



Press release, Mai 12th 2016

The ITRA, the International Trail Running Association, has aimed , since its creation in 2013, to give a voice to all the players involved in trail-running not only in order to promote the values of the discipline, maintain its diversity, contribute to its development, and facilitate dialogue between national and international institutions, but also to improve the safety of the races and the good health of runners.

Trail World Championships -TWC

The next World Trail-running Championships (Trail World Championships -TWC) will take place in Gerês (Portugal), on October 29th 2016, and will be organised under the auspices of two international organisations : the IAU (International Association of Ultra-runners) and the ITRA.

In 2015, during the World Championship which took place in Annecy, the IAU clearly made a reminder of the decision to organise the World Championships each year.

Last November, the ITRA's Steering Committee decided to support the IAU in organising the 2016 World Championships in Gerês (Portugal) while engaging in an international debate with all players of the discipline in order to find the best way of organising future World Trail-running Championships.

Indeed, numerous questions always arise, whether in terms of the frequency of the event, the coordination with the international trail-running calendar, the format of the event, the selection of athletes...

For all these, the ITRA has sent a questionnaire to the entire community (organisers, runners, elite runners and members of federations and trail-running associations, brands and specialised media). Around 900 answers have helped to define all the requirements, numerous but also contradictory.

The announcement by the IAU in January 2016 of the Italian, (Badia Prataglia) for 2017, and the Spanish, (Penyagolosa) for 2018, candidatures were announced before the results of the survey were known.

The ITRA's propositions

Once the results of their survey were known, the ITRA's Steering Committee voted on a series of propositions in order to define its official position :

- The ITRA wishes to find solutions for a more open race format corresponding to the values of trail-running, with, notably, a grouped start between the elite and 'mass' runners. This is an important point for the community which is being thought through at the heart the combined commission.
- The ITRA wishes to advance the idea of the organisation of the World Championships every two years over two distances of around 50km and 80km.

The decisions taken upon consultation with the IAU

A coordination meeting between the IAU and the ITRA took place in Lisbon on March 11th, the decisions taken are as follow:

- A clear and transparent process was outlined with which must be followed as from the stage of candidacy. It aims at setting up a deadline of at least two years between the date of the next TWC and the date fixed for it. That of 2019 (if it takes place) will be made official two years in advance, or in autumn 2017 and the call for candidature will start in autumn 2016.
- The creation of a commission of four members consisting of two from the IAU and two from the ITRA will be responsible for the application process and will propose a choice for each TWC. These decisions will then be approved by the two steering committees of the IAU and ITRA.
- To continue discussions, with the federations, organisers, elite athletes and also the brands, to find the best possible solutions for a more open race format and to increase the media impact and the interest of the athletes by having a TWC every two years with two distances, on different continents.
- The introduction, as from 2017 in Italy, of a new distance of around 50km. Also there will be two distinct titles for Champion of the World that of 50km and of 80km alternating every two years while waiting for the results of the discussions.
- The division of the roles between the IAU and ITRA have been defined and will take effect as of the next Championships in Portugal in 2016. The IAU will be responsible for all administrative and financial questions concerning accommodation and transport. While the ITRA will be responsible for the technical organisation and communications.

I strongly believe that our meeting in Lisbon was a true stepping stone for the sustained development of our sport. I'm sure that IAU as an International body with a deep knowledge of the « Federal World », along with us at ITRA that are closer to the Trail Running community, can do a great job together. For sure the next Trail World Championships in Gerês will demonstrate that” comments Jose Carlos Santos, Vice-president of the ITRA and in charge of the international relationships.

Dirk Strumane, President of the IAU, adds: *“The forthcoming Trail World Championship in Gerês will be the first formal joint venture between IAU and ITRA. As international governing body for ultrarunning, we fully endorse this co-operation. Both IAU and ITRA are dealing with trail*

running and although we still have different views about a number of items, there is the common and true intention to join our forces for the benefit of the further development of this branch of the sport. We also are aware of the necessity to include the IAAF in this discussion to come to a broad-based policy in this regard".

This collaboration between the IAU and the ITRA, in parallel to the work carried out on the World championships, continues on multiple fronts. The recent drama experienced in Patagonia shows that safety remains a priority. The ITRA is equally concentrating its efforts on the health policy for all runners and the QUARTZ programme for elite athletes, the quality of races and a more important direct representation of runners within the heart of the ITRA. The different subjects will be the subject of specific communications in the weeks to come.

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