



# Flashinfo

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### The FIRA-AER's global influence

In his closing speech of the 80th General Assembly, the International Rugby Board's representative, David Carrigy, launched a passionate appeal to the representatives of 44 affiliated nations (3 and a half million members spread across 6,000 clubs according to Jean-Louis Barthes): “We are working hard alongside all the Unions for rugby's entry into the Olympic Games. There is an opportunity to be seized. We need your help. Speak to those occupying positions of responsibility for the Olympic Games every time an occasion arises.” He then proceeded to distribute the “IMPACT” document, edited by the IRB, intended to prove the aptness of rugby's inclusion into the Olympic Games (“A discipline practised in 115 countries by millions of players and supported by tens of millions of fans”). We are very grateful for the work carried out by the FIRA-AER. Our relations are both close and cordial. We are committed to working together. Your contribution to our “Common Agreement” (the final version will be presented in December) has been very important but we will continue to solicit your opinion on all questions posed in all fields.” Before adding, in a more confidential tone, “We have evaluated the other candidates and have concluded that it is the promotional aspect of rugby that has to be concentrated on and which must be conveyed through the sport's essential spirit”.

From what has already been said, the European Association's global influence, which is the most important region under the Board, is obvious to see.

Jean-Claude Baqué was quick to reassure his host: “The IRB can count on the complete cooperation of FIRA-AER. We agree that rugby should be made more attractive and be given a bigger stage. Personally, every time I go to a country, I make a special effort to meet with the Olympic representative”. Before concluding: “We have a common goal that must be reached”. This is a relationship that goes far beyond the entente cordiale!

# Women's

## Women's Seven — European Championship 2008

### Final Tournament — Limoges (France)

#### 1st Phase

#### Pool A

14/06/2008

France **22 - 0** Portugal

14/06/2008

Russia **39 - 0** Czech Republic

14/06/2008

France **71 - 0** Czech Republic

14/06/2008

Russia **20 - 0** Portugal

14/06/2008

Portugal **43 - 5** Czech Republic

14/06/2008

France **10 - 17** Russia

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
<b>1 Russia</b>	3	3	0	0	9	76	10	66
<b>2 France</b>	3	2	0	1	7	103	17	86
<b>3 Portugal</b>	3	1	0	2	5	43	47	-4
<b>4 Czech Republic</b>	3	0	0	3	3	5	153	-148

#### Pool B

14/06/2008

England **31 - 0** Germany

14/06/2008

Sweden **36 - 7** Andorra

14/06/2008

England **56 - 0** Andorra

14/06/2008

Sweden **10 - 33** Germany

14/06/2008

Germany **45 - 7** Andorra

14/06/2008

England **40 - 0** Sweden

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
<b>1 England</b>	3	3	0	0	9	127	0	127
<b>2 Germany</b>	3	2	0	1	7	78	48	30
<b>3 Sweden</b>	3	1	0	2	5	46	80	-34
<b>4 Andorra</b>	3	0	0	3	3	14	137	-123

### Pool C

14/06/2008

Spain **36** - **5** Romania

14/06/2008

Netherlands **52** - **0** Israel

14/06/2008

Spain **50** - **0** Israel

14/06/2008

Netherlands **35** - **0** Romania

14/06/2008

Romania **34** - **0** Israel

14/06/2008

Spain **28** - **19** Netherlands

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
1 Spain	3	3	0	0	9	114	24	90
2 Netherlands	3	2	0	1	7	106	28	78
3 Romania	3	1	0	2	5	39	71	-32
4 Israel	3	0	0	3	3	0	136	-136

### Pool D

14/06/2008

Wales **40** - **0** Finland

14/06/2008

Italy **34** - **0** Moldova

14/06/2008

Wales **31** - **10** Moldova

14/06/2008

Italy **48** - **0** Finland

14/06/2008

Finland **17** - **5** Moldova

14/06/2008

Wales **5** - **28** Italy

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
1 Italy	3	3	0	0	9	110	5	105
2 Wales	3	2	0	1	7	76	38	38
3 Finland	3	1	0	2	5	17	93	-76
4 Moldova	3	0	0	3	3	15	82	-67

