

PROJECT RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZERS OF RUNNING EVENTS



**RUNNERS
4ALL**

**European
Students
Run**

Runners4All - project results and recommendations for organizers of running events

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Ljubljana, the host of the NLB Ljubljana Marathon

In Ljubljana, we believe that physical activity is the foundation of a high quality of life in all its aspects. That is why we encourage all generations of people living in Ljubljana to be active on a regular basis.

We place special emphasis on young people, as sport and exercise are among the most effective ways to reduce excessive use of smartphones and other screens. The slogan of our campaign promoting moderate and mindful screen use - "Šport je lajv*" - captures the true essence of sport: it is fun, social, and brings generations together.

Ljubljana's identity as a true sporting city is also reflected in our largest annual international event, the NLB Ljubljana Marathon, which takes place on the third weekend in October and attracts runners from all over the world. I am particularly pleased that many students participating in the Runners4All – European Students Run project have also taken part in this event.

At the Municipality of Ljubljana, we support both elite and recreational athletes. We ensure high-quality training conditions and promote an active lifestyle through a wide range of programmes and initiatives. Preparations for the 30th anniversary of the NLB Ljubljana Marathon are already underway, and I am confident that this year we will once again welcome many young athletes who embody the values of our city.

In Ljubljana, solidarity, friendship, tolerance and respect for diversity are not just words. they are a way of life.

Welcome to Ljubljana - to me, the most beautiful city in the world.



Zoran Janković
Mayor of Ljubljana

NLB Ljubljana Marathon and the European students Run

Some races change your finishing time. Others change you. The NLB Ljubljana Marathon has always been more than just a run through a beautiful city. It is a meeting point between generations, between nations, between the person you are and the person you are becoming. From first-timers crossing a finish line with shaking legs and full hearts, to competitors stepping onto the podium, every single one of them belongs here.

Runners4All – European Students Run was born from a belief we hold deeply: that young people deserve more than an invitation to participate. They deserve a stage. We brought students together from across Europe, supported their training at home, and united them on a shared start line in Ljubljana where some went on to reach the very top of the results. Inclusion and excellence are not opposites. Here, they run side by side.

But the lessons you learn in a sport do not stay there. The discipline built through training is the same discipline that carries you through difficult projects in school or at work. The resilience that keeps you going when your legs say »stop« teaches you who you are under pressure. And that knowledge is yours forever.

Through Runners4All, we are building a European community of young people who carry their athletic ambition into everything they do; into careers, relationships, and life itself.

The Ljubljana Marathon is where opportunity, knowledge, and ambition meet. Come and find out what you are made of. We will be waiting at the finish line.



*Barbara Železnik,
project manager,
Ljubljana Marathon
and Timing Ljubljana
Director*

Opportunities for students in university sports

The European University Sports Association (EUSA), as the umbrella organization for sports in higher education, brings together national university sports bodies, universities, and other key stakeholders. Sport events for student-athletes are one of the key pillars of EUSA's activities, alongside education and social responsibility engagement. EUSA sporting events primarily focus on the European Universities Games, which are large multi-sporting events, and the European Universities Championships, which annually cover over 20 sports. Participants in these events are teams and individual student-athletes, primarily representing their universities. They are nominated by their national university sports associations, often qualifying through national university championships.

The Runners4All project constituted a new opportunity for EUSA and the EUSA Institute. It brought sports engagement and the possibility of taking part in international events even closer to students, who are our primary target population. The aspects of inclusion, sustainability and youth engagement with peer-supported activities are also, undoubtedly, the key to success and fully resonate with the values of EUSA.

We see the Runners4All project and its legacy event, the European Students Run, as an opportunity for every student to connect meaningfully with sports. It allows them to experience the value of a healthy mind in a healthy body, supporting mental health and well-being, alongside key values and opportunities - including friendship, fair play, social connection and cultural exchange.



*Matjaž Pečovnik,
EUSA Secretary
General / CEO*

Ljubljana runs with the marathon



Maruša Penzeš, project team member

The NLB Ljubljana Marathon is not just hosted by the city of Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia. Ljubljana is the marathon. Each year, the start and finish line are placed in the very heart of the city, where history, culture and everyday life meet. And for the third weekend in October, everything shifts to a different rhythm. Runners don't observe Ljubljana. They experience it in motion.

Ljubljana is sport

Ljubljana does not treat sports as an exception. It builds it into everyday life. With green spaces, running routes and accessible infrastructure, movement is part of the city's identity — not just its events. That is why the marathon does not feel like a highlight. It feels like a natural extension of the city's rhythm.

The city as a stage

The course is not designed to avoid the city. It is designed to reveal it. From Congress square, through boulevards, across bridges and green corridors, past neighbourhoods that turn into cheering zones, the marathon unfolds as a sequence of moments. Each

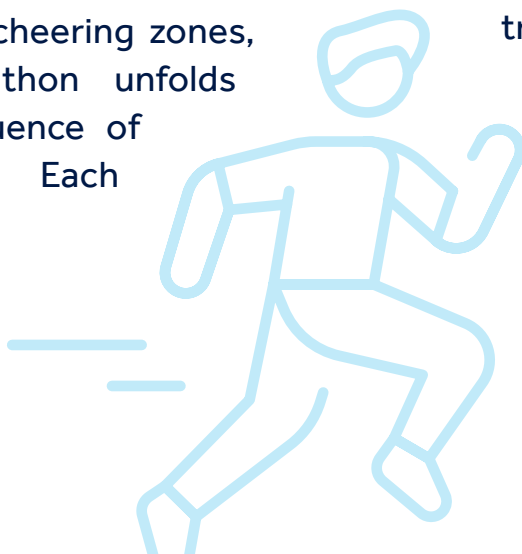
kilometre shows a different Ljubljana. And yet the experience stays simple: You start in the centre — and you finish in the centre.

30 years of a shared story

Since its first edition in 1996, when just 673 runners lined up at the start, the marathon has grown into Slovenia's and region's largest running event. Today, it brings together almost 30,000 runners annually. But the real achievement is not just scale. It is continuity.

For nearly three decades, the event has been shaped by consistency, organisation, high level execution and trust, led by Timing Ljubljana.

What feels effortless on race day is the result of decades of precision behind the scenes.



The numbers, and what they mean

At one of the latest editions:

➤ **29,555**

registered people participated over the weekend

➤ **16,700**

runners reached the finish line on Sunday

Distances included:

- 42 km (marathon)
- 21 km (half marathon)
- 10 km race
- 200 – 1.500 meters (children and youth)

The event also continues to grow internationally, with runners from over 80 countries joining the race.

But the most important numbers are less visible:

- A large share of runners are first-time participants
- Many return year after year
- Some come to close a personal chapter

Because every bib number carries a different reason.



A new generation on the course

One of the most important shifts in recent years is the growing presence of young runners and students. At recent editions, more than 1,700 student runners took part not only as participants, but also through organised initiatives and collaborations.

Through Runners4All and related projects, students are becoming part of the marathon in multiple ways:

- Running their first race
- Contributing as volunteers
- Participating in organizational and project environments

This changes the event in a subtle but powerful way, the marathon is no longer just something you attend: it is something you grow into.

Conclusion

Ljubljana does not just host the marathon. It lives it in its streets, its rhythm and its people. And after nearly 30 years, the story continues: with every runner who starts, and every step that follows.



“ **Ljubljana is best experienced in motion.** ”

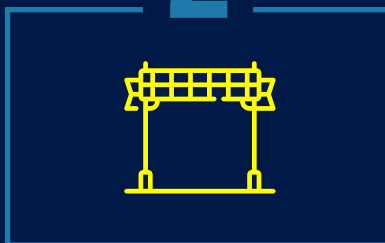
1



The city as a stage

Ljubljana is not a backdrop... it is part of the experience.

2



Start and finish in the heart of the city

Congress square connects the beginning and the end.

3




Community


Runners, spectators and volunteers create an energy that carries through every kilometre.

Facts

1996
First marathon:
673 runners

80+ 
countries
represented

2025
Latest editions:
29,000+
participants (weekend total)

1,700+ 
student runners
(growing segment)





**Connecting
partners for long-
term development
of the European
Students Run**

Žiga Černe, Runners4All project coordinator

The European Students Run is not organized by a single institution. It is built through coordination. Universities, sport federations, event organizers and public institutions are connected into a shared system. The goal is not a one-time event. It is continuity. Students not only take part. They become part of the process.

A system built on connection

The initiative did not start from scratch. It builds on organizations that already operate at a high level, including Timing Ljubljana, the Municipality of Ljubljana, the European University Sports Association and the University of Ljubljana. Around them, a wider European network is formed through university sport federations and partner institutions. The system is not new. It is connected.

Integration with the NLB Ljubljana Marathon

The European Students Run is not organized as a separate event. It develops within an existing one. Its central platform is the NLB Ljubljana Marathon. Students become part of a larger running environment that already brings together tens of thousands of participants. The experience is not created in isolation. It is shared.

