

- a) Biela Stopa (Slovakia);
- b) Bieg Piastow (Poland);
- c) Prazdnik Severa (Russia);
- d) Toxovo Skimarathon (Russia);
- e) Christmas Maraton (Russia);
- f) Fossavatn Ski Marathon (Iceland)
- g) Different marathons from New Zealand, Argentina, Chile, China and Spain.

Central European marathons, Prazdnik Severa of Russia and Paddy Pallin of Australia had already put up their candidature in 1984. The poor snow conditions in the beginning of the 1990s and in 2000-2002 decreased the participation numbers and changes in some marathons' organising committees decreased their level of organisation. For Russian marathons there are two major obstacles in addition to the requirements: a visa is needed for entering Russia and it makes travelling more complicated; there are several equal level candidates from this country and the Russian ski authorities will have to decide, which one to favour.

The interest of Central European marathons has not disappeared. At the 2005 meeting Madis Lepajõe suggested bigger Worldloppet races to offer their patronage to the candidates and support them with their experiences to help them to reach the needed level of organisation. Madis Lepajõe believes that new members and the verifying of mentors will give everyone new developmental possibilities.

Another important dimension of expansion is the race calendar, which is now almost full, the only free weekends are in December, the first weekend of January and the beginning of April. A marathon from a southern hemisphere country would be a perfect choice. Right now 6 races share 3 weekends: La Transjurassienne and Sapporo International Ski Marathon are on the second weekend of February, Tartu Maraton and Keskinada Loppet take place on the third weekend of February and the fourth weekend is for Finlandia-hiihto and American Birkebeiner.

In 2003 Vasaloppet entered a new market for skiers – China – and helped to work up a new race – China Vasaloppet, which takes place in Changchun on the first weekend of January. These days the skiers over there still learn to ski, but the interest is remarkable. With the support and help from Vasaloppet this race may become a serious candidate to the Worldloppet.

In 2006 Paddy Field suggested working out a liaison between Worldloppet races and neighbouring marathons. Being in the same ranking with Worldloppet helps the candidate races to prepare for the needed level of organisation (for example Asian Cup consisting of Sapporo International Ski Marathon from Japan as a Worldloppet race, Kamchatka's Avatchinski Maraton from Russialoppet and China Vasaloppet).

One way of expansion is the addition of new distances from the middle of the 1990s. There were 9 races at the beginning, but now it consists of 40 different distances although only 5 new main races have been included. Different distances have been included just to fulfil the wishes of skiers with different training level.

Paddy Field: "Worldloppet may already be close to its optimal size and additional members may ruin the series' spirit. From some point the organisation may become even uncontrollable. But closing the doors for the rest of the world may also cause a static development. Still if a marathon fills the requirements, it must have something to offer to the organisation as a whole and also bring something new to other members."



Madis Lepajõe handing over the work of Secretary General to Angelo Corradini. AGM 2004 in Sapporo, JPN



The negotiations between Jörgen Aukland and Carla Braitto