### 1/4 Finals Cup

15/06/2008

Russia **20** - **5** Germany

15/06/2008

France **7** - **29** England

15/06/2008

Spain **14** - **5** Wales

15/06/2008

Netherlands **5** - **0** Italy

### 1/4 Finals Bowl

15/06/2008

Portugal **17 - 0** Andorra

15/06/2008

Czech Republic **0 - 34** Sweden

15/06/2008

Romania **0 - 12** Moldova

15/06/2008

Finland **21 - 0** Israel

## Cup

### 1/2 Finals

15/06/2008

Russia **12 - 21** Netherlands

15/06/2008

Spain **0 - 10** England

### Final

15/06/2008

England **52 - 0** Netherlands

### 3rd Place

15/06/2008

Spain **5 - 10** Russia

## Plate

### 1/2 Finals

15/06/2008

France **35 - 7** Wales

15/06/2008

Germany **0 - 29** Italy

### Final (5th Place)

15/06/2008

France **14 - 5** Italy

### 7th Place

15/06/2008

Germany **0 - 20** Wales

## Bowl

### 1/2 Finals

15/06/2008

Portugal **19 - 7** Finland

15/06/2008

Sweden **22 - 5** Moldova

### Final (9th Place)

15/06/2008

Portugal **7 - 15** Sweden

11th Place

15/06/2008

Finland **7** - **10** Moldova

Shield

1/2 Finals

15/06/2008

Czech Republic **14** - **19** Romania

15/06/2008

Andorra **34** - **0** Israel

Final (13th Place)

15/06/2008

Andorra **10** - **5** Romania

15th Place

15/06/2008

Israel **12** - **7** Czech Republic

## Sevens

### European Seven 2008

#### European Seven 2008 — Stage 4

Tbilisi (Georgia)

First Phase

Pool 1

07/06/2008

Ukraine **47** - **0** Latvia

07/06/2008

Azerbaijan **17** - **35** Moldova

07/06/2008

Ukraine **36** - **0** Greece

07/06/2008

Latvia **17** - **7** Azerbaijan

07/06/2008

Moldova **7** - **10** Ukraine

07/06/2008

Latvia **10** - **7** Greece

07/06/2008

Ukraine **42** - **7** Azerbaijan

07/06/2008

Moldova **33** - **5** Greece

08/06/2008

Moldova **26** - **0** Latvia

08/06/2008

Greece **36** - **5** Azerbaijan

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
1 Ukraine	4	4	0	0	12	135	14	121
2 Moldova	4	3	0	1	10	101	32	69
3 Latvia	4	2	0	2	8	27	87	-60
4 Greece	4	1	0	3	6	48	84	-36
5 Azerbaijan	4	0	0	4	4	36	130	-94

## Pool 2

07/06/2008

Georgia **42 - 10** Bulgaria

07/06/2008

Israel **12 - 10** Cyprus

07/06/2008

Wales **22 - 0** Georgia

07/06/2008

Israel **31 - 14** Bulgaria

07/06/2008

Georgia **12 - 14** Cyprus

07/06/2008

Cyprus **7 - 36** Wales

07/06/2008

Georgia **29 - 5** Israel

07/06/2008

Wales **50 - 0** Bulgaria

08/06/2008

Bulgaria **7 - 17** Cyprus

08/06/2008

Wales **26 - 0** Israel

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
1 Wales	4	4	0	0	12	134	7	127
2 Georgia	4	2	0	2	8	83	51	32
3 Cyprus	4	2	0	2	8	48	67	-19
4 Israel	4	2	0	2	8	48	79	-31
5 Bulgaria	4	0	0	4	4	31	140	-109

## Cup

### 1/2 Finals

08/06/2008

Wales **28 - 5** Moldova

08/06/2008

Ukraine **14 - 0** Georgia

### Final

08/06/2008

Wales **45 - 5** Ukraine

3rd Place

08/06/2008

Moldova **7** - **24** Georgia

Plate

1/2 Finals

08/06/2008

Cyprus **5** - **19** Greece

08/06/2008

Latvia **10** - **5** Israel

Final (5th Place)

08/06/2008

Greece **10** - **27** Latvia

7th Place

08/06/2008

Cyprus **12** - **7** Israel

Bowl

Final (9th Place)

