



## interview to **Jaime Lissavetzky**

**President of the Spanish National Sports Council and Secretary of State in the Spanish government**



Mr. Jaime Lissavetzky Díez was born in Madrid, Spain in 1951.

He took his doctorate in chemical science at the Complutense University of Madrid in 1977 and worked from 1977 to 1979 as assistant professor of organic chemistry at the University of Alcalá de Henares, where he was Secretary of the Faculty of Pharmacy. From 1979 onwards, he was tenured as Professor of Science in the Institute of Medical Chemistry, part of the Spanish National Research Council.

His work as a specialist in organic and pharmaceutical chemistry has resulted in numerous publications and he has acted as Director for various degree and doctoral theses.

In the political sphere, he started his career as Director of Education, Culture and Sport for the Community of Madrid from 1985 to 1995. Highlights of his term of management include:

- ▶ Establishment of the Carlos III University of Madrid in 1989.
- ▶ Establishment of the Ramón Carande University Center in 1990.
- ▶ Adoption of the First and Second Regional R+D (Research and Development) Plans for the Community of Madrid in 1990 and 1994.
- ▶ Formation of the Madrid Training Institute (Instituto Madrileño para la Formación (IMAF)) in 1991.
- ▶ Operational launch of the Cinema Academy of the Community of Madrid in 1993.
- ▶ Establishment of La Abadía Theater Center in 1994.
- ▶ Construction of the Olympic Stadium of the Community of Madrid (La Peineta), inaugurated in 1994.
- ▶ Launch of the City of Arts and Literature in 1995.

For his work in connection with his responsibilities for the area of education and sport, he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal Order of Sporting Merit and the Medal of Honor of the Complutense University of Madrid.

He was Secretary-General of the Madrid Socialist Federation from May 1994 until November 2000, spokesman for the Socialist Parliamentary Group in the Madrid Assembly from 1995 to 2000, and Senator (Madrid Assembly) during the sixth legislative term (1996-2000).

He was Member of Parliament for Madrid in the seventh legislative session (2000-2004), acting as second vice-chairman of the Science and Technology Committee; he was re-elected as Member of Parliament for Madrid in the election on 14 March 2004.

He is currently President of the Spanish National Sports Council (as from 20 April 2004) and Secretary of State in the Spanish government.

His current term of office has seen the adoption of the Organic Law on Health Protection and Combating Doping in Sport, and the Law against Violence, Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance in Sport.

From 2004 to 2007, he also chaired the Iberoamerican Sports Council (C.I.D.), an organization that includes 22 countries.

He was recently elected to the post of Vice-President of the Conference of Member States of the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport.

He was re-elected as President of the Spanish National Sports Council (as from 20 April 2004) and Secretary of State in the Spanish government on 14 April 2008.

In 2008, he was elected as a member of the Executive Committee of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), as the sole representative of the European government in this organization. He was re-elected in 2010.



Julia Usón, gymnast

*“An investment in sport is a secure and growing value asset”*

Mr. Jaime Lissavetzky is a chemist who worked as a teacher and researcher before entering the world of politics and government, where he set about an endless mission: facilitating creativity. His contributions range from new universities to initiatives aimed at promoting all the arts, sciences and -his main interest in recent years- sport. As an active participant in the fight against violence and doping in sport, Mr. Lissavetzky was one of the many who were delighted by Spain's latest sporting victories, with the Football World Cup in South Africa as an unforgettable highlight among many others. Now he is tackling a new political challenge with the same positive and tireless attitude.

**Your career in regional and national government started a long time ago. In 1985, you were a member of Mr. Joaquín Leguina's government in the Community of Madrid, as Director of Education, Culture and Sport. In your view, when did the turnaround take place in the Spanish sporting world? When did Spain start to assume a prominent global position?**

There is no doubt that the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, where Spain won 22 medals, generated crucial impetus for Spanish sport. The Games coincided with the launch of the plan of the Spanish Olympic Sport Association (ADO), which marked a turning-point. From then on, this country began to take sport seriously and to promote talent. Our sportspeople began to compete without complexes and our society viewed sport as an instrument of change and modernization, a window through which we could project our new image to the world.

**Do you think Spaniards are interested in sport? As some analysts have said, is our country living through a golden age of sport?**

I think that one of the aspects that must be strongly emphasized when seeking reasons for the success of our sportspeople is the increasing importance that the Spanish public attaches to sport. The affinity and the bond that have been established between sport and society are becoming much deeper as time goes on. Sports broadcasts attract larger audiences than any others and at every championship, Spanish sports competitors feel the great fondness in which they are held. One example is the “spirit of the Reds” that swept through the entire country, uniting everyone through a shared feeling at the Spanish squad's victory in the last World Cup in South Africa.

**It is essential to provide support for young people in sport with the basic aim of ensuring continuity**

The Spanish team was able to win the championship by playing football based on the talents of a generation of footballers who are not burdened by any complexes



David Silva, Spanish national football team (world champion, 2010)

**What part do good sports results play in projecting a positive image of the country?**

Our sport has become our best window on the outside world. Nowadays, Spain is an international benchmark for every kind of sporting activity, and its proven efficiency and organizational capability for hosting major competitions is an excellent way of showcasing our modern and open society.

**Which measures are being implemented by your organization to ensure that we continue achieving good results? Are centers of excellence part of this strategy?**

In recent years, we have made enormous efforts to build new centers of excellence as well as sports technology centers, with the aim of adding new technologies and equipment to those already in use. Moreover, we have encouraged scientific and medical research and backup to protect our sportspeople's health. We know that it is a complex matter to ensure

continuity in the results we are achieving, but this goal can be fulfilled. To reach it is difficult, and to maintain the attained level is even harder – but this is the challenge posed by our sporting endeavors.

**What budget is the Secretariat of State for Sport expecting? And how