From preparation to participation

The process unfolds step by step. It begins with an open call to universities for mentors, connecting coaches and experts. This is followed by online workshops, where mentors and students align and establish a shared approach. Training then moves to campuses, where students prepare in organized groups under local guidance. The process continues online, with consultations and access to experts. As the event approaches, participants come together in Ljubljana, take part in conference activities and meet experts in person. The process concludes at the event itself.

Knowledge in motion

One of the defining elements is the transfer of knowledge. Coaches, sports scientists and event specialists from Slovenia

contribute directly to the program. Their role is practical. They shape preparation, guide training and share experience developed through years of organizing the marathon. What exists in Ljubljana is not replicated. It is transferred.

A growing student presence

The result is not only participation, but development. Students engage as runners, volunteers and contributors. At recent editions, more than 1,900

students have been involved. The event is no longer something you attend. It is something you grow into.

Conclusion

The European Students Run is not defined by a single race. It is defined by the system behind it. A network of partners, experts and students connected through a shared structure. And like the marathon, it continues with every new participant who enters the system.

“ The European Students Run is best experienced as a process. ”

1



Built on connection

The system links institutions, not replaces them.

2



From campus to course

Preparation, knowledge and experience form one process.

3



Shared experience

Students, mentors and experts create a continuous environment.

Facts

Connected to

NLB Ljubljana Marathon

15+

European countries
represented in partnership

**Hybrid
model:** campus +
online +
live event

1,700+ 
student participants

Core partners

- Timing Ljubljana
- Municipality of Ljubljana
- EUSA Institute

European university sport organizations and institutions

- Croatian Academic Sports Federation
- French University Sport Federation
- German University Sports Federation
- Hungarian University Sports Federation
- Latvian University Sports Federation
- Lithuanian Students' Sports Association
- Student Sports Association the Netherlands
- University Sports Federation of Macedonia
- University Sports Association of Poland
- Portuguese Academic Federation of University Sport
- Turkish University Sports Federation
- Calabria University Sports Center
- Venice University Sports Center
- University of Barcelona
- University of Ljubljana

Inclusion partner

- Special Olympics Austria



Runners4All project design and project results

Aleš Šolar, project external expert support

6.1. *Aim and goals of the project*

Runners4All – European Students Run is a project which was designed by the coordinator Timing Ljubljana, together with the City of Ljubljana and the European University Sports Association. The coordinator applied with the project for a not-for-profit sports event as part of the European Commission Erasmus+ Sport Call.

It is a mono-beneficiary project, where the most important role is played by the applicant organization, Timing Ljubljana. All other partners are involved as associated partners and we must emphasize that without the participation of all partners, implementation would not be possible.

The project has some short-term and long-term planned outcomes. But in general, we wanted to encourage students to participate in an enjoyable, large-scale event with cross-border dimensions. Above all, we want to encourage them to be active and to motivate other young people to exercise regularly through educational workshops, joint training and encouragement through selected student mentors. This approach ensures that participants are well-prepared and can safely compete in 10 km races, half marathons, and full marathons.

The project's main planned goal was to motivate students to safely participate in sporting and in running events – competitions (including the first edition of the European Students Run). Therefore, part of the project's tasks included the development of educational materials, selection of students/mentors and the organization of educational workshops.

In general, the Runners4All project encouraged citizens and particularly the target group (students) to exercise regularly. The main general objectives of the project were:

1. to strengthen the motivation to develop an attitude and care for health and mental well-being,
2. to promote sport and running as an important part of life and leisure activities,
3. to use a large-scale international event to promote and encourage participation in sports,
4. to draw attention to the importance of safely participating in a running event and to make appropriate preparations for the competition,
5. to promote common European and sports values, and to encourage cooperation, solidarity and the intergenerational networking of participants,

6. to promote the role of the European Union in co-financing the project and the need for joint lifelong learning.

The Runners4All project offered a long-term activity aimed at a target group of students. It encouraged them to exercise regularly and gave them the opportunity to participate in the first European Student Run event in different categories.

The specific objectives of the project included:

1. to encourage students to exercise regularly;
2. to select student mentors who will encourage their colleagues to exercise regularly and inform them about the importance of both safe preparations and physical preparations for running competitions;
3. to organize educational workshops for students;
4. to organize regular running training that ensures that students would be well prepared for the event in October 2025 in Ljubljana;
5. to organize the first European student run, which was part of the Ljubljana Marathon and all accompanying events of the event in October 2025 in Ljubljana, Slovenia;

6. to obtain information about the run and the project and to collect feedback from participants, which would be of great help in planning further running events to be held under the auspices of EUSA;
7. to share the experience and results of the project with the organizers of future running events;
8. to continuously encourage students and other age groups to exercise regularly and participate safely in running competitions events.

We believed that the experiences gained would be of great help in promoting sport, running and physical activities among students as well as among other citizens. Since the project included also an educational component, we also hoped to inspire some of the selected students' mentors to become professional running coaches after the conclusion of their studies.



6.2. *Planning project activities*

The most important part of the project was the long-term promotion of running as a basic sport activity, as it is very efficient, easily accessible and is a sport activity recommended for different age groups as well as for beginners and those who are already regularly active.

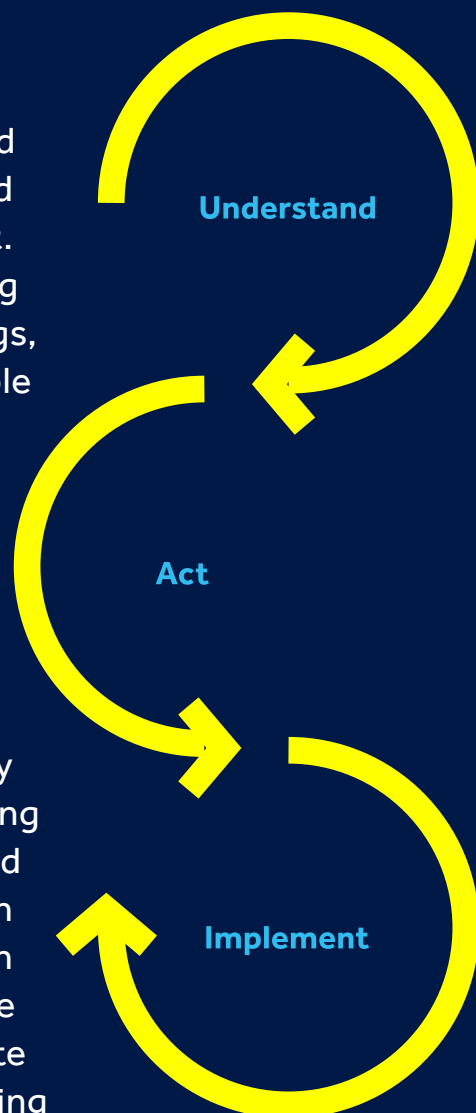
Our vision was to establish an inclusive and empowering running program that transcends generational, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. Our primary goal was to foster a diverse and connected running community, encouraging healthy lifestyles for all. The overall approach in Runners4All rests on three pillars; Understand - Act-Implement, within three phases.

Phase 1 – Understand

The initial three months were devoted to developing a profound and shared understanding of the Runners4All project. This included an operational plan for achieving results, online international partner meetings, analysis and desk research of comparable projects, events, and previous experiences, as well as the development of a plan to engage target groups in the marathon.

Phase 2 – Act

During Phase 2 – Act, the subsequent 8 months were actively dedicated to engaging in exchange and learning activities. This phase was primarily focused on various aspects, such as the selection of target groups for training and marathon participation, crafting a comprehensive support plan for both student and elite athlete runners, strategizing and organizing



accompanying activities for the Ljubljana Marathon, conducting seminars tailored for runner-mentors, executing training programs across participating countries, active participation in the Marathon, organizing the Ljubljana Marathon event and the European Students Run, hosting preliminary events for children, youth, and adult recreational runners, fostering a sense of unity through a joint gathering before the marathon commences, and finally, cultivating a sense of community through collective socializing after the conclusion of the event.

Phase 3 – Implement:

Over the last seven months, partners reviewed plans, enhancing them by exploring diverse options for future implementation. Following the main event, we conducted post-event activities, persisting in the activation of local exercise and motivating the population to maintain an active lifestyle. The culmination of this stage was marked by the creation of a final report, capturing the achieved results and providing insights into future prospects.

