

Speech of WADA's Vice President Prof Arne Ljungqvist
EU Conference on Anti-Doping, Athens – May 13, 2009

Mr Minister of Health, Mr Mayor of Athens, Mr Prefect of Athens, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me thank the European Commission for having taken the initiative of organizing this symposium. We look forward to these two days of conference where we hope that fruitful discussions will result in the reinforcement of the fight against doping in Europe and of the collaboration between Europe and the World Anti-Doping Agency. I also want to thank our Greek hosts for a very warm welcome.

A few years ago, we were in Athens celebrating the Olympic Games together with thousands of athletes. At that time, as IOC Member and President of the IOC Medical Commission, I was fully involved in insuring that the Games would be as clean as possible and that the athletes winning medals would do it without cheating, inspire the youth of the world and be role models. This commitment of mine continues and has of course included subsequent Olympic Games.

Let me make one point very clear from the outset: doping in sport should be of major concern to society at large. I believe that my following presentation will confirm that statement. Studies from around the world have shown that an alarming number of youngsters, not only athletes — I would say not even primarily athletes — are steroid consumers. That has led to many human dramas and many broken lives. We simply cannot accept that. Indeed, studies have shown that the intake of doping substances such as anabolic steroids may give rise to uncontrolled aggressiveness and criminal violence. We, sport organizations and governments,

must therefore ensure that an efficient and restless fight against the use of doping substances is conducted both inside and outside sport.

When WADA was created in 1999, it was accepted by all that the fight against doping could only be won if both sports and governments were to work hand in hand. The organization of this seminar by the European Commission is therefore extremely important to reinforce that spirit of cooperation and reinforce the engagement that Europe has always shown in the fight against doping.

Europe has been at the forefront of the fight against doping for many years. The first international Convention against doping in sport was developed on my own initiative by the North European countries of Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland in the early 1980s, and an amendment ratified in 1987. I was told by Norwegian friends here in Athens that an amended version will be ratified later this year. In 1989 the Council of Europe put into place its own Convention for the fight against doping and has kept very active to ensure that progress would always be accomplished in that field.

With full government engagement, we can effectively address laws and regulations at the national level to prohibit the actual manufacturing, distribution and possession of these harmful substances. Without committed governments, there will be no cross-border co-operation in the name of anti-doping at a time where we can observe the multiplication of networks, underground Internet marketing and trafficking of doping substances. In the same manner, with the active engagement of governments and law enforcement in sharing information and evidence with sports, we will ensure that those who might escape detection

from testing programs will nevertheless have their anti-doping rule violations pursued so that they can be removed from sport.

Governments' contribution is far more than the simple ratification of either the Council of Europe Convention or the UNESCO Convention. Throughout the world, and in particular in Europe, governments are legislating, establishing and funding anti-doping organizations. They are also combating drug manufacturing, marketing and trafficking of illegal substances. We are encouraged by the growing numbers of busts that are publicly reported. Only in the past few weeks, significant law enforcement operations and seizures were conducted in Slovenia, Norway, Austria, and some other parts of the world, such as Australia, Canada, the United States and Qatar, just to take a few examples. This is a clear demonstration that more and more governments and other key players that were not actively involved in the fight against doping in the past, have now received the message that doping is wrong and is a major threat to greater public health.

WADA and Europe have always been strong partners and will continue to be. There is no fight against doping without worldwide and harmonized efforts. All this should be done within the respect and recognition that we are not all at the same stage of development and that we should help each other to reach our common goal.

Today's conference at the initiative of the European Commission will reinforce that message — the message that within Europe, all countries and all organizations should work together and ensure that together we make the fight every day more effective and efficient. The message should also be that Europe wants to work with the rest of the world through WADA to ensure that the level playing field for the athletes is not only in Europe but everywhere.

Let's be practical. Let's be efficient and let's avoid creating unnecessary conflicts or barriers amongst ourselves, which would only benefit those who cheat to the detriment of the youth and clean athletes.

During this two-day conference, we will work on a number of very interesting topics.

Cooperation of the pharmaceutical companies with the industry and anti-doping laboratories is extremely important. Thousands of new drugs are at various stages of preclinical and clinical development. These new drugs will hit the market in the years to come and will potentially be used for doping purposes. It is essential for anti-doping organizations to have the capacity to detect new substances before they are made available to athletes. We have seen in the past few months that several successful partnerships between WADA and pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies resulted in the development of detection methods for new substances. The best-known example is the detection of CERA in 2008. This is the result of a very fruitful collaboration with Roche that surprised some athletes who were probably thinking that this substance was undetectable.

