

## Official Now: Veszprém and Bakony–Balaton Region Awarded Title of European Region of Sport 2026

**ACES Europe has officially announced that Veszprém and the Bakony–Balaton region have been granted the title of *European Region of Sport 2026*.**

ACES Europe (European Capitals and Cities of Sport Federation), a Brussels-based organisation working in cooperation with the institutions of the European Union, has been recognising cities, communities and regions since 2001 for outstanding achievements in promoting healthy lifestyles, sport and physical activity among the population. Its mission is to encourage active living, community building and sustainable sports development.

The ***Veszprém–Balaton European Region of Sport 2026*** bid, coordinated by Veszprém–Balaton 2023 JSC., was the result of several months of preparatory work. Local sports clubs, civil organisations, municipalities and institutions all took part in the process. The aim of the bid was not merely to win the title, but also to initiate a long-term shift in attitudes towards sport, promoting healthier lifestyles among residents of Veszprém and the wider region, and reinforcing the socially integrative power of sport.

In the Veszprém–Balaton region, high-quality and diverse sports infrastructure is complemented by an exceptional natural environment: the forests of the Bakony, the water sports opportunities of Lake Balaton, the cycle routes and open-air facilities all inspire people to get moving.

**The concept places the emphasis not on elite sport, but on the beneficial effects of everyday physical activity: those everyday moments when families go hiking together, young people hop on their bikes, retirees exercise as a group, or children play team games. These moments not only contribute to our well-being but also help build community, bring joy and bring us closer together.**

### CORE VALUES AND GOALS OF VESZPRÉM-BALATON EUROPEAN REGION OF SPORT 2026

Fundamental values such as community building, inclusion, accessibility, sustainability and volunteering form the foundation of the bid. The goal is to **increase the number of active minutes among local residents and to place healthy living at the heart of everyday life through the joy of movement, in the spirit of fair play, with a drive for achievement and a commitment to social inclusion.**

Following the submission of the bid, an ACES Europe delegation of four visited Veszprém and the surrounding region between 15th and 18th July. The delegation included Gian Francesco Lupattelli,

Founder and President of ACES Europe; Hugo Alonso, Secretary General; André de Jeu, Director of the Association of Sports and Municipalities; and sports educator Werner Schleicher.

The jury members had the opportunity to visit the region's most significant sports facilities in person and meet the key stakeholders behind the bid. Their tour included Ski Arena Vibe Park in Eplény, Veszprém Sports Swimming Pool, the sports facilities of the University of Pannonia, ActiCity Dance and Movement Arts Centre, as well as water sports and outdoor venues in Balatonalmádi and Balatonfüred, such as Nereus Water Base, Wesselényi Beach, Forrás Sports Park, and Kékszalag Port marina.

A key highlight of the visit was the presentation of the region's strategic plans, delivered by the team behind the bid. They provided a detailed overview of the programme's concept, objectives, expected impacts and the broad social cooperation that underpins the bid - built on the achievements of the Veszprém-Balaton 2023 European Capital of Culture programme.

At the press conference following the presentation, jury members highlighted that the bid is of an exceptionally high professional standard, reflects exemplary collaboration and successfully integrates the region's cultural heritage into its vision for sports development. In their assessment, they also noted that the region is well-prepared not only in terms of infrastructure and programming, but also in mindset, to bear the title of European Region of Sport 2026 with distinction.

The official announcement of the award arrived on 30th July, and was delivered in a video message by Gyula Porga, Mayor of Veszprém; Péter Ovádi, Member of Parliament; Alíz Markovits, CEO of Veszprém-Balaton 2023 JSC. and organiser of the bid; and Balázs Kiss, Olympic champion hammer thrower and professional adviser to the project.

Further details about the events planned for 2026 and the related health and sports development initiatives will be revealed in autumn 2025, in a comprehensive programme launch.

Alongside its bid for the European Region of Sport 2026, Veszprém and the Bakony-Balaton region also entered an inspiring short film into the ACES Europe 2025 International Video Competition. The film

centres on the personal story of Botond Birnbauer, a para-swimmer from Veszprém, who authentically represents the community-building and life-enhancing power of sport. Its message is clear: the joy of movement and access to sport are values that should be available to everyone.

View the video [here](#).

For the latest updates, please follow the official website and social media channels of Veszprém–Balaton European Region of Sport 2026:

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Photos of the jury's visit are available [HERE](#).