We realized the operational project plan through the successful execution of these work packages:

- WP1 - Project management and coordination
- WP2 - Preparation and implementation of the Runner4All Program
- WP3 - Impact and dissemination



6.3. Promotion, dissemination and project graphic design

The Dissemination and Communication Plan focused on achieving the following objectives:

- Project awareness (emphasize project scope, highlight key contributions of associated partners);
 - Stakeholder interest (proactively triggers interest and encourage active involvement),
 - Understanding motivation (promoting habits for health and mental well-being through civic engagement);
 - Sustainability beyond the project (establish mechanisms for solution uptake post-project termination and cultivate a culture of enduring engagement);
 - Strategic communication (stimulates enthusiasm and meaningful involvement among stakeholders);
 - Cultivation of understanding (encourage widespread participation and civic engagement);
 - Long-term impact (aim to optimize project impact on awareness, stakeholder engagement, public understanding, solution adoption, and sustainability).
- Promotion and dissemination tasks of all partners were:
- Creating a project web page (sub-page of the Ljubljana Marathon Run web page)
<https://ljubljanaskimaraton.si/en/european-students-run-runners4all>
 - Preparation of the project graphic design, including obliged EU logos, statements and disclaimers;
 - Preparing presentation of the Runners4All project activities on the web page, project partners, events, educational materials, educational workshops, running events, selected students- mentors, Runners4All – European Students Run results;
 - Sharing information with students, universities, faculties, student associations, sports associations;
 - Publishing news, digital newsletters, invitations for runners, volunteers, general public;
 - Organizing educational, promotional and running events;
 - Organizing a project conference as part of European Students Run event in October 2025 in Ljubljana;
 - Organizing a final project conference in 2026 for dissemination of the running event results and project long-term planned results;

- › Coordination and communication with partners, educational and sports organizations;
- › Communication with policymakers, governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- › Dissemination of the project long-term outcomes among students, universities, students' organizations, sports associations;
- › Planning continuation of the project results and especially continuation of the European Students Run in future.

Communication was an important part of the project activities. It was critical to not only invite and include students and some other selected target groups to participate in the event in Ljubljana, but also to inform the general public about running,

about being active and how that contributes to physical fitness and the health status of EU citizens.

However, the project's priority target groups were students, with the project activities aimed to include in the event as many as possible children, youth, adults, seniors as well as people with disabilities and people with fewer opportunities in life.

The project's graphic design was carefully selected and presents the aim of the project – running, sports and regular physical activation.

The project design also included all needed elements of EU visual identity, since Runners4All project was selected for financial support by the European Union Erasmus+ Sport Programme (not-for-profit sport events).



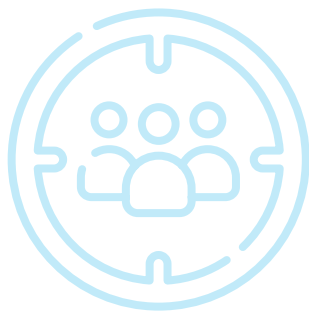
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6.4. Selection of the project target groups

According to the project plan, the accepted decisions by partners and a review of the current state and results of the survey, the most important selected target groups were:

- Universities and Students' organizations
- Sports organizations
- Organizers of running events
- Experts – lecturers
- Selected students – mentors
- Students of the associate partners
- Students in Europe
- Children, youth and adults with disabilities
- Other citizens and runners

Some of the selected target groups were included directly and some indirectly.



The most important aim of the Runners4All project was to promote sports, regular physical activities, training and present really important topics of the sport and physical activities to priority selected target group – students.

Action plan on how to reach selected target groups

The Runners4All project included a plan for the involvement of selected target groups. The partners agreed to the following:

- To address universities and student organizations directly through the Runners4All project and the established partnership. EUSA provides a wider EU range of the promotion of the project and the European Student Run. The plan for involving this target group is related to cooperation with associated partners, as well as the involvement of other institutions that connect students, and are from Europe.
- Timing Ljubljana would directly involve and inform sports organizations. For promotion, it used the existing network of participating societies and organizations, organizers of running events from Europe and other public and private entities, inviting them to participate and inform target groups about the student run.
- Associate partners would engage and involve students in their local and national environment and invite them to regular preparatory training sessions and participation in the European Student Run in Ljubljana.

In order to promote the movement and the project, selected student mentors were activated.

- Selected student mentors were selected based on conditions for participation. The selection of student mentors began in April 2025. Student mentors participated in educational workshops. All university associate partners played a primary role in informing and ensuring the reach of information, and also had the right to select mentors.
- Students from Europe were invited to the European Student Run through the media, through promotional events organized by Timing Ljubljana, EUSA and other partners. Information and dissemination activities of project activities and results were coordinated by EUSA. The scope of this activity goes beyond the area covered by the coordinator and other associate partners. Therefore, it is expected that news in digital media, on social networks, in printed EUSA newsletters would contribute to increasing the number of participants.
- People with special needs and disabilities would be invited directly through institutions and indirectly through news in the

media. Inclusive events were organized for this group of runners within the 29th NLB Ljubljana Marathon 2025 and European Students Run. Associated partner Special Olympics Austria and the Slovene national Sport Federation for Disabled would disseminate information in conjunction with other national Special Olympics committees, clubs and institutions.

A special target group are students with disabilities or students with special needs. They were invited to participate in the European Students Run. All associated partners, their student organizations and selected student mentors were tasked with including them in regular practice and training sessions and also inviting them to the event in Ljubljana.



- Among other planned participants, we would also like to highlight the volunteers and members of the public who followed this large event. We addressed them through the media, and for volunteers, the promotion was also carried out directly by the project partners, as students are an excellent target group for volunteering programs.

6.5. *The role of the selected student/mentors*

Among the key activities of the project was the proper (and adequate) preparation of students and runners for the running event and competition. Students were the selected target group, as research has indicated a decline in the number of regularly active students and a decrease in their physical capabilities.

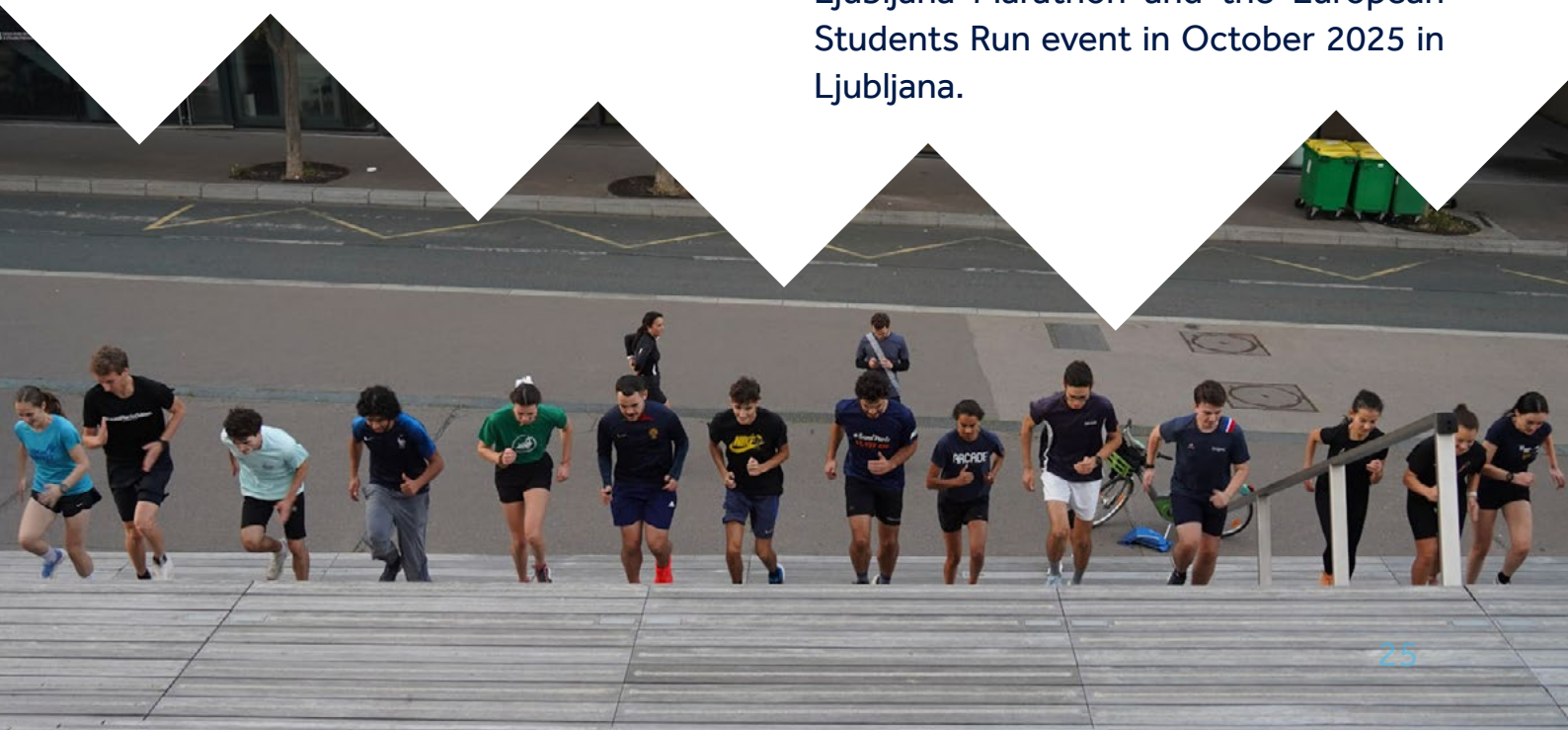
A special task of the project was to select and appoint students as mentors and to facilitate and train them to be able to promote: a healthy lifestyle, running as a fundamental sport activity and proper preparations for safe and effective training and competition. We believe that the experience would be very positive and could be helpful after the end of studies when planning sports practice, training, in personal coaching or otherwise.

