



British Embassy Riga

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Dear Sir/Madam,

The Nordea Riga Marathon is one of the largest annual events in Riga, and saw a record 8,592 participants in 2009. For Riga's marathon to realise the ambition of its organisers, *Nords Events Communication (NECom)* and Riga City Council, and become one of Europe's major marathon events, a competitive event for disabled athletes must become a feature of the annual event.

With sponsorship from the British Embassy in Latvia, the Nordea Riga Marathon's first distance for disabled persons, the 'Unity Kilometre', was launched on 17 May 2009. Organised so as to launch the main event, the 'Unity Kilometre' received significant press coverage, and was covered live on Latvian national television. The event and the resulting press coverage did much to help raise the profile of disability in Latvia, as well as the standing of those striving to see greater recognition for disabled people.

The British Embassy worked with a number of stakeholders working with the disabled community to realise the event, including Apeirons, the Latvian Paralympic Committee, the Latvian Wheelchair Basketball Sports Federation, the State Agency for Social Integration, and SUSTENTO, whose ideas and enthusiasm helped attract participants from 11 different disability organisations. The 'Unity Kilometre' proved to be a significant opportunity for members of these organisations - people with diverse special needs and backgrounds - to participate more fully in public life. Amongst the 110 participants who completed the distance were 45 taking part in wheelchairs, 5 with sight impairment, 21 with movement disorders, and 14 with special needs in the area of mental development.

Promotion of the 2010 marathon is already well underway, and we want to see disabled athletes there once more, helping to make their participation an integral element of future marathons. Our vision is of a disabled event that continues to develop and expand.

But this would not of course be possible without help from sponsors. We are targeting sponsorship of 20,000 EUR for this year's event, which will help to cover costs such as event barriers, disabled parking and transportation, medical support, a finishing arch, a hospitality area, medical support, catering, publicity and a participants pack containing starting numbers, memorial medals, and event t-shirts.

The sight of seeing the athletes complete the distance is perhaps reward enough, but in return for their contributions sponsors stand to benefit from positive publicity in the run up to and during the event, including on banners along the marathon route. Perhaps an international disabled athlete could be sponsored to attend, showing solidarity and adding profile to the event.

We believe this is a tremendous opportunity to help raise the profile and spirits of Latvia's disabled community, and we hope that you can join us in pledging your support. If you would like to make either a financial contribution or offer in-kind please contact Inese Kikule, Project Director, NECom on +371 67504931 by Thursday 18 March. We will then look to arrange a sponsors meeting.

Yours sincerely,



Antony Stokes
Charge d' Affaires
British Embassy, Riga



Aigars Nords
NECom



Aigars Apinis
Latvian Paralympic Association