08/06/2008

Azerbaijan **21** - **26** Bulgaria

European Seven 2008 — Stage 5

Ostrava (Czech Republic)

First Phase

Pool 1

14/06/2008

Czech Republic **12** - **14** Spain

14/06/2008

Croatia **0** - **47** Portugal

14/06/2008

Spain **29** - **0** Switzerland

14/06/2008

Croatia **21** - **12** Czech Republic

14/06/2008

Portugal **58** - **0** Switzerland

14/06/2008

Spain **28** - **7** Croatia

14/06/2008

Portugal **31** - **0** Czech Republic

14/06/2008

Croatia **14** - **7** Switzerland

15/06/2008

Spain **5** - **19** Portugal

15/06/2008

Switzerland **10** - **34** Czech Republic



Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
1 Portugal	4	4	0	0	12	155	5	150
2 Spain	4	3	0	1	10	76	38	38
3 Croatia	4	2	0	2	8	42	94	-52
4 Czech Republic	4	1	0	3	6	58	76	-18
5 Switzerland	4	0	0	4	4	17	135	-118

## Pool 2

14/06/2008

Slovakia **0 - 68** Germany

14/06/2008

Andorra **12 - 17** Belgium

14/06/2008

Germany **31 - 0** Serbia

14/06/2008

Andorra **32 - 7** Slovakia

14/06/2008

Belgium **41 - 7** Serbia

14/06/2008

Germany **21 - 17** Andorra

14/06/2008

Belgium **40 - 5** Slovakia

14/06/2008

Andorra **38 - 7** Serbia

15/06/2008

Serbia **38 - 12** Slovakia

15/06/2008

Germany **10 - 10** Belgium

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
1 Germany	4	3	1	0	11	130	27	103
2 Belgium	4	3	1	1	11	108	34	74
3 Andorra	4	2	0	2	8	99	52	47
4 Serbia	4	1	0	3	6	52	122	-70
5 Slovakia	4	0	0	4	4	24	178	-154

## Cup

### 1/2 Finals

15/06/2008

Portugal **47 - 0** Belgium

15/06/2008

Spain **15 - 14** Germany

### Final

15/06/2008

Portugal **26 - 7** Spain

3rd Place

15/06/2008

Belgium **24** - **7** Germany

Plate

1/2 Finals

15/06/2008

Croatia **39** - **7** Serbia

15/06/2008

Andorra **14** - **7** Czech Republic

Final (5th Place)

15/06/2008

Andorra **12** - **28** Croatia

7th Place

15/06/2008

Czech Republic **43** - **5** Serbia

Bowl

Final (9th Place)

15/06/2008

Switzerland **21** - **12** Slovakia

European Seven 2008 — Stage 6

Corfu (Greece)

First Phase

Pool 1

20/06/2008

Bosnia Herzegovina **0** - **48** Russia

20/06/2008

Andorra **42** - **10** Corfu Team

20/06/2008

Russia **38** - **0** Luxembourg

20/06/2008

Andorra **35** - **5** Bosnia Herzegovina

20/06/2008

Corfu Team **0** - **20** Luxembourg

20/06/2008

Russia **31** - **5** Andorra

20/06/2008

Corfu Team **0** - **57** Bosnia Herzegovina

20/06/2008

Andorra **47** - **0** Luxembourg

21/06/2008

Russia **50** - **0** Corfu Team

21/06/2008

Luxembourg **7** - **45** Bosnia Herzegovina

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
1 <b>Russia</b>	4	4	0	0	12	167	5	162
2 <b>Andorra</b>	4	3	0	1	10	129	46	83
3 <b>Bosnia H</b>	4	2	0	2	8	107	90	17
4 <b>Luxembourg</b>	4	1	0	3	6	27	130	-103
5 <b>Corfu Team</b>	4	0	0	4	4	10	169	-159

