DECLARATION OF VIENNA

The 11th Congress of Panathlon International, held in Vienna (Austria) on 2 and 3 May 1997, on the topic ‘Adolescents and their social introduction through sport’ ended with the following declaration.

Currently sport is not only an important factor for psychophysical health, particularly for youngsters, but also an effective means of social integration.

Thanks to its positive effects, it is a valid element preventing negative influences in today’s daily life, such as the use of certain drugs, alcoholism, violence, insufficient motory activity, all elements representing a permanent danger for youngsters.

The education of adolescents through sport acquires an essential role in moulding their character, enhancing their self-esteem and preparing them to take on their responsibilities in adult life.

Panathlon International, in compliance with its aims, undertook to support a sound sports education among youngsters, based on the promulgation of such values as fair-play, tolerance, respect for oneself and for others.

Therefore, considering the preliminary work done by Clubs, involving thousands of adolescents, following four important introductory lectures and fruitful discussions in the four cultural and language groups (German, French, Spanish/Portuguese, Italian), Participants approved the following actions:

- to favour the social introduction of adolescents, it is necessary to listen to them, to establish an open dialogue with them, ensuring their active participation and encouraging them to take on their responsibilities.

- special sporting actions, based on specific scientific knowledge should be taken so as to effectively exploit sport’s educational potential with maladjusted and psychologically weak adolescents.

Therefore, among the numerous proposals for concrete actions, the following were deemed more important at international level:

* To favour access to possibly free of charge multifunctional sports facilities.

* To support and enhance training among sports educators so that they may operate with an in-depth knowledge of the characteristic features and needs of the youngsters they will be educating.
* To favour the evolution of sports clubs so that they may meet new adolescents’ expectations.

* To develop actions ensuring harmony between sports practice and studies.

* To urge champions to give their testimony and encourage young people to practise sports.

* To promote cross-cultural exchanges, also to fight racial prejudices.

* To encourage adequate sports practice, as early as possible, among young disabled.

Panathlon International, its Districts and Clubs therefore undertake to disseminate the Declaration of Vienna among all political and sporting authorities in their areas, so as to obtain their participation and co-operation for its widespread application, while taking into consideration the different national and cultural characteristic features.