Guidelines for who could be selected for the position of the student/mentor (young ambassador)

A student who has been selected and appointed for this task by an associated partner of the Runners4All project can be selected as a mentor and should be:

- active in sports with some previous experience with running.
- eager to gain new knowledge and interested in possible future work in the field of organizing sports events and sports training.
- fluent in English and able to follow workshops for acquiring new knowledge - educational modules that would be held in English.
- able to encourage students to exercise regularly and to participate in the European Students Run in Ljubljana.

Student mentors were expected to participate as runners in the NLB 29th Ljubljana Marathon and the European Students Run event in October 2025 in Ljubljana.



Some of the most important tasks of the selected student mentors:

- Fill out the application form and provide personal and contact information to Timing Ljubljana. The agreed and permitted personal data of selected student mentors will be published.
- Attend an educational workshop - a module lasting 3 days, additional follow-up seminar and workshop in Ljubljana as part of the European Students Run.
- Organize 1 (introductory) workshop for students who want to prepare for a running event, or who just want to practice running regularly. Provide students with some basic information that they will receive at the seminar/ educational workshop.
- Encourage students to join the running training sessions, to regularly attend the running training sessions and to prepare themselves for the European Student Run in Ljubljana.
- Motivate students to participate in the European Students Run in Ljubljana in 2025 as well as in all subsequent editions of the European Students Run in 2026, 2027...

6.6. Implementation of training sessions and workshops for students in their local environments

The project partners planned and carried out various activities within their local environments with the aim of engaging students, promoting running and regular physical activity, and encouraging participation in the first edition of the European Student Run (ETŠ) in Ljubljana.

Among the activities implemented by the partners in their local environments, the following can be highlighted:

- Promotion of project activities through internal newsletters, media, and social networks;
- The organization of introductory and informational workshops for students;
- The organization of regular exercise sessions and training with experts, experienced runners, and selected student mentors;
- The organization of promotional events presenting the importance of proper preparation for running events;
- Participation in preparatory running events within local communities;

- One of the most important activities was the regular training program. The intensity and scope of the training varied across different environments.
- Based on the initially defined project objectives, we expected to engage 1,000 students within the partners' environments as part of the preparation for the races and subsequently as participants in the European Student Run. This target was significantly exceeded. A total of 1,740 students participated in the event in Ljubljana. In addition, the partners reported more than 2,000 engaged students who took part in promotional events and training programs.

6.7. *Accompanying program for students*

Within the Runners4All project, students were involved in a variety of activities. The following can be highlighted:

- Selected students who took on the role of mentors;
- Students who participated in educational and informational workshops;
- Students who took part in group training sessions;
- Students who attended the social gathering on the day before the competition, together with the Ljubljana Marathon EXPO event, refreshments, and the Beyond the Finish Line conference;
- Students who presented examples of good practice;



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- Students who participated as promoters of running and assisted in organizing running events for children, youth, and people with disabilities;
- Students who participated in the event as volunteers, carrying out various tasks and responsibilities (route setup, main event area support, information and help points, cloakrooms, refreshment stations, road closures, directing participants, cheering zones, etc.)

The objective of engaging students was to allow them to experience the event from the broadest possible perspective. Through their involvement, they gained a variety of competencies, practical skills and knowledge.

A special objective was the engagement of international students who registered to participate in the European Student Run. As organizers, we wanted them to join the social gathering, participate in educational workshops, follow the latest developments at the EXPO fair, attend the conference, and share their experiences and examples of good practices.

All these activities successfully connected and united the 1,740 students who participated in the running event, together with an additional 110 students who were involved in the organization and implementation of the European Students Run and Ljubljana Marathon events in one way or another.



6.8. Implementation of the event and results

In all partner countries, students came together and trained in running. They prepared themselves for the European Students Run. The main event – the European Students Run – took place on 19 October in Ljubljana as part of the NLB 29th Ljubljana Marathon.

Students participated in a special category and registered for the 10 km run, half marathon, and marathon races.

In addition to the running events, students also participated in the Beyond the Finish Line conference, which was organized together with European University Sports Association on Saturday, 18 October, in Ljubljana as part of the Ljubljana Marathon EXPO event:

- The organization of a meeting with students, a conference for representatives of student organizations, selected student mentors, representatives of sports associations, a sports fair, and a pasta party for all participants of the European Students Run on Saturday, 18 October 2025;
- The organization of running events for children, youth, and people with disabilities on Saturday, 18 October 2025;

- The organization of the Ljubljana Marathon and the European Students Run on Sunday, 19 October 2025;
- More than 16,000 registered participants participated in the running events on Sunday, 19 October; of them 1,740 students participated in the European Students Run event;
- More than 150 children and an additional 20 adults with disabilities and special needs participated in the special Inclusive Run event on Saturday, 18 October 2025;
- Around 9,000 children and young people participated in the Ljubljana Marathon events on Saturday, 18 October 2025;
- More than 80 students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds were included in the project;
- The organization of the Beyond the Finish Line conference with more than 100 participants, together with a gathering of students from all participating partners and countries, on Saturday, 18 October 2025.

These activities successfully demonstrated strong international cooperation among project partners and highlighted the important role of sport and running events in promoting inclusion, healthy lifestyles, volunteering, and student engagement across Europe.

Statistical Data of the

NLB 29th Ljubljana Marathon & European Students Run

Participation Statistics by Gender

Children's / School Runs:

4,222  **4,512** 

Students Runs:

880  **1,053** 

Inclusive Run:

100  **45** 

10 km Run:

3,001  **3,479** 

21 km Run:

4,486  **2,968** 

42 km Marathon:

2,268  **606** 

Number of Participating Countries



Number of Volunteers

The volunteers carried out a wide range of tasks, including:

- > Information services
- > Distribution of race bib numbers
- > Refreshment and water stations
- > Route guidance and participant direction
- > Officiating and judging services
- > Start area assistance
- > Distribution of finisher medals
- > First aid support (Red Cross)
- > Pace runners
- > Cheering zones





Estimated number of students involved as volunteers or through student work arrangements: **110**

Coaches and professional staff **269**



(schools, teachers, clubs, etc.)

Number of Staff and Experts Involved

Total staff: Saturday **350**

Sunday **1,717**

Total **2,067**

Social Impact and Charity Activities



Runners supported special charity program Godparenthood ("Botrstvo")

Volunteers included in the total staff: **475**

Athletes and sports ambassadors **49**



(selected promoters and ambassadors)



6.9. Sustainability of results and the future development of the European Students Run

The evaluation of the long-term expected results will be reflected through the following indicators:

- The number of activated students participating in sports and running activities
- Improved preparedness of runners for participation in events, leading to a reduction in injuries, risk situations, and other safety concerns
- Participant satisfaction and repeated participation in future events
- Newly acquired knowledge and skills
- A diversified offer of running events organized according to the recommendations of this project and involving various target groups, including people with limitations and disabilities

Among the most important tangible and accessible long-term outcomes, we would particularly like to highlight:

- Educational materials supporting the safe and effective preparation of runners for training and participation in events;
- Examples of exercises for improving running technique;
- Recommendations for organizers of future running events;
- The developed concept and identity of the European Students Run, including recommendations for student engagement, a network of connected organizations, guidelines for regular training and physical preparedness, and a framework for organizing the European Students Run in future years.



We would especially like to emphasize the conclusions adopted during the international Beyond the Finish Line conference. The students who presented examples of good practice and shared their experiences of participating in the Runners4All project clearly and unanimously confirmed that they wish to continue participating and competing in this way in the future. This approach differs significantly from the standards of major championships and elite competitions. In traditional championships, including student championships, only a small number of selected athletes participate. They represent their country, club, or organization, while others can only watch and support them from the sidelines.

However, the students expressed a strong desire to be actively involved—to participate as runners themselves, achieve their personal best results, and at the same time socialize, connect, and build international friendships. For this reason, such an event should remain a standard model for long-distance running events.

This type of event enables a large number of students to participate, with the primary goal being participation itself and the successful completion of the race. Of course, some participants will also compete for medals and titles.

The slogan “Let’s Be Active” should continue to guide us in the future and encourage regular physical activity, healthy lifestyles, and safe participation in major international running events in the years to come.

Interested individuals and organizations can obtain further information, data, and educational materials on the project website.



WEBSITE



The background is a dark blue gradient. On the left side, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent blue shapes that resemble stylized, elongated letters or geometric forms. On the right side, there is a large, solid blue arrow pointing to the right, partially overlapping the edge of the page.

Recommendations for organizers of running events

Organising a running event is not a single operational task. It is a long process that begins months before the first runner reaches the start line and continues after the last result has been published. A successful event is built through planning, coordination and the ability to connect many different systems into one clear experience.

