

First and foremost I am thankful to the members of the WL Executive Committee – Angelo Corradini, Hans Eriksson and Tom Duffy. We had very effective and close cooperation. They trusted me and their great experience in WL was the best support to my ideas.

The WL office was located in the premises of Tartu Maraton. If I had no time or possibility to talk to the other WL members, I could start any important discussion in my office together with Alar Arukuusk, Indrek Kelk, Aet Nurk or Epp Paal. This way I formulated the first proposals to the other members.

With the support of Tartu Maraton I had the wonderful possibility of employing a professional assistant, WL Project manager Kairis Leinus. Kairis was usually behind the scene, but I can say, that most of my success in leading WL was achieved thanks to her hard work.

If I were to speak about my goals and achievements of my election period, then I would mention the following:

- The most important step for Worldloppet as an international non-profit organisation was its legal registration in 2001.
- The most remarkable innovation for Worldloppet members and skiers was developing the WL website into an interactive information source, where every member can immediately publish useful information. The creation of the database of race results and transferring the database of Worldloppet passport holders and Masters to Internet was an enormous work.
- A big jump forward in the field of international marketing and attracting elite skiers to participate in WL races, was the introduction of the FIS Marathon Cup in collaboration with the FIS Sub-Committee for Popular Cross-Country. Personal thanks here belong to the Chairman of the Sub-Committee Paddy Field (WL double Master and author of many training and information materials on long-distance cross-country skiing).

These goals were fulfilled during my election period 1998 – 2002. My working load had increased both in my everyday work in the Estonian Ministry of Education and in Worldloppet. So I decided not to be a candidate for the next election period, as I needed more time for my family and myself. But I liked my skiing colleagues and friends so much, that I accepted the extraordinary proposal from the WL Executive Committee (later supported unanimously by WL AGM) to prolong my term in the office for 2 more years. This gave me a good possibility to enjoy some of the fruits of my work and to prepare the office for handing it over in 2004 to the next elected Secretary General Angelo Corradini. Angelo was certainly the best candidate and I am happy that WL has been developing further under his great leadership.

In 1998, when I started as the Worldloppet Secretary General, there were more than 70 000 participants in Worldloppet races. Now more than 90 000 skiers complete Worldloppet races. I would be very happy to see the Worldloppet total participation numbers exceeding the magic bound of 100 000 in the coming seasons. This would be the best acknowledgement of Angelo`s work.

Madis Lepajõe
Secretary General of Wordloppet 1998 - 2004
Tartu, Estonia

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2004-..... Angelo Corradini, Marcialonga (ITA)

Angelo Corradini has continued the direction started by Madis Lepajõe: so continues tight cooperation with FIS, (even from his position as Secretary General of 2 Nordic FIS World Championships in Val di Fiemme), raising the importance the FIS Marathon Cup, improving the results database and also looking for new outputs to make series attractive for new skiers.

During the Annual General Meeting 2007 in Norway on Angelo Corradini's proposal the new title of GLOBAL WORLLOPPET SKIER (worked out by Hannes Larsson, President of the International Association of Worldloppet Skiers) was accepted and will be awarded to the WL skiers, who have completed all 14 WL member races. This is meant to be a new goal for Super Popular Cross Country Skiers.

At the same meeting the proposal to "open the door" to new Worldloppet Members was accepted and at this time there are lot of contacts with possible candidates - Bieg Piastow from Poland; Christmas Marathon and Prazdnik Severa via Russian Ski Federation. Most probably these races will be presented at the annual meeting in 2008 in Mora (SWE).

The present Secretary General wishes to use all the possibilities of the digital era: to publish live results in the web, introduce virtual Worldloppet passport and web based communication forum for making friends and information exchange between participants.

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It is a huge piece of luck for me to experience this period in two different roles: that of Secretary General and that of skier at various Worldloppet races.

Living these experiences "from the inside" allowed me throughout all these years to make numerous improvements and simplifications in the traditional routine work of the Secretary and in the necessary general strategies, too. It is useless to list all these improvements in this moment, but maybe it is important to underline the most significant one, which gave the possibility to all masters to communicate in real time with the headquarters, to order new passports and their well-earned diplomas/certificates using their credit cards easily at home.

With the help of my sons Denis and Luca, I worked hard in order to make the public database of our web www.worldloppet.com efficient: our site is now a real "giant", with more than 230.000 names and 1.000.000 results available on-line.

I have often taken the liberty of making some suggestions or giving some advice about some little organising modifications for various single races; these improvements and modifications were almost always accepted, exclusively in the perspective of the interest and convenience of our indispensable Worldloppet passport holders and Masters.

Angelo Corradini
Secretary General of Wordloppet 2004-2008
Predazzo, Italy

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THE FURTHER EXPANSION OF WORLLOPPET

Tony Wise's idea, that one day Worldloppet could have a race in each FIS member country, has become utopic. Firstly, cross country skiing is not popular in some of them and secondly and what is the most important, it is difficult to organise a high level marathon that faces the international requirements.

Tony Wise thought that Worldloppet would become real Worldloppet when all the continents are represented. The organisation has widely expanded since its establishment. Within recent years no new serious candidates have appeared. The initial pace of expansion: one new member after every 5 years is slowing down, although from the Central European and Russian long time candidates some have made remarkable steps forward. Within years, the following marathons have showed their interest: