

The European Health & Fitness Sector Outlines Its Main Priorities At The 2nd Annual Industry Summit In Brussels

The three day EHFA Summit on 6,7 and 8 November, under the leading title “*Building Bridges*”, included the 2nd International Standards meeting and EHFA’s 4th Fitness Forum, bringing together over 125 participants from 25 countries.

At the International Standards meeting representatives came from major International and European certification bodies, vocational and academic institutions, registrars, and club operators who continued their debate initiated by EHFA last year in London. They agreed to further cooperate in the areas of the validation of vocational training programmes, pathways between VET and higher education, assessment of learning outcomes, principles of lifelong learning, developing common standards for chronic conditions, as well as advancing the development of common best practice. The results of their work will be presented at the next annual International Standards meeting scheduled for 3rd November.

The EHFA Fitness Forum, in its fourth successful year, brought together senior policymakers, fitness experts, industry leaders and academics to explore further on issues related to fitness and health.

Key note speakers included:

Representatives from the EU Commission, **Michal Krejza**, of DG Education & Culture - Sport Unit, who presented on the latest EU developments related to sports policy, and **Despina Spanou** of DG Health & Consumers who expanded on the role of fitness in public health.

Dr Marco Baccanti of Technogym advocated the support of the global initiative “Exercise is Medicine” and handed out a new book by American College of Sports Medicine under the same title.

Prof Willem Van Mechelen of VU University Medical Center Amsterdam focused on the “Economic Benefits of Exercise”.

The **Active Ageing** issue was elaborated by two distinguished speakers, a 92 year old fitness ambassador, **Dr Charles Eugster**, and **Dr John Searle**, Chief Medical Officer of the Fitness Industry Association, UK.

EHFA also presented the interim results of its EU funded project “**Fitness Against Doping**” and will continue with further analysis of the data arising from its research work and discussions with its project partners and stakeholders to propose future actions based on the findings of the project, which will be communicated during the final conference in Copenhagen on 28 February 2012.

The survey results revealed for the first time an interesting insight into the prevalence of doping in fitness together with some strong suggestions for future intervention policies. The delegates signed-up to the European Fitness Sector Anti-Doping Charter, which forms the context for the sector further developing its position of social responsibility. Details of the research findings and a copy of the Interim Report published at the Fitness Forum can be downloaded from the EHFA website [here](#).

One of the highlights of the Summit was a networking dinner at the Comic Strip Center in Brussels, where participants enjoyed famous Belgian cartoon characters in the splendid art nouveau surroundings of the Museum (a group photo attached).

Herman Rutgers, Executive Director of EHFA commented: “*The ‘Building Bridges’ theme of the Summit was intended to create a navigational blueprint to further professionalise the sector. I am delighted that the 2nd EHFA Summit has fulfilled that brief.*”

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Photo:

EHFA networking dinner at the Comic Strip Museum in Brussels on 7 November 2011.



Note to Editors:

EHFA – the European Health & Fitness Association, 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 approx. 10 000 facilities across Europe, as well as trade associations, suppliers, training providers, and individuals.

EHFA supports the development of the **European Register of Exercise Professionals, EREPS**, which it operates. EREPS is an independent process for the registering of all instructors, trainers and teachers working across Europe in the exercise and fitness industry. For more information: www.ehfa.eu or www.ereps.eu