Leadership, course design, registration, communication, logistics, safety, technology, volunteers, runner support and recognition all influence how participants experience the event. None of these areas stand alone. A weakness in one area can quickly affect the others.

This chapter is therefore designed as a practical handbook for future organisers. It not only describes

what must be done but also explains how to think about the organisation of a running event, how to structure the process, and how to create a model that can be repeated, improved and transferred to other environments.

The added value of this approach lies in sustainability. Knowledge does not remain with one organiser or one edition of the event. It becomes a shared method.



Organisation as the foundation

Every running event begins with structure. Before promotion can begin, before registration and before logistics, the organiser must define who is responsible for what. Without this, the event quickly becomes solely reactive. Decisions are made too late, information is repeated, and problems are solved only when they have already appeared.

A functional organisational model connects three levels:

- the strategic level,
- the operational level and
- the field level.

The strategic level defines the event concept, partnerships, budget and key decisions. The operational level turns this into concrete planning across areas such as communication, course management, logistics, safety, registration and technical systems. The field level is where the plan becomes visible: volunteers, coordinators, information points, refreshment stations and operational teams.

The most important principle is clarity. Every area must have ownership, but no area can work in isolation. Logistics must understand the course. Communication must

understand registration. Safety must understand crowd flow. Technology must understand the participant journey. When these areas are connected early, the race day becomes manageable.

Volunteers are a central part of this structure. They should not be treated as an improvised workforce for the final days before the event. In large running events, volunteers often become the first human contact between the organiser and the participant. They guide runners, distribute materials, answer questions, support refreshment stations and help maintain flow. Their preparation directly affects the quality of the event.

Volunteer management should therefore include early recruitment, clear task descriptions, short but practical training, team leaders on site and written instructions. A volunteer who knows exactly where to stand, what to say and who to contact in case of a problem can solve small issues before they become larger ones.

“ **A good event is not controlled from one place. It is coordinated through a clear structure.** ”

7.1. *Course design and target groups*

The course is more than a route. It is the physical expression of the event. It determines how runners move, how spectators follow the race, how city services operate and how safe the event will be.

A good course starts with a clear understanding of target groups. A marathon runner, a half-marathon runner, a 10 km participant and a first-time student runner do not enter the event with the same knowledge and expectations. Some are focused on performance, others on finishing, others on belonging to a wider community. The course must allow these experiences to coexist.

Different distances are one of the most effective tools for inclusion. A 10 km race can open the event to beginners and students. A half marathon offers a strong challenge for recreational runners. A marathon creates the core identity of the event and attracts experienced participants. When these distances are planned together, the organiser must carefully manage starting times, shared sections, separation points and finish flow.

The route must also be readable. Runners should understand where

they are going without needing to interpret complex instructions during the race. Signage, barriers, volunteers, markings and route communication before the event are all critical ways to support this. The best course is the one that feels natural to the runner.

From an operational point of view, course planning must include road closures, access for emergency services, public transport impact, refreshment station placement, medical points, timing checkpoints and spectator zones. These elements should be considered when designing the route, not added afterwards.

A course that looks attractive on a map can become difficult in practice if it creates bottlenecks, blocks emergency access or separates key operational zones too far apart. This is why course design must be tested from multiple perspectives: the runner's level of experience, city management, safety, logistics and timing.



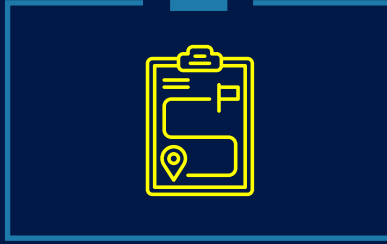
1



The runner must understand the course.

A clear route reduces uncertainty.

2



The organiser must control the course.

Access, safety and flow must be manageable.

3



The city must be able to function around the course.

The event should energize the city, not paralyze it.

7.2. *Building participation*

Large participation numbers are never accidental. They are the result of continuous communication, trust and relevance. People register when they understand the event, when they feel invited, and when they believe the experience will be worth their time.

Promotion should not only begin when registration opens for the event. It should be part of a longer process in which the event becomes visible in the environments where target groups already exist. For students, this

means universities, faculties, student organisations, campus activities, sports networks, mentors and digital communities. For recreational runners, it means running clubs, local events, social media groups, partner races and community channels.

The most effective communication is not only promotional. It is practical and relational. Participants need to know why they should join, but also how to prepare, what to expect, who is involved and where they can get help. This is especially important for first-time runners. A beginner may not register because of distance,

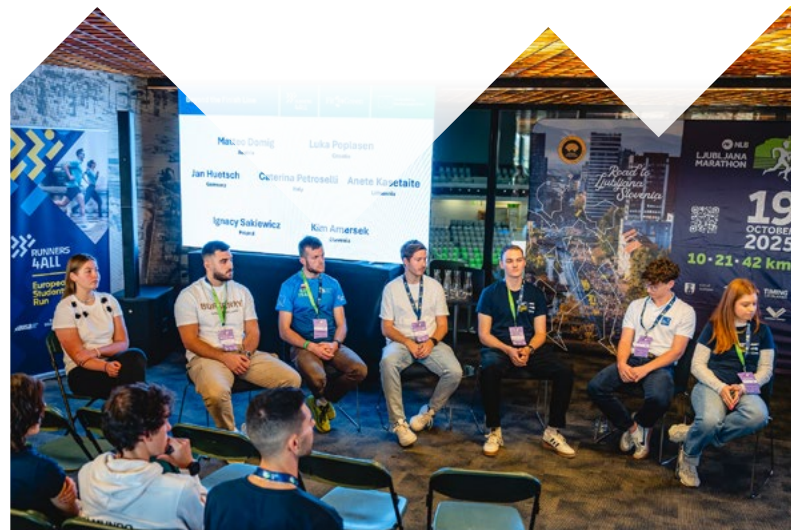
uncertainty, lack of confidence or fear of not belonging. Communication must reduce those barriers.

In the student model, participation was strengthened through mentors, ambassadors and direct institutional cooperation. Students were not addressed only as individual runners, but as part of a wider process: training, preparation, online support, conference participation and the race itself. This created a stronger sense of belonging.

Media, press conferences, influencers and ambassadors

can support this process, but they should not replace the core communication system. Their role is to amplify visibility, provide relatable examples and bring the event closer to specific audiences. The strongest ambassadors are often those who reflect the target group: students speaking to students, recreational runners speaking to beginners, experienced runners encouraging first-timers.

« Promotion creates visibility. Connection creates participation. »



7.3. *Registration and the participant journey*

Registration is not only an administrative step. It is the beginning of the participant journey. The way registration is designed tells the participant what kind of event they are entering.

A good registration system must be simple, stable and transparent. Participants should immediately understand which race they are registering for, what the conditions are, what the price includes, when deadlines apply and what happens after registration. Every unclear step creates friction.

The organiser should think of registration as the first stage of communication. After registration, the participant should receive confirmation, practical information and a clear sense of the next steps. These may include training recommendations, instructions for collecting race kits, travel information, event schedule, start times, expo information and contact channels. For larger events, communication must be planned as a sequence rather than as isolated announcements. Participants need different information at different moments. Immediately after registration, they need confirmation. A few

months before the event, they need preparation guidance. In the final week, they need exact instructions. On site, they need orientation. After the event, they need results, photos, certificates, feedback forms and next steps.

Digitalisation plays a central role in this process. Automated emails, personalised codes, participant dashboards, QR confirmations, searchable FAQs and structured information flows reduce the pressure on support teams and improve the participant experience.

AI can support this journey when used carefully. It can help answer frequently asked questions, guide participants to useful and correct information, structure customer support, translate information for international participants and reduce repetitive manual communication. AI should not replace human responsibility, but it can make information easier to access.

The key is not to use technology for its own sake. The purpose is to remove uncertainty.



Customer journey in practice

A participant should move through the event in a clear sequence:

registration > **confirmation** > **preparation** >
race kit collection > **start information** >
race experience > **results** > **recognition** >
feedback

If one step is unclear, the entire experience suffers.

7.4. *Expo, race kits and bib distribution*

The expo or race village is one of the most important operational spaces of a running event. It is not only a commercial or promotional area: it is the place where the participant physically joins the event.

This is where runners collect their bib numbers, receive participant packages, meet partners, ask questions, check event information and enter the atmosphere of the race. For this reason, the expo must be planned as both a logistics centre and an experience zone.

Race kit distribution must be one of the most carefully designed processes. If it is slow or unclear, it creates queues, frustration and unnecessary pressure on staff. If it is well organised, it builds confidence before race day.

In this project, the issuing of bib numbers and participant packages for students was organised as a separate process within the expo, in cooperation with EUSA. This separation was important for several reasons. It allowed clearer communication with





the student group, faster handling of participants, better control over the distribution process and a stronger sense of identity for students within the larger event.

The issuing process was based on a digital code. Participants received a unique code before arriving at the collection point. At the expo, the code was checked or scanned, participant data was verified, and the correct bib number and package were issued. This reduced manual searching, minimised mistakes and improved traceability.