## Pool 2

20/06/2008

Cyprus **0 - 34** Spain

20/06/2008

Italy **49 - 7** Bulgaria

20/06/2008

Spain **33 - 5** Greece

20/06/2008

Italy **7 - 7** Cyprus

20/06/2008

Bulgaria **0 - 31** Greece

20/06/2008

Spain **10 - 5** Italy

20/06/2008

Bulgaria **0 - 49** Cyprus

20/06/2008

Italy **31 - 0** Greece

21/06/2008

Spain **52 - 0** Bulgaria

21/06/2008

Greece **17 - 7** Cyprus

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
1 <b>Spain</b>	4	4	0	0	12	129	10	119
2 <b>Italy</b>	4	2	1	1	9	92	24	68
3 <b>Greece</b>	4	2	0	2	8	53	71	-18
4 <b>Cyprus</b>	4	1	1	2	7	63	58	5
5 <b>Bulgaria</b>	4	0	0	4	4	7	181	-174

## Cup

### 1/2 Finals

21/06/2008

Russia **32 - 7** Italy

21/06/2008

Spain **19 - 0** Andorra

### Final

21/06/2008

Russia **22 - 26** Spain

3rd Place

21/06/2008

Italy **28 - 0** Andorra

Plate

1/2 Finals

21/06/2008

Luxembourg **0 - 33** Greece

21/06/2008

Bosnia Herzegovina **21 - 5** Cyprus

Final (5th Place)

21/06/2008

Greece **5 - 15** Bosnia Herzegovina

7th Place

21/06/2008

Luxembourg **0 - 29** Cyprus

Bowl

Final (9th Place)

21/06/2008

Corfu Team **5 - 31** Bulgaria

European Seven 2008 — Stage 7

Moscow (Russia)

First Phase

Pool 1

28/06/2008

Norway **7 - 41** Russia

28/06/2008

Ukraine **26 - 7** Lithuania

28/06/2008

Russia **52 - 7** Azerbaijan

28/06/2008

Ukraine **34 - 0** Norway

28/06/2008

Lithuania **29 - 0** Azerbaijan

28/06/2008

Russia **26 - 5** Ukraine

28/06/2008

Lithuania **24 - 19** Norway

28/06/2008

Ukraine **39 - 0** Azerbaijan

29/06/2008

Russia **17 - 0** Lithuania

29/06/2008

Azerbaijan **12 - 7** Norway

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
1 <b>Russia</b>	4	4	0	0	12	136	19	117
2 <b>Ukraine</b>	4	3	0	1	10	104	33	71
3 <b>Lithuania</b>	4	2	0	2	8	60	62	-2
4 <b>Azerbaijan</b>	4	1	0	3	6	19	127	-108
5 <b>Norway</b>	4	0	0	4	4	33	111	-78

## Pool 2

28/06/2008

**Slovakia 0 - 47 Moldova**

28/06/2008

**Poland 0 - 26 Portugal**

28/06/2008

**Moldova 54 - 5 Monaco**

28/06/2008

**Poland 61 - 0 Slovakia**

28/06/2008

**Portugal 63 - 7 Monaco**

28/06/2008

**Moldova 19 - 19 Poland**

28/06/2008

**Portugal 64 - 0 Slovakia**

28/06/2008

**Poland 63 - 0 Monaco**

29/06/2008

**Moldova 15 - 19 Portugal**

29/06/2008

**Monaco 31 - 7 Slovakia**

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
1 <b>Portugal</b>	4	4	0	0	12	172	22	150
2 <b>Poland</b>	4	2	1	1	9	143	45	98
3 <b>Moldova</b>	4	2	1	1	9	135	43	92
4 <b>Monaco</b>	4	1	0	3	6	43	187	-144
5 <b>Slovakia</b>	4	0	0	4	4	7	203	-196

## Cup

### 1/2 Finals

29/06/2008

**Russia 42 - 0 Poland**

29/06/2008

**Ukraine 0 - 19 Portugal**

### Final

29/06/2008

**Russia 19 - 21 Portugal**

3rd Place

29/06/2008

Ukraine **20** - **5** Poland

Plate

1/2 Finals

29/06/2008

Lithuania **26** - **7** Monaco

29/06/2008

Moldova **40** - **0** Azerbaijan

Final (5th Place)

29/06/2008

Moldova **31** - **7** Lithuania

7th Place

29/06/2008

Monaco **12** - **0** Azerbaijan

Bowl

Final (9th Place)

