

Dear guest and friends,



I am very happy that we are hosting the election General Assembly of EUSA here in Ljubljana. I am also proud of the fact that this is the fifth general assembly of EUSA, which shows that the organisation is still young and is growing up.

The reason for this personal happiness is actually very simple. I see a great potential, a well-needed straightforward energy and brave ideas in the youth of EUSA. All of these can start changing the attitude of institutions such as universities, the government, and students' organisations (ŠOU, ŠOUM, ŠOS in Slovenia) towards university sport. With this, also the attitudes of students are changing. During the time of study they adopt sport as a need and by doing that, they raise awareness and help pave the way for sport on European soil. Europe should not have any lesser ambitions, and I am thrilled to report that the Council of Europe shares these believes, which are to be included in the new European Constitution.

Universities of Europe can sometimes be too conservative. They are still in times of great change (such as the Bologna declaration, and the Berlin manifest), and this is the reason why university sport is often dealt with only superficially. As such, it presents itself as a poorly defined upgrade without any proper content- and organisation-wise solutions, and this is also the reason for insufficient funding of university sport.

There are three universities in Slovenia. The largest and the oldest one is the University of Ljubljana, which has about 50,000 students. University of Maribor also shows respectful age and has 20,000 students. The youngest member of the family is the University of Primorska, which was born – so to say – only two months ago, and has some 10,000 students. Slovenian University Sports Association SUSA consists of sport student associations from all three universities.

Each university has its own way of how the university sport is organised; with all the advantages and disadvantages. It is said that it is very hard to make any changes and keep up motivation for making them in this conservative university field. University of Primorska, however, is a fine example of how the youthful world can bring advantages.

Slovenian University Sports Association functions as a promoter of university sport in university centres. With its activities and by ensuring media coverage of National university championships, European university championships, World university championships, Universiades, and other events, SUSA constructively helps seek solutions and new opportunities. Its members, who function on university, national, and international level of sports politics, also play an important role here.

Here are some more visible results: Faculty of Sport of University of Ljubljana founded the Department for University Sport; sport at the University of Primorska is a result of an agreement of the University and Student sport association on financial and organisational fields;

and thorough renovation of sport at the University of Ljubljana has finally started. As the final result, all students should be enabled and entitled to appropriate, accessible and professionally guided sports activities during their time of study.

At this point, I have to mention, that hosting two European University Championships, and also this EUSA General Assembly helped speed up the process. So I would take the opportunity and thank European University Sports Association for the trust they have showed by awarding these events to SUSAA.

I strongly believe that this Assembly will bring important decisions and strategies of developing and promoting European University Sport.

Today, Europe is caught in big changes, and this time is therefore the time of great opportunities. University sport can be made available to all, but this will not be possible without some influence in Brussels, and on national levels. So it is of vital importance that European University Sports Association successfully places itself in the European region, that it defines the content strategies, and that it chooses the most suitable people who can make these plans come true.

I wish you all the best in these efforts and thank you for your attention!

*Otmar Kugovnik,
SUSAA President*