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EHFA & IHRSA Sign Agreement To Cooperate

In a spirit of cooperation to grow the industry and clarify the roles of IHRSA and the European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA), in the European health and fitness industry, Harm Tegelaars, President of EHFA and Joe Moore, President of IHRSA met on 29th June 2009 to sign an agreement.

In a joint statement, Joe Moore, President, IHRSA and Harm Tegelaars, President, EHFA said:

"We are experiencing a worldwide epidemic of obesity and a host of chronic and life-threatening diseases that could be eliminated or controlled through regular exercise. The health and fitness industry can and should play a pivotal role in improving the health of all Europeans. We are uniquely positioned to provide the public with the facilities and personal support they need to live longer, healthier and happier lives.

In order for the industry to take its rightful place in the healthcare sector, we must engage governments, the media and the healthcare community at all levels – local, national, EU, and global. This is no small task and will require commitment, effort and action from all stakeholders in the industry to make this happen."

Among the key points of the agreement:

- EHFA acknowledges IHRSA as the Global Federation which acts as an umbrella to EHFA and national federations.
- IHRSA acknowledges the role that EHFA plays in public policy as the primary representative body of the European health and fitness industry to the institutions of European governance, with IHRSA playing a supporting role.
- EHFA will cooperate with IHRSA to actively influence public policy discussions at global organisations (e.g., WHO, OECD), wherever they are based, when those discussions impact the health and fitness industry.
- EHFA recognises that IHRSA will continue to provide support and advice on best practices to IHRSA's national strategic partners, member federations and other members on all aspects of the health club business.
- IHRSA supports the concept of EHFA's development of a European Register of Exercise Professionals (EREPS).

The agreement also acknowledges that each organisation may hold different positions on individual issues and will, in those cases, act in the best interests of its stakeholders.

The European health and fitness sector generates €20 billion in revenue, employs 370,000 people and serves 40 million members in public and private health & fitness clubs and centres across Europe. Based in Brussels, EHFA, with its origins in 1996 as a not-for-profit organisation, represents the interests of the European Health & Fitness sector at the EU level. Its objective is 'More People, More Active, More Often'. EHFA is also a standards setting body and promotes best practices in instruction and training to help battle the inactivity and obesity challenges spreading across Europe. EHFA represents 6259 facilities across Europe, trade associations, suppliers, training providers and individuals.

Globally, there are more than 120,000 fitness facilities generating over \$68-billion and serving over 117-million members. The International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) is a not-for-profit trade association representing the sector worldwide. IHRSA's mission is to grow, protect and promote the industry. The association's membership includes more than 9,745 clubs in 78 countries, along with more than 740 industry suppliers. IHRSA and its members are dedicated to making the world healthier through regular exercise and fitness promotion.

For more information please contact:

EHFA

Kasia Scoggins
Head of Brussels Office
EHFA – The European Health & Fitness Association
Rue Washington 40
B-1050 Brussels
Tel: +32 (0) 2 649 90 44
Fax: +32 (0) 2 642 90 44
kasia.scoggins@ehfa.eu

IHRSA

Cathy McNeil, VP International Operations
Rosemary Lavery, Public Relations Manager
IHRSA – International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association
70 Fargo Street, Seaport Center, Boston, MA 02210, USA
Tel: +1 617 951 0055
Fax: +1 617 951 0056
cmm@ihrsa.org
rl@ihrsa.org



Joe Moore, President, IHRSA and Harm Tegelaars, President, EHFA signing Cooperation Agreement on 29 June 2009