29/06/2008

Norway **14** - **35** Slovakia

## Seniors

### 2006/08 - European Nations Cup Division 3 B

07/06/2008 - Vilnius

Norway **9** - **40** Lithuania

08/06/2008 - Vienne

Austria **9** - **6** Hungary

Team	Matches					Score		
	No	W	D	L	Pts	f.	a.	Diff.
<b>1</b> Lithuania	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	315	56	259
<b>2</b> Hungary	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	144	83	61
<b>3</b> Norway	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	114	152	-38
<b>4</b> Austria	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	32	152	-120
<b>5</b> Bulgaria	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	87	249	-162

## Summary

### ◆ Jean-Claude Baqué: “Consolidate what has been achieved...and reinforce it”



By opening discussions on the theme: “This land of culture” the FIRA-AER president, addressed compliments to the organisers, the various champions (including England for their achievement in reaching the final of the world cup), the new Finnish president, Heta Lapinen and to all of the new presidents. He then proceeded to deliver a summation of the operations that have been carried out and an announcement of those yet to be implemented. Reasons to be content:

Creation of a Development Officer per Federation: Five new Development Officers were formed over the past season augmenting the contingent (23).

Training courses for the U17's (plus coaches and referees). Our brand has achieved extraordinary success, and still has great potential for improvement. Our progress in the field of communications partnerships where the work invested is bearing fruit. Concerning the consolidation of training subsidies voted in Monaco, the 118,000 euros raised by the French Rugby Federation (FFR) have been distributed by FIRA-AER to the 11 countries concerned. The strategic development plan has not only been scrupulously implemented but has also been further developed in the fields of: Promotion of women's rugby, application of the IRB training plan, implementation of 'Age-grade competitions' for under 17s to under 21s (Creation of a group of 8 as well as regional groups of 4 for under 20s). Creation and institution of the 'Presidents Assembly' in Paris on the eve of the General Assembly: “A great success, the ideas proposed have opened up new horizons”.

Ongoing operations: These include the request to the IRB for an additional RDM. There are some differences in the conception of the role and the place of a Regional Association within the international institutions. How to obtain televised re-transmissions without payment. The TV rights domain.

Difficulties encountered. Problems are being experienced in the organisation of competitions, the liberation of players (international windows), the payment of visas resolved by FIRA-AER at the financial level but not yet addressed at the political level, the playing kit of some teams. To this end Jean-Claude Baqué gave a stern advocacy of the essential role that must be played by experienced supervision.

Projects! In addition to the renewal of the President's Assembly, he proposed the establishment of a specific meeting with the Development Officers. While posing as a basic principle: "Consolidate what has been achieved...and reinforce it" It is in the interest of FIRA-AER to continue to build with the IRB. To work in close collaboration with the VI Nations organisation who have accepted a constructive dialogue that enables FIRA-AER nations to participate in ERC competitions (Six nations instead of the current two).

And concluded Jean-Claude Baqué: "Thanks to the 2007 Rugby World Cup, rugby's image and values have been highlighted. This has led to an increase in the number of affiliated players and a very high increase in the numbers of women participating in the sport. Let us reap the rewards of this magnificent popularity while at the same time providing an efficient and suitable supervisory framework. We find ourselves in the birthplace of the Olympic Games. Let us work together to ensure that rugby becomes an Olympic discipline."

#### ◆ European Competitions: "Rugby World Cup" label



In Corfu, all of the divisions established their calendars to within three dates. The first two from Division 1, plus a third, the winner of a series of 'Play-offs' being qualified for the Rugby World Cup, all competitions have been conceived taking these criteria into account and thus dispose of the "Rugby World Cup" label. On the proposition of Jean-Claude Baqué all matches counting for world cup qualification will have two official touch judges.

Following the unanimous approval of the proceedings (Administrative Council, General Assembly, Executive Committees), the General Assembly gave the floor to RDM Michel Arpaillange, who consecrated his time to development of the Greek leg of the European Sevens Championship. He defined his posting as focusing on competition development whereas the focus of the second RDM Douglas Langley was mainly training, nevertheless both technicians intervene in each domain according to particular circumstances and requirements. First a reminder: Requests for subsidies must be addressed to the RDMs, accompanied by supporting documents. Appointment: There are five new National Technical Directors (Sweden, Holland, Romania, Moldavia, and Belgium), formed prior to the national reviews passed under the expert eye of Arpaillange. Announcement: A DTN conference will be held in Romania in October. On the programme are training courses for players and coaches, a new conception of training programs and development of women's rugby.



