

WINTER DAYS FOR EUROPEAN YOUTH



The Valley of Aosta, coiled in the heart of the Western Italian Alps, hosted from 7th to 10th February 1993 a new initiative by the Association of European NOCs - the first Winter edition of the European Youth Olympic Days.

Mr Mario Pescante, Secretary of the Association and of the Italian NOC, introduced this new initiative as follows: "The success of the European Youth Olympic Days held in Brussels in 1991 prompted us to match this great festival for the young with an edition specially devoted to winter sports.

The city and the region of Aosta rapidly came forward with enthusiasm to host this first winter version of the winter EYOD. With the patronage of the European Community and under the aegis of the International Olympic Committee and the Association of

European National Olympic Committees, the Italian NOC (CONI) and the CMIS, the organizing committee of the winter EYOD in Aosta, were proud to welcome to this corner of Italy in the very heart of Europe the representatives of the youth of our continent to this event characterized by sport, friendship and joy."

AOSTA KEEPS PACE WITH EUROPE

Almost 500 boys and girls between 15 and 18 years of age participated with enthusiasm in the alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, biathlon and speed-skating events held on the runs and trails of the winter sports resorts of Pila and Cogne and in the ice rink in Aosta.

The opening ceremony took place at Place Chanoux at the heart of the old town of Aosta in the presence of the President of the AENOC, Dr Jacques Rogge, the President of CONI, Mr Arrigo Gattai, the EEC representative, Mr Marco Piccarolo, representatives of the Italian authorities and numerous Presidents and Secretaries-General of European NOCs.

THE FUTURE CHAMPIONS OF THE YEAR 2000

The delegations of 34 NOCs, preceded by the mascot of the EYOD - "Poudzo", a figure symbolizing the traditional greeting of the people of the valley in the local patois - paraded in the square in front of the City Hall after processing through the streets of Aosta to the strains of the folk music of the valley.

The Olympic flame was lit by the cross-country skiing champion Marco Albarello while the voices of the Alpine huntsmen's choir rendered "Les Plumes noires".

Over and above the promising sports results obtained at this first edition, this initiative provided the young European athletes with an opportunity to make friends, exchange aspirations and hopes and so to become the citizens of the year 2000 under the multicoloured flags of the new Europe.

These young athletes from the four corners of Europe were lucky enough to experience the magic atmosphere of "Olympics" for youngsters which will help to make them tomorrow's Europeans and - who knows? - the Olympic champions of the future.

THE 1ST WINTER EDITION OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH OLYMPIC DAYS, AOSTA (ITA), 7TH-10TH FEBRUARY 1993