For future organisers, the important lesson is that distribution should not be treated as a simple handover. It is a controlled operational process. It needs staff, signage, digital tools, backup procedures, clear opening hours, queue management and a help desk for exceptions.

“ The race kit collection is the first on-site test of the event. If it works, trust increases. If it fails, uncertainty begins. ”



7.5. *Event environment and accompanying activities*

A running event does not exist solely on its course. The wider event environment shapes how participants, partners and visitors experience the event.

The expo, partner presentations, activation areas, pasta event, conference activities and informal meeting spaces all extend the event beyond the race itself. These elements create additional value and allow different groups to connect.

The pasta event, for example, is not only a meal. It is a social and symbolic moment before the race. It helps participants relax, meet others, receive final information and feel part of a larger community. For student

participants, such activities can be especially important because it alters the race from an individual challenge into a shared experience.

Conference activities add another layer. They allow the event to become a platform for knowledge transfer. Organisers, experts, mentors, students and partner institutions can exchange experiences, discuss methods and reflect on what has been learned. This is particularly important when the project aims to create long-term value and not only one-time participation.

Accompanying activities should always have a purpose. They should support preparation, visibility, community, education or partner engagement. If they are added without integration, they become noise. If they are well connected, they strengthen the entire event.

7.6. *Technology, timing and data*

Technology is one of the invisible systems that determines whether a running event feels reliable. Participants may not notice technology when it works, but they immediately notice when it fails.

Timing systems must be accurate, tested and supported by trained staff.



Timing chips, checkpoints, start and finish mats, backup procedures and result processing must be planned in advance. The timing system should be connected with registration data so that bib numbers, participant categories and results match correctly.

Data processing is equally important. Organisers handle personal data, registration data, emergency contacts, category information, timing data and result data. This information must be accurate, protected and used responsibly.

GDPR compliance is not only a legal requirement. It is part of participant trust. Participants must know how their data is used, stored and protected. Access to data should

be limited to those who need it, and systems should be secure.

Technology also supports communication. Real-time updates, digital maps, FAQs, automated messages, QR codes and AI-supported information tools can improve the participant journey. The strongest systems are those that connect technology with human support. A chatbot can answer common questions, but complex issues still need a real person. A QR code can speed up distribution, but there must be a solution for participants who arrive without it.

The goal is not to digitalize everything. The goal is to digitalize the parts where technology improves clarity, speed and reliability.

1



Timing must be trusted.

Results are part of event credibility.

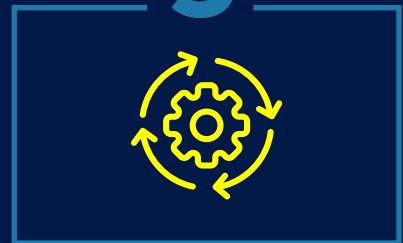
2



Data must be protected.

Trust is built through responsible handling.

3



Technology must simplify.

If it creates confusion, it is not helping.

7.7. Runner support

Runner support begins before race day and continues until after the finish. It includes every piece of information, infrastructure and assistance that helps participants feel prepared, safe and guided.

Before the event, support means clear instructions. Runners need to know where to collect materials, when to arrive, where to leave belongings, where the start zones are, how refreshment stations work, what happens at the finish and where to find help.

On site, support becomes physical. Information points, signage, volunteers, toilets, changing rooms, baggage storage, start zones and refreshment stations all influence the participant's experience. These elements should be visible, logically placed and communicated in advance.

Refreshment stations are especially important. Their placement depends on World Athletics rules and regulations, distance, weather, expected runner density and course layout. They must be supplied, staffed and designed to allow for a smooth flow of foot traffic. A badly positioned refreshment station can create congestion. A poorly stocked one can damage the experience and even create safety issues.

Support should also consider different types of runners. Elite runners, recreational runners, first-time runners, international participants and students may need different information and different levels of guidance. The event should be inclusive without being overly complicated.

“ Support is not what happens when something goes wrong. Support is what prevents uncertainty. ”



7.8. Safety and risk management

Safety is one of the areas where improvisation is unacceptable. It must be planned, coordinated and communicated.

A running event requires cooperation with police, municipal services, medical teams, emergency responders, traffic management, security staff and course marshals. Each of these actors must understand their role, location and communication line.

Risk assessment should begin early. It should identify possible issues such as crowd congestion, medical emergencies, weather conditions, traffic conflicts, lost participants, technical failures, blocked access points and communication breakdowns.

The safety plan should define how incidents are reported, who makes decisions, how emergency vehicles access the course, where medical points are located, how communication flows between teams and what happens if conditions change.

Medical support must be visible and accessible. Depending on event size, this may include medical teams at the finish, mobile medical units, ambulances, first aid points along the course and clear procedures for participant evacuation.

Safety should be integrated into all other areas as well. Course design affects safety. Logistics affects safety. Communication affects safety. Volunteer training affects safety. The best safety plan is not separate and isolated — it is built into the event structure itself.



7.9. Logistics and infrastructure

Logistics is the backbone of the event. It turns plans into physical reality.

This includes start and finish zones, barriers, tents, signage, toilets, baggage areas, refreshment stations, timing infrastructure, power supply, waste management, transport, loading zones, volunteer equipment, partner areas, spectator zones and dismantling after the event.

The start and finish area require special attention because they carry the highest concentration of participants, staff, volunteers, partners and spectators. The start area must allow controlled entry, clear start zones, sufficient space and safe flow. The finish area must support

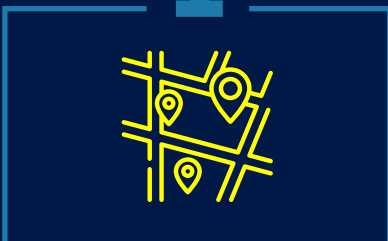
timing, medals, refreshments, medical care, photo areas, exit routes and reunification with supporters.

Logistics must be planned with a detailed timeline. What arrives first? Who installs it? Who checks it? What depends on what? When must the area be closed? What happens if a supplier is late? These questions must be answered before race week.

The course also has its own logistical structure. Every refreshment station, signage point, barrier line, volunteer post and medical location must be placed according to plan. Material distribution should be organised so that teams receive what they need without delay.

Good logistics are invisible. Participants notice only when something is missing.

1



Plan the space.

Every zone needs a clear function.

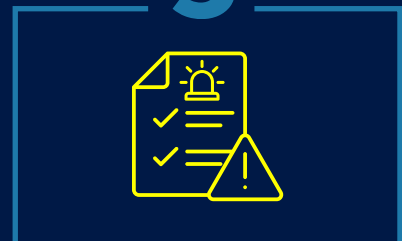
2



Plan the movement.

Participants, staff, vehicles and spectators must flow safely.

3



Plan the backup.

Every critical element needs an alternative.

7.10. *Results, ceremonies and recognition*

The event does not end when runners cross the finish line. Results, medals, ceremonies and communication provide closure.

Results must be accurate, accessible and published quickly. Participants expect to find their time, placement, category and certificate without confusion. Any corrections must be handled transparently.

Award ceremonies are not only formal moments. They communicate what the event values. They recognise performance, effort, identity and belonging.

In this project, student participants had a separate award ceremony within the larger event. This was important because it gave visibility to the student category without separating students from the main marathon experience. They were part of a large international event, but still recognised as a distinct group.

This balance is important for future organisers. Special target groups can be integrated into a major event while still receiving dedicated recognition. Separate ceremonies, category results, student rankings, partner acknowledgements and tailored

communication all help build identity. Recognition should also extend beyond winners. For many participants, especially first-time runners, finishing the race is the main achievement. Certificates, photos, post-event communication and storytelling help preserve that experience.

7.11. *Alignment with World Athletics standards*

For events aiming at international recognition, alignment with World Athletics standards provides an important quality framework. World Athletics Label Road Race Regulations define requirements for areas such as race organisation, elite athlete management, anti-doping procedures, timing, course certification and reporting. The regulations also require organisers to provide updated elite athlete entry lists in advance, including status information such as confirmed, contracted or under negotiation, which shows the level of planning expected for labelled races.

The broader World Athletics rules and official documents also include anti-doping rules, safeguarding, technical rules and privacy-related standards, which are relevant for organisers who want to operate at a high professional level.

For a practical handbook, the important point is not only the label itself. It is the organisational culture behind it. A labelled event must show that it can deliver quality consistently. This includes a properly measured course, reliable timing, structured safety and medical support, competition integrity, clear communication, controlled logistics and professional event delivery.

Even if an event does not immediately aim for a label, these standards are useful as a reference. They help organisers understand what high-level road race organisation requires.

« **International standards are not decoration. They are a checklist of seriousness.** »

7.12. *Digitalisation and AI as part of the event model*

Digitalisation should not be treated as a separate innovation chapter. It belongs inside the event model.

It supports registration, communication, race kit distribution, participant guidance, timing, result publication, feedback collection and post-event analysis. When used correctly, digital tools reduce uncertainty and make the event easier to navigate.

