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FISA announces cancellation of the 2009 World Rowing Forum

FISA, the International Rowing Federation, announced the cancellation of the 2009 World Rowing Forum which was due to take place in November this year in Philadelphia, USA.

The World Rowing Forum is a quadrennial event bringing together coaches, sports medicine professionals, sports managers and event organisers centred around a common theme. This year, the Forum was due to also accommodate the annual Joint Commissions Meeting which is the occasion for all of FISA's governance and technical commissions to come together and discuss common issues and projects.

The Forum had been awarded to Philadelphia in 2007 following a successful bid process which was the result of a joint effort between the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), USRowing and Philadelphia Sports Congress, a division of the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Since the appointment of the host city, Philadelphia had been working tirelessly on bringing together this event, FISA's most prestigious non-competition gathering.

"This was a very difficult decision to make" said FISA President Denis Oswald. "The people in Philadelphia have been working very hard to make this event a success and we are sure that this year's edition would have set a new standard for the Forum. We thank the organisers for their efforts, and also for their understanding following this decision. "

The decision came about following the review of the FISA's four-year budget plan covering 2009 to 2012 and is part of a series of cuts set to ensure financial stability over the four year period given the current difficult economic situation.

In a letter to the FISA Council, Commission and Staff members, Matt Smith, Executive Director wrote last week: "As you know, we submitted a budget to the Extraordinary Congress in February based on many assumptions. In the meantime, many important issues have become clear, particularly on the income side. For this reason, we are forced to cut about CHF 1'000'000 from our four year budget which will result in a small, but positive result at the end of 2012. This may improve in the coming months and years through sponsorship or it may require a little bit more cutting later on. The important point is to deal with it right away and not be put in the corner in 2012."

FISA's Executive Committee also decided that henceforth, the Joint Commission's Meeting and the annual Coaches' Conference would be held every two years until further notice, starting from 2010.

Other cuts include the digitization of the World Rowing Directory, as well as a more efficient use of resource during events and hence the potential reduction of travel expenditure for Staff and Officials.

FISA is currently in the final stages of re-negotiating a four year TV deal with the European Broadcast Union (EBU) and is also working to secure a sponsorship deal for the 2009 World Rowing season and beyond. The measures announced today are to be seen as a "safety measure" to avoid coming into deficit at the end of this four-year cycle. New sponsorship deals will mean that some of the cut projects can be reinstated.

For more information - FISA media contact:

Marion Gallimore, Marketing and Communications Manager

Tel: +41 21 617 83 73 or direct +41 21 612 02 26, mobile +41 79 706 72 55

E-mail: marion.gallimore@fisa.org

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