We are very pleased to see that this conference might broaden this cooperation. More and more pharmaceutical companies understand that such cooperation is a win-win for them, for the fight against doping and for the athletes. With such cooperation, WADA will be able to anticipate possible doping trends and close the gap on doping cheats, while drug companies can help ensure that their work is directed at treating and healing patients suffering from illness and diseases and not at providing healthy athletes with an unfair advantage over their competitors. Last November in Biarritz, we signed a declaration of intent under the initiative of the French Government, to facilitate the communication between the key players, the

pharmaceutical industry and the anti-doping movement. We hope that this can be extended to the rest of Europe.

The collaboration between the anti-doping laboratories is also an extremely important subject. The laboratories are a cornerstone of the fight against doping. The efficiency with which they can detect substances is a powerful deterrent to doping and one of our important tools in the fight against doping. WADA is in charge of accrediting these laboratories. WADA has set very high requirements to ensure that all athletes are treated fairly and guarantee that only the cheaters will be caught, and that the clean athletes will have nothing to worry about. Laboratories, not only through their analysis activities, but also through the research they are conducting, are helping the fight against doping. Again, Europe has a key role to play in that field. Laboratories in Europe are quite advanced and have the possibility of sharing much of their know-how with others worldwide to move the fight against doping to a higher level.

Data protection is another very important topic in our discussions. WADA has always operated within the framework of legality with a clear willingness to protect the rights of the athletes. The World Anti-Doping Code and the International Standards have been developed to ensure that fair process are put into place to deal with doping cases, that the general principles of law are respected and that everybody can have a fair hearing and the right to be heard. The fight against doping also aims at protecting the right of those who do not cheat, the right of those who are playing fair and deserve to win medals as a reward for their efforts.

Cheaters are more and more sophisticated, and supported by organized crime. The fight against doping is clearly an important public interest. Nobody should deny that. When you talk to clean athletes, when you talk to young people, they do not want to be forced to dope

in order to win a medal. Clean athletes are willing to make a lot of sacrifices in their lives in order to succeed in their sports. Clean athletes are willing to be tested and if you speak with them, you will realize that they are actually happy when the testers knock at their door. Not only does it give them an opportunity to show that they are clean and playing fair. It also tells them that the doors of other athletes are also knocked at, athletes who may not be clean.

Denying the right for an athlete to consent to an efficient fight against doping is irresponsible. Sport is based on the free will of those who participate in its activities. Nobody is forced into a sport activity, but once they have chosen or engaged in that direction there are number of rules which have to be respected, including anti-doping rules. We should not forget that, and we should not deny that reality. Data protection laws have to be respected, but the exceptions that have been created within the law itself have also to be respected taking into account the context within which anti-doping operates. We hope that during these two days of conference, true exchange can occur between those who are confronted with the reality of anti-doping and those who are trying to protect the privacy of every citizen so that practicality and common sense prevail.

I am very pleased that Europe and WADA have recently agreed on an International Standard for Data Protection which will help protect the privacy of all athletes around the world, including in countries where there is no legislation in place. The process was very successful, and a fruitful dialogue was established between Europe and WADA to the benefit of the fight against doping. Let's keep building on that positive outcome and reinforce our cooperation for a common goal.

The fight against doping in sport has significantly progressed recently, and we can say, and be proud to say, that today it is certainly a lot more difficult to be a cheater than it was few years ago. Look at the recent example of the further analysis of samples collected by the IOC at the Olympic Games in Beijing, following which six new cheaters were identified a few months after the facts. This is significant and sends the right message that we will never give up the fight, and that if you cheat today, you will be caught, and if not today, then tomorrow.

Let's not be naïve however. Cheaters are innovating, and a lot of criminal energy is often put behind them so that they can find ways to exploit any weaknesses in the system. We should not accept that. We should not give them any opportunity to circumvent the system and we should show that we are united and determined in our fight. We trust that through this seminar, we will show our commitment to work together.

I thank again the Commission for inviting WADA to be part of this symposium and look forward to partake in tomorrow's and Friday's discussions.

Thank you very much.