education, and consisted in an E-learning Language Challenge, composed of 3 key axes :

1. **Promotion of the challenge**, accessible on internet (www.swimthelanguage.org), during the Masters 07 (Kranj, SLO), European Short Course Swimming Championships 07 (Debrecen, HUN), European Swimming Championships 08 (Eindhoven, NED)



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2. **Competition**, throughout questionnaires filled in on internet by web surfers willing to participate, from January 2008 to May 2008. 4 categories of questionnaires (30 questions per questionnaire, with a limited time of 20 minutes) :

✓ **Visiting and Hosting** (launched in January): learn how to find your way to the European championships, check in at the hotel, get some food at a restaurant or catch a taxi.

✓ **Socialising** (launched in February): talk to swimmers from other European cultures, learn how to start conversations, talk about swimming.

✓ **Swimming** (launched in March): find your way around the pool, discuss equipment and chat about your performance in the races.

✓ **Meeting cultures** (launched in April): start to understand mentalities of your host and feel comfortable in new tables.

All participants could take part in one or two languages (Italian, Finnish, Hungarian, or Slovenian) different than their native language. To enter the challenge, candidates should not have any knowledge in the language (= « zero » level) or a « beginner » level (can neither use more than 30 words or expression, nor be able to held a simple discussion).

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3. Competition final, held in Malaga during the European Water Polo Championships 08 :

6 finalists :

- ✓ 4 having scored the highest number of points in each language
- ✓ 2 chosen amongst the ones having played considering the 4 accessible languages



The 6 finalists and organisers



Zsafia Deme (HUN), the winner

3000 people visited the « Swim theLanguage » stand on sites, and over 400 participants took part in the challenge !

CONCLUSION



*« LEN is a culture that transcends boundaries and links individuals across Europe through their interest in Aquatics » **

- Kelvin Juba, « The Story of LEN » -

* From LEN President Nory Kruchten's speech, at the « languages meet sport » meeting held in Trieste in October 16th/17th, 2009 (cf. annex « LEN President speech »).