'Age-grade Competitions' summary: U17, 38 nations involved; U18, 32 unions plus Group E; U19, 16 unions in two tournaments of eight, 9 unions with specific FIRA-AER financing; U21, 8 high performance unions. Positive report: The progress registered by the U17s will benefit the U18s but the number of participating referees remains insufficient. The quality of play at U18 is improving. The competition was presented to the VI Nations management. 32 candidacies were registered for the 2009 Tournament that will take place in the French Côte d'Azur. For the U19s, the Group A competition, which is a qualification competition for the 2009 Junior World Championship, will take place in Poland, that of Group B will take place in the Czech Republic. The 9 nations of the U20s will meet in three tournaments. For the U21s a new competition will be created. As concerns Beach-Rugby, a commission including Douglas Langley has been charged with working over the summer period on a project for a Sports charter that takes into account issues of safety as Jean-Claude Bacqué estimates that the general popularity of the game deserves the creation of a serious framework.

In the context of the new evaluation system Michel Arpaillange has been to Georgia, Portugal, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Azerbaijan and Douglas Langley to Romania, Russia, Germany, Slovenia and Greece.

Michel Arpaillange has highlighted the unrelenting progress experienced by 7s Rugby (in terms of match quality and organisation). 35 nations are participating in the current Tournament (7 preliminary stages). The 12 best nations meeting in Hanover (Germany) for world cup qualification. Germany is already a candidate for the organisation of the Finals Tournaments in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Denmark hopes to host the competition in Odense in 2012. As for refereeing, Patrick Robin has suggested using a mix of experienced high level referees and aspirant referees who have exhibited stand-out qualities in the U18 competitions.

A real explosion in women's rugby (Jean-Claude Bacqué) has been illustrated by Douglas Langley's report. The Championships at XV and VII involved 694 female players. 33 nations were ranked (in the field). The same can be said as regards the referees (a FIRA-AER panel of 13 female referees) who are making fine progress, two among whom have been proposed for the final of the 7s World Cup in Dubai in 2009. It has been proposed to include a female referee in the U17 rugby camps. This popularity of the 7s game opens up great recruitment possibilities for rugby at XV, where numerous emerging nations are champing at the tails of the major nations. Jean-Claude Bacqué has expressed the wish that two emerging nations qualify for the 2010 World Cup. David Carrigy added that the decision on the form of qualification will be taken in September, when a Committee will be created. And the European President concluded: "Following this demonstration we have a clearer view of the importance that FIRA-AER accords to women's rugby".

- ◆ **René Hourquet: “The development of rugby progresses hand in hand with that of refereeing**



A leader in the European refereeing sector, René Hourquet suggested during the introduction of his discourse: “It is vital to develop refereeing skills if we hope to develop rugby”. This is the case with FIRA-AER that has three panels of sport directors. Last season these resources enabled management of 75 senior matches. 31 nations (4 more than in the previous season) were involved. The (regrettable) last minute forfeitures were able to be compensated for through regional solutions. At Treviso, 12 referees from 10 nations and 25 Italian touch judges officiated for the U18s; the 13 U17 groups involving the refereeing body; the U19 and U21s leading to the participation of the five nations. At the 7s European Championships, 13 unions were involved. Women’s rugby (both 7s and XV) is also concerned with a palpable development (5 female referees at Amsterdam, 6 at Limoges).

An Expert training program will be organised at Toulouse with an FFR - FIRA-AER grouped framework : 20 FIRA-AER referees will participate. Each nation is requested to designate a refereeing manager, to assess the present state of refereeing, to propose a ‘Refereeing’ plan of action, to organise local training (the FIRA-AER will organise and pay for the animator). In conclusion, René Hourquet gave a presentation of the 13 points of the IRB modified rules, applicable from 1<sup>st</sup> August and to be trialled over a one year period, a bi-lingual document (English and French) was made available to congress participants.

