**LEN Bureau Meeting, Nice (FRA)**

**The Learn-to-Swim Programme to be presented at the European Parliament**

**At its first meeting of the year, in Nice, the LEN Bureau welcomed President Paolo Barelli’s announcement on the ‘Learn to Swim’ programme which will be presented at the European Parliament in Brussels on 20 March. LEN can also be proud to maintain its sound financial position while constantly offering more contribution for its National Federations and more prize money for the athletes.**

LEN’s ‘Learn-to-Swim, Prevent Drowning’ programme is set to pass another milestone on 20 March. As LEN President Paolo Barelli announced for the Bureau Members, the ambitious initiative will be presented in Brussels at the European Parliament in the presence of the Parliament’s President Antonio Tajani and the EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Tibor Navracsics. *‘This should be a tremendous boost for this programme as it’s going to earn an even bigger recognition”* Mr Barelli said.

At the meeting the first encouraging numbers were also revealed on the 2018 finances. LEN enjoys a healthy financial situation with preliminary 2018 figures showing positive results while an appreciable increase of financial travel and accommodation contribution were given to the LEN Member Federations and prize money offered to the athletes.

The Bureau was updated on the negotiations on the 2022 European Championships. *“We are keen to be part of the format preferred by our main partner, the European Broadcasting Union, but we need further discussions regarding the dates of the multisport event and on the proposed host cities, whether we join the other sports or this time we look for a separate location”* the LEN President said.

The preparations for this year’s major LEN Events – the short-course European Championships in Glasgow in December, the diving Europeans in Kiev in August, the synchro European Cup in St. Petersburg in May and the Champions League Final Eight in Hannover in June – are all following the previously agreed timelines and set to become the absolute highlights of the year.

The members were also informed on the challenges the European water polo community faces this season since the current rule changes require some further clarification before their implementation. The Europa Cup finals are to be the first occasions to apply them in full (the last weekend of March in Turin for the women, the first weekend of April in Zagreb for the men). Mr Barelli said that these events – run jointly with FINA – would hopefully become the celebrations of water polo, despite of the present uncertainties.

*11 March 2019*