AI can add value particularly in information management. Large events generate repeated questions: where to collect the bib, when to arrive, where to park, where the start is, what to do if a code does not work, where to find results, how to change data, what happens in bad



weather. AI-supported tools can help participants find answers quickly and reduce pressure on staff.

However, AI must be used responsibly. Information must be correct, updated and supervised. AI should guide participants to verified event information, not create unofficial answers. For this reason, it should be connected to structured content: official FAQs, event maps, schedules, registration rules and support procedures.

The best use of AI is not replacing people. It is helping people receive the right information faster.

Conclusion

A running event is not defined by one good idea. It is defined by the quality of the system behind it.

The organizer must connect the structure, course, participation, registration, expo, technology, runner support, safety, logistics,

results and standards into one coherent experience. When this works, participants do not see the complexity. They see a clear path from registration to race day and from finish line to recognition.

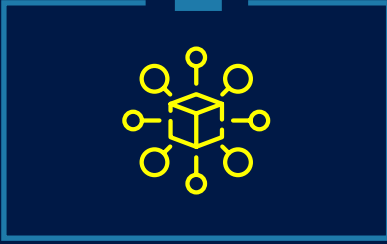
This is the real value of a handbook approach. It turns experience into transferable knowledge. It allows future organisers to begin with a model, not with a blank page.

The goal is not to copy one event exactly. The goal is to understand the logic behind it and apply it in a way that fits a new environment.



“ A successful running event feels simple because the system behind it is not. ”

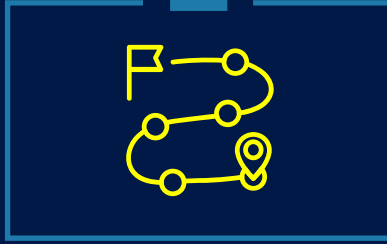
1



Structure

The event begins with clear responsibilities and connected teams.

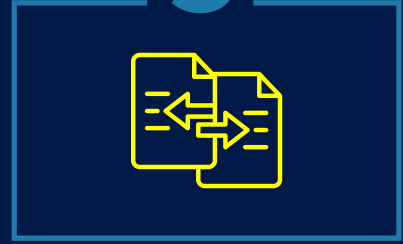
2



Journey

The participant experience starts at registration and ends after recognition.

3



Transferability

A good model can be adapted, repeated and improved.

7.13. Facts

- Running events require integrated planning across an organization, course, communication, logistics, safety, technology and participant experience.
- A separate student pathway can exist inside a major event without separating students from the main experience.
- Race kit distribution should be treated as a controlled process, supported by digital codes and clear on-site flow.
- AI-supported communication can improve the participant journey when connected to verified event information.
- World Athletics standards provide a useful reference for organisers aiming at high-quality, internationally credible delivery.

7.14. Operational checklist for running event organisation

Before you start

Before any planning begins, make sure you understand one thing:

- What is the scale of the event (local / national / international)?
- Who are your main target groups (students, recreational runners, elite)?
- What is the core purpose (competition, participation, community, project output)?
- Which partners are already involved and which are missing?

If this is unclear, everything that follows will be inconsistent.

1. Organisation and structure

- Define the core organisational team
- Assign clear responsibilities for each area (no overlaps, no gaps)
- Establish communication flow between teams
- Create a decision-making structure (who decides what, when)

- Start volunteer recruitment early
- Define volunteer roles (registration, course, logistics, support)
- Prepare simple written instructions + short training
- Assign team leaders for volunteers

If roles are unclear, problems will appear on race day.

2. Course design

- Define race distances (10 km / 21 km / 42 km or equivalent)
- Map routes and test them physically
- Engage a licenced course measurer if needed
- Check:
 - safety of all sections
 - possible congestion points
 - accessibility for emergency vehicles
 - feasibility of road closures

- Coordinate with:
 - city authorities
 - police
 - traffic management

- Plan:
 - start and finish zones
 - refreshment station locations
 - medical points
 - spectator areas

A good course reduces problems in every other area.

3. Participation and promotion

- Define target groups and communication approach
- Activate partners (universities, organisations, networks)
- Prepare:
 - communication timeline (not one campaign)
 - basic media kit
 - social media + email communication
 - media presence (articles, interviews)
- Engage:
 - key speakers
 - ambassadors
 - mentors
 - influencers

- Ensure continuous presence, not only short bursts of promotion

Participation grows through consistency, not intensity.

4. Registration and communication

- Set up a simple and stable registration system
- Clearly define:
 - prices
 - deadlines
 - race categories
- Prepare automatic confirmation messages
- Plan communication flow:
 - after registration
 - before the event
 - race week
 - post-event
- Set up:
 - FAQ section
 - support email / contact
 - information points
- Integrate:
 - QR / unique codes for participants
 - digital communication tools

- (Optional but recommended)

Use AI tools for:

- answering common questions
- guiding participants

If participants are confused, the system is failing.

5. Expo and race kit distribution

- Define expo layout:
 - distribution zone
 - information point
 - partner area
- Plan race kit distribution as a controlled process
- Prepare:
 - unique participant codes (QR / ID)
 - scanning / verification system
 - clear collection instructions
- Organize:
 - separate flows if needed (e.g. students / general participants)
 - queue management
 - help desk for issues
- Ensure:
 - trained staff
 - backup solutions (manual check if system fails)

The expo is the first real test of the organization.

6. Event environment and activities

- Plan:
 - expo activities
 - partner presentations
 - pre-race events (e.g. pasta event)
 - conference / knowledge-sharing sessions
- Align all activities with:
 - participant schedule
 - logistics
 - communication
- Ensure each activity has a clear purpose

Activities should support the event, not distract from it.

7. Technology and data

- Select timing system provider
- Test timing equipment in advance
- Set up:
 - result processing system
 - data management system
- Ensure:
 - GDPR compliance
 - secure data storage
 - controlled access

- Prepare:
 - backup systems
 - technical support team
- Integrate digital tools for:
 - communication
 - participant guidance
 - real-time updates

Technology must work under pressure.

8. Runner support

- Prepare clear instructions:
 - arrival
 - start zones
 - course
 - finish process
- Set up:
 - information points
 - signage
 - changing areas
 - baggage storage
- Plan refreshment stations:
 - locations
 - supplies
 - staff
- Train volunteers for:
 - communication
 - basic problem solving

Support should be visible before it is needed.

9. Safety and risk management

- Conduct a full risk assessment
- Coordinate with:
 - police
 - medical services
 - emergency teams
- Define:
 - emergency procedures
 - communication protocols
- Ensure:
 - medical points along the course
 - clear access for emergency vehicles
- Brief all staff and volunteers

Safety must be planned, not assumed.

10. Logistics and infrastructure

- Plan:
 - start zone
 - finish zone
 - course setup
- Organize:
 - materials
 - transport
 - installation timeline
- Ensure:
 - everything is installed before race day
 - all zones are functional and tested

Prepare:

- backup materials
- contingency plans

Logistics determines whether the plan becomes reality.

11. Results and awards

Prepare:

- result publication system
- ranking categories

Ensure:

- fast and accurate result availability

Organise:

- award ceremony
- medal distribution

Include:

- separate recognition if needed (e.g. students)

Prepare:

- certificates
- post-event communication

The event ends with recognition, not the finish line.

12. Post-event phase

Publish results and photos

Send communication to participants

Collect:

- feedback
- data

Analyse:

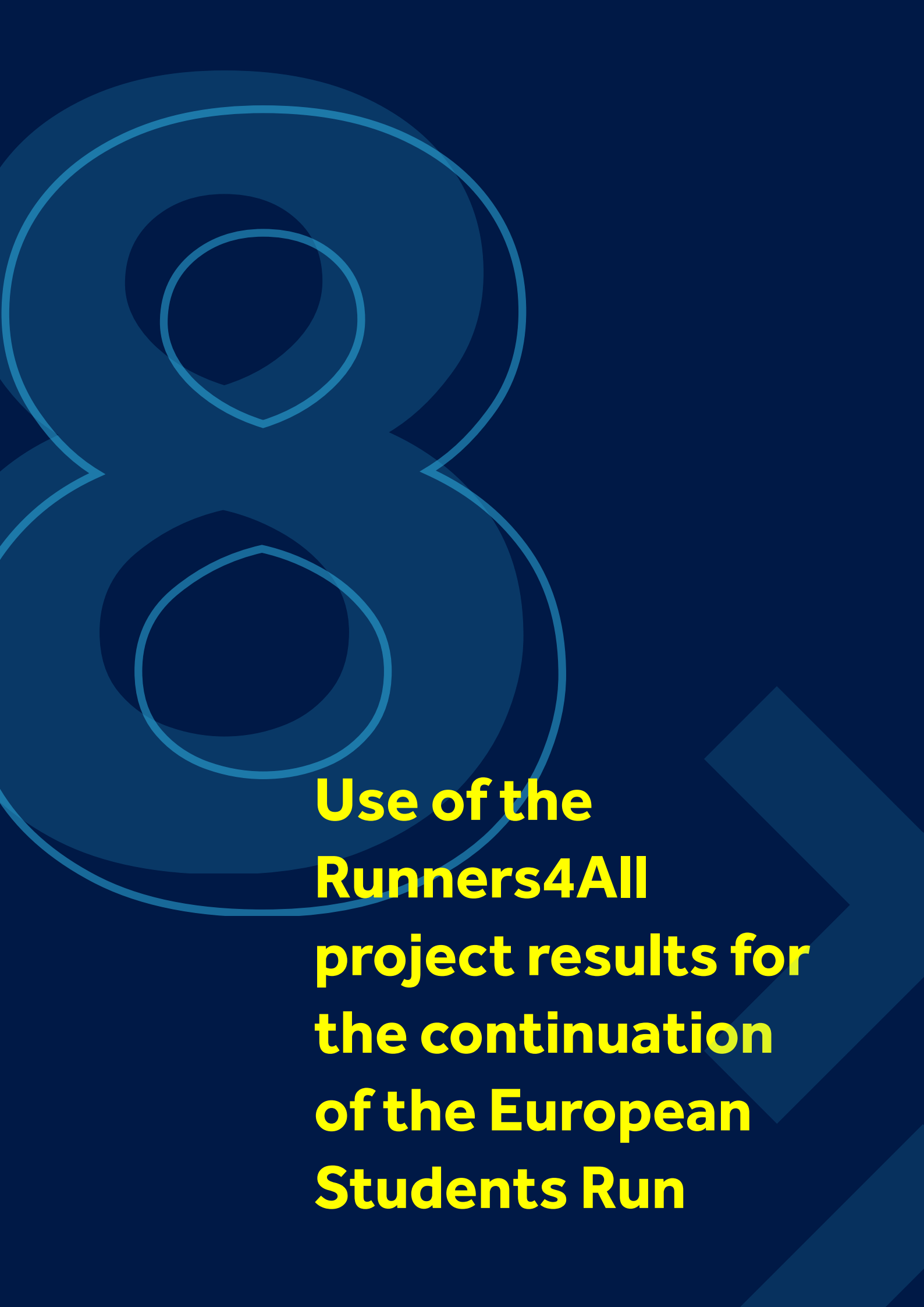
- what worked
- what failed

Document:

- lessons learned
- improvements for the next edition

This is where future events are built.

“ If you don't plan it, you will have to solve it under pressure. ”



**Use of the
Runners4All
project results for
the continuation
of the European
Students Run**

8.1. Long-term impact of the project results and presentation of good practice examples

Aleš Šolar, project external expert support

An important part of the Runners4All project is its broad impact on students and citizens of all age groups, encouraging them to stay active, practice running regularly, and engage in continuous physical activity.

We are planning the continuation of activities carried out by all project partners and their selected mentors regarding the promotion of healthy

lifestyles, training, and other sports activities that can contribute to students' health, academic success, and social inclusion.



The coordinator and associated partners have prepared several long-term project outcomes:

- Recommendations for students on how to start and improve physical fitness, and how to organize training sessions and practice regularly;
- Educational materials for students and other citizens on selected topics such as psychology and motivation, sports nutrition, the prevention of sports injuries, the inclusion of students with disabilities, and running techniques;
- Educational materials for students and other runners regarding running techniques, practical examples, and demonstrations;
- The establishment of a network capable of effectively promoting running, organizing training sessions, and participating collectively in major public running events.

At the same time, we also developed recommendations for organizers of future running events on how to integrate special target groups and include educational and promotional content within their events:

- Organizations can support one another by sharing examples of good practice
- An important aspect of such events are the accompanying activities. Students as our main target group wanted to not only participate in the races, but also to engage in additional activities such as EXPO fairs, workshops, conferences, volunteering opportunities, meetings with colleagues from other cities and countries, and the exchange of personal experiences related to training, physical fitness, health, overtraining, and injuries;
- If event organizers provide relevant content and accompanying activities, they can expect greater participant interest and higher attendance;
- Through the recommendations for future organizers, we also aim to share the experience of Timing Ljubljana regarding event organization, volunteer engagement, route preparation, hospitality services, and the provision of all necessary information for domestic and international runners.



Design of the European Students Run, Promotional Materials, and Network

An important part of the project's long-term outcomes also includes the graphic design elements developed for the European Students Run. Materials and visual designs for future editions of the event have been prepared and are available to organizers of future European Students Run events.

In addition, promotional materials were created and made available for future organizers. However, one of the most important long-

term outcomes is the increased visibility and recognition of the European Students Run among students, universities, and student organizations.

During the implementation of the Runners4All project, we established a strong network of students, student organizations, universities, and sports clubs. This network will support future efforts to promote physical activity among students and the wider public, motivating them to stay active, practice running regularly, and participate safely in running events.



8.2. European Students Run - event planning for 2026

Žiga Černe, Runners4All project coordinator

Planning a running event for 2026 began the day after the 2025 event was finished. It begins with what has already been learned. The experience of previous editions provides a clear starting point, not only in terms of organisation, but also in understanding participants, partners and the environment in which the event takes place. The goal is not to repeat the event, but to refine it.



Building on an existing model

The structure of the event is already established. It connects universities, partners and the marathon environment into a single process, where preparation, participation and experience form a continuous flow. This model will continue to be developed in 2026, with a focus on clarity and consistency.

Key elements remain unchanged: integration into the NLB Ljubljana Marathon, cooperation with EUSA, and connection with local and

international university networks. The system is not being redesigned. It is being strengthened.

Expanding participation

The 2026 edition places a strong focus on accessibility. A reduced participation fee for students remains a central element of the model. Access to this benefit is organised through a structured system of registration codes, distributed via the EUSA network and further supported by local universities.

This creates a direct link between European coordination and local engagement. Students do not access the event individually, but through connected environments that guide and support their participation.

At the same time, earlier and more consistent communication ensures that students understand both the process and the value of participation. Participation is not only increased, it is organised.

Improving through experience

Continuity is one of the strongest elements of the project. Insights from previous editions are used to better

understand participant behaviour, improve communication and refine organisational processes. This leads to clearer guidance, better coordination between partners and more efficient planning. The focus is not only on growth, but on quality and stability.

Conclusion

Planning for the European Students Run 2026 is not about starting again. It is about continuing a process that has already been established; refining it, strengthening it and making it more accessible. Each edition builds on the previous one. And with each step, the system becomes clearer.

“ **Planning begins with what has already been learned.** ”

1



Build on experience

Previous editions define the starting point.

2



Keep the structure

Refine what works.

3



Expand through connection

Grow through networks, not in isolation.

Info box

NLB 30th LJUBLJANA MARATHON

Ljubljana, October 17-18, 2026

<https://ljubljanaskimaraton.si/en/>

NLB LJUBLJANA
MARATHON



European
Students
Run 2026



EUROPEAN
STUDENTS RUN



How to access discounted student registration

Students can participate under a reduced entry fee through a structured system:

- Codes are distributed via the EUSA network
- Local universities activate and share codes within their communities
- Students register using these codes through the official NLB Ljubljana Marathon system

This ensures controlled access, clear communication and wide availability across participating countries.



8.3. European Students Run as legacy

Andrej Pišl, EUSA Director of Projects and Policy

As a long-term legacy of the Runners4All project, the European University Sports Association (EUSA) and the EUSA Institute are extremely happy and proud to report that the European Students Run is here to stay - or better yet, keep moving!

Thanks also to the support and co-funding of the European Union, the project has successfully translated into a self-sustaining legacy. After the successful pilot edition in 2025 as part of the project, in cooperation with the Organizing Committee of the 30th edition of the NLB Ljubljana Marathon, preparations for the second edition of the European Students Run are already underway. As of spring 2026, over 900 students from across Europe have already registered for the run in one of three distances: the entry-level 10km, the half marathon (21km), or the full marathon (42km). Registrations for the 2026 edition, taking place on October 17 and 18, remain open

until September, and we expect several hundred more students to join us in Ljubljana.

The success and impact of the pilot edition will extend beyond 2026. The bidding process has already begun for the 2027 and 2028 editions, gathering positive feedback and interest.

We are thrilled to see the engagement of national university sports associations, universities, university sports centers, clubs, informal groups, and individuals - not only in their participation in the European Students Run as a final event, but also in their adoption,

promotion, and activation of these initiatives at the local level throughout Europe. This brings grassroots sports, physical activity, and a healthy lifestyle even closer to students. The engagement of talented and elite runners, alongside those who are using it as an entry-level activity to move away from a sedentary lifestyle, is one of the greatest successes of the initiative.

The initiative has also inspired a European study on promoting health-enhancing physical activity among university students through user-centered running and walking interventions. Furthermore, it inspired another project co-funded by the European Union - Cycle2Connect, which encourages the physical activation of students through leisure cycling and active commuting.

We look forward to the future of the European Students Run!





**RUNNERS
4ALL**

**European
Students
Run**