- ◆ **Communication — Partnership: the vital support of television**

During a particular Presidents meeting, Jean-Claude Baqué and Nicolas Hourquet developed the role of television both as a means of development and support of material resources. They are encouraging the nations to transfer the images from their national television stations to Eurosport while financing the operation through partners and/or advertisers. This has already been concluded in Poland, Romania has signed an agreement with a private station and is on the point of concluding at national level. Portugal also has a private station while Spain must assume the production costs. Russia, under the condition that the commentary must be made in English, feel that to facilitate the agreements with television an annual championship formula is preferable to the current formula (over two years). Remarks taken into consideration. In any case Eurosport will provide FIRA-AER with a detailed tender specification.

During his discourse on Communications and Partnerships, Nicolas Hourquet had already highlighted the importance of this sector, noting that 'Rugby TV' an Internet TV station, filmed the last U18 European Championship as well as the Women's XV European Championship (financing of the operation provided by advertisers), which came to 11 matches in all, in two programmes, the programmes having been viewed over 400, 000 times. Euro-sport hopes (with IRB authorisation) to retransmit images from the Nations European Cup and 'Total Rugby' covered the finals of the women's XV and 7s U18 European Championships.

The other communications mediums are functioning perfectly: 'Flash Info' in two languages (English and French), as well as press communiqués that are achieving an increased exposition. In addition the Internet site animated by Bernard Jargeac is in full expansion (1400 daily visits, 18,000 weekly visits from around the world with a total of 358 000 visits in 2007). Recurring problems of the sector: Insufficient contact with the federations and a lack of motivation on the part of commissioners. A new edition of the directory is planned for September 2009.

In terms of partnerships: Renewal of contracts with Société Générale, the GMF, Berugbe and Leclerc. Ongoing renegotiations: Europ Assistance, the refereeing partnership. New partner: The computing firm SII. New perspectives concerning 7s rugby (masculine and feminine), U18 European Championship negotiations ongoing. The firm 'Ricard' has been making contact in Belgium, Spain and Portugal.

#### ◆ **Jean-Louis Barthes: a bridge between antiquity and future**



No doubt inspired by the solemnity of the host nation, Jean-Louis Barthes, after listing many of the benefits (and heroes) provided by Greece to our modern civilisation, came back to the subject of FIRA-AER (which should presently reach 50 affiliated nations). From his extremely complete overview, we have retained a summation of achievements:

Implementation and organisation of men's and women's European competitions; fabulous development of men's and women's 7s rugby; updated statutes and rules; renewed IRB - FIRA-AER agreement; adapted procedures; rules for sport safety; training courses for players and administration; implementation of a strategic plan with precise objectives; equitable distribution of IRB financial aid; ambitious policy for referee training; growth in competitions at youth level; Internet site; Flash Info in two languages,

simultaneous translation in three languages; reinforcement of the Partnership/Marketing/Communications service; one Development Officer per nation; material aid for youth rugby training; mutualisation of visas;

And the list goes on!

We will soon create our mission statement: "Despite the arrival of professionalism, rugby must continue evolving to conciliate spectacle and nobility, popularity and education, sporting fame and the game. Rugby is the school of life!"

◆ **David Carrigy: "New sporting and commercial rules**



Once again the IRB representative, David Carrigy, followed closely throughout the deliberations of the General Assembly. The honour of drawing a closure to proceedings was accorded to him. He contributed greatly to the proceedings through the provision of much useful information.

The congress participants thus learnt that 30 million pounds sterling have been invested over three years, concerning infrastructures, training centres, training programs, new competitions (9.5 million) for 21 unions. That 60% of these funds went to emerging nations. That in recognition of its work, the FIRA-AER will have its aid increased by 2%. It was also announced that new competitions will enable new sporting and commercial expertise. They were requested to improve communications with their governments, as exemplified by Romania, and with the other unions. A revision of the transfer rules, of player liberation (during the tournament windows, proceeding from federation to federation and not directly with the clubs), the means for maintaining the anti-doping combat are currently being studied. A 79 page document dealing with the fight against doping has been edited. Conclusion of the IRB representative: "Nothing is written in stone. Let us continue to work together, to review and adapt our requirements and our aid."

In response, David Carrigy received from Jean-Claude Baqué the assurance of the total implication and collaboration of the FIRA-AER as well as thanks for his precious input and help in resolving problems and smoothing over difficulties. A meeting has been programmed for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> December in Paris.

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