

## Kazan, Russia Site Visit

The site visit to Kazan was conducted by FINA Executive Director Cornel Marculescu. FINA Masters Technical Committee Commission ( Ed Evely, President, Mel Goldstein, Vice President, Kurt Mikkola, Honorary Secretary, and FINA Bureau Liaison, Mohamed Diop), on February 5-7, 2015.



**Day 1-** The visit opened with a meeting attended by Director General of the Executive Directorate for Sports Projects, Azat Kadyrov in the preparation for the World Masters Championships. Each chairman responsible for each aquatic discipline was introduced (Grigory Stetsyuk, Swimming and Open Water, Irek Zinnuroy, Water Polo, Tatiana Galkova, Synchronized Swimming, and Andrey Beketoy, Diving.

During the morning meetings Accreditation, Visas, and other items were discussed. Entry data information for these championships for the first time will be handled by the FINA GMS system, going forward this system will provide for a more uniform entry system for the championships. This system is now in place and presently in operation. The Championship entry booklet and entries will open on February 17<sup>th</sup>, with a “Hard Entry Deadline” of July 2<sup>nd</sup> for all disciplines. However, there is one concern that all athletes who are required to get Visas to travel to Russia should be aware of. The Visa process explained in the entry booklet is very simple, however it take approximately 10 days to produce the Russian Invitation Letter, which the athlete will need to secure a visa. Therefore the last possible date to get the invitation letter is June 15<sup>th</sup>, if you want to enter the championships prior to the deadline of July 2, 2015, and you need a visa you will have to adhere to the Visa deadline. This will be spelled out very clearly in the entry information. (Unfortunately, these deadlines may change slightly)



After the morning meetings the committee first visited the Main International Center in the Athlete Village. This is where all athletes will be directed upon their arrival from the Kazan airport, and where they will receive their accreditation material and from here proceed to their hotel of choice or their room in the village. The airport and Athlete Village is about 10-15 minutes away. The Athlete Village for the championships is a very nice option, very clean, well maintained, and has many benefits (Medical, Beauty Shops, Restaurants, Recreation areas and etc.. A list of the many benefits will be in the Entry Booklet.



The medical facility in the village is “Second to None”... It has all of the latest medical equipment, and is available 24/7. In all of my years working



championships I have not seen a medical facility solely dedicated to the athletes who are participating in a championship like the one in the Athlete Village in Kazan. The Athlete Village rooms will be priced at \$45 single and \$75 double, which includes breakfast, WiFi, and transportation to the city as well as the shuttle to the various venues. At first

glance I was skeptical of the Athletes Village concept, because they were very “Spartan” at best. However, for the athlete traveling to Kazan for the championships this pricing reduces the total cost to attend these championships about 50%. We all know Masters swimmers like destination championships, this price will definitely allow extended travel throughout Russia and or Europe. We were first led to believe that hotel space beyond the Athlete Village were limited and that there were only given 4 or 5 Hotel choices. The Entry Booklet and website will include 32 additional hotels at various pricings which will be available that are three to four star hotels.

**Day 2-**We visited all of the competition venues, which are outstanding.



At each venue we discussed athlete flow in and out of the competition, how each competition will be conducted., when and where the award ceremonies will be conducted for each discipline, and where food catering will be located in each venue. The Kazan OC is very confident that they have Meet Referees, Starters, and Judges in the key positions for each discipline, however they will be putting out a call for judges to each federation in each discipline. The software and hardware for

producing results and event management is in place for Diving, Synchronized Swimming and Water Polo through Swiss Timing as this will be the same timing and event management used by the Elite Championships. However, Swim Timing does not have soft ware to manage Masters swimming or produce results. Kazan OC is hosting the Russian Masters Swimming Championships in April and plan to use one of two meet management systems (Splash or Hy-Tek). The FINA Masters Technical Committee has suggested they send two observers (Mel Goldstein, Vice President, and Walt Reid, FINA Top Ten Recorder) to these championships to see if the Swiss Timing system is combatable with either of the software programs designed to manage Masters swimming meets.

In conclusion, I think these championships will be an outstanding event for Masters athlete throughout the world. The 4000-5000 athletes attending these championships will experience first class venues, well run and managed events, and a very friendly local organizing committee that will do everything to make their visit to Kazan a pleasant one. Kazan was definitely the right choice by FINA to host both the Elite and Masters Championships in the same city. The city is very beautiful and has many historical sites to visit, Masters swimmers will enjoy their experience in Kazan.

