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## THE SUCCESS OF EUROBASKET2011: ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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Type: Scientific  
Category: 2: Global Sporting Events

### Abstract

Aim of the paper is to analyze the experience of LOC members responsible for specific areas during the preparation and the running of EuroBasket2011 event.

Theoretical background. Sport event management issue keeps great interest among politicians, scholars and professionals. During Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2013 Informal Meeting of EU Sport Ministers one of the background documents was dedicated to planning, investment and sustainable legacy of major sporting events. It is evident that sport event organizers seek to maximize the benefits in the form of socio-cultural and economic impact more strategically. However major sport event organizational committee formation and it's activity during all phases of the event is almost not studied. According to Parent, Séguin (2007) every organizing committee has three unique characteristics: it grows quickly, is temporary and is responsible for the symbolism of the event. Theodorakis (2007), Parent (2008;2010), Heere and Xin (2012), states the rapid growth of the organizational committee and it's impermanence. These aspects have the greatest significance of the local organizing committee member's productivity and efficiency. The success of EuroBasket2011 was determined by the political, economic and socio-cultural context of the Lithuania as well as by the members of the Local Organization Committee (LOC) and their ability to make the most of professional and personal competence, creativity, flexibility and commitment in reaching the common goal.

Methodology. Qualitative research was constructed into four stages. There were interviewed 20 members of LOC: 17 managers responsible for different areas of activity and three assistant managers. Interview was organized twice: during the preparation phase and after the championship. The first interview was aimed to investigate into the compliance of job descriptions for each area of activity and actually

performed functions with the requirements set forth in FIBA Europe, i.e. to determine the harmony and balance of necessity and reality. The second interview was used to disclose the positive and negative experience of each LOC manager in respective areas of activity focusing on three criteria: knowledge, emotions and behaviour.

Results. There were three EuroBasket2011 management phases: build-up in 2005 – 2008, intensive in 2009 – 2010 and implementation stage in 2011. It's important to highlight the professional experience gained during the organizing international basketball tournaments in Lithuania in 2002, 2009 and 2010.

Although operations of the EuroBasket2011 LOC started in November 2009, the formation process is divided into four stages. LOC was set up following the basic principle – the experience of potential managers in the specific area of activity and awareness of its peculiarities. Two-thirds of the LOC managers came from the world of sport or sport-related sectors. The compliance of activities and functions of the LOC managers based on the results of the first interview is ensured by grouping the responsibilities of LOC managers according to compliance criterion (compliance of the formal job description with actual activities) and dividing responsibilities into four groups.

The analysis of activity content revealed the professionalism of individuals responsible for different areas, their flexibility, adequate response to emerging situations, appropriate participation in decision making, ability to balance out expectations/requirements and individual approach backed by personal responsibility, a good sense of the situation and commitment to the common goal.

Personal positive and negative experiences of LOC managers according to three criteria: knowledge, emotions and behaviour were examined. Generalization of experiences revealed through the interviews proves the significance of leadership expressed by the manager's abilities to accurately capture the facts, meticulous coordination of the event process, personal ambitions and adequate psychological disposition.

Conclusion. The event revealed the potential of the country and professionalism of individuals that afford the staging of international sport events. It also disclosed the weaknesses resulting from the gaps of legal knowledge and its practical application, lack of marketing skills and the use of marketing techniques in sport sector, poor ability or inability of business to make use of favourable opportunities.

All phases of EuroBasket2011 gave grounds for the building of relationship between the state and Lithuanian Basketball Federation. The maturity of this relationship manifested when legal liabilities (governmental guarantee) and optimization of operations (partial funding, operational tools) created a mechanism that enabled to optimize the budget of the event, ensure rational and transparent use of the funds and to generate income from the sport event creating added value for the country. This was especially possible due to successful and effective work of LOC managers.

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