

## Co-operation partners attracted by home fans' medal expectations at the ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2009 in Helsinki

The *ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2009* in Helsinki have attracted a renowned squad of national co-operation partners. The "National Partners" include *Ilta-Sanomat, Luhta, Neste Oil, Puustelli, Valio, and Veikkaus*, and the "National Suppliers" *Nokia, Canon, SBS Finland, Lönnberg, Royal Ravintolat, and Sony*.

The *Finnish Figure Skating Association* media launched the names of their co-operation partners as well as the sale of the single tickets for the 2009 European Championships on Monday, 29 September 2008 in Helsinki. The competitions will be held at the *Hartwall Areena* from 20-25 January 2009.

Managing Director Mikko Vanni of *Infront Finland*, in charge of the event marketing of the Championships, is highly satisfied with the current situation with the preset goal already being achieved. Mr. Vanni is convinced that the home fans' medal expectations, the business opportunities offered by international sports events, and the perfect setting provided by the Hartwall Areena all have contributed to the attractiveness of the event which is also considered significant by the Finnish State and the City of Helsinki.

- Companies are more interested in participating in projects with social significance. The *City of Helsinki* for example sees our project as a means to develop their own marketing strategies. The *Ministry of Education* is currently working on their own role in our *EC2009* Project, Vanni says.

The International Skating Union ISU's sponsors are *Mary Cohr, Arnest, Citizen, Actavis, Guinot, MacCoffee, Cellier des Dauphins, Insurance Group Progress* and *Masters Colors*. The *IMG* is responsible for the ISU sponsorship sales.

The ISU European Figure Skating Championships will be the greatest sports event organized in Finland in 2009 along with the UEFA Women's Euro 2009. Over 50,000 spectators are being expected to attend the figure skating championships during the six competitions days which include a total of eleven events. Nearly 500 volunteers will be assisting in the practical arrangements of the event. The Executive Organizing Committee with Mr. Sauli Niinistö, Speaker of the Finnish Parliament, as their Chairman, and Mr. Henri Nordenswan as their Secretary General, have the overall responsibility of the organization of the championships. Year 2009 will be the sixth time that Finland is playing host to an ISU championships event : European Championships were held in Helsinki in 1977 and 1993, World Championships in 1983 and 1999, and World Synchronized Skating Championships in 2001.

- Everything is under control. The great interest shown by our volunteers once again proves that Finnish people love sports. The sales of the ticket packages is going as planned. We are expecting a new boost in the sales with the launch of the single tickets, Henri Nordenswan says.

In terms of sporting results, the Finnish Figure Skating Association have set as their goal two medals. This goal is hard but, nevertheless, well justified on grounds of Finnish figure skaters' previous achievements on international ice arenas. Susanna Rahkamo, President of the Finnish Figure Skating Association, is feeling confident about the future of figure skating and its status among the different sports being organized in Finland.

- Figure skating is the darling of Finnish sports fans now that Finland is one of the world's leading figure skating countries. According to a recent survey, nearly 200,000 people, children and adults alike, are skating in Finland today, Rahkamo says.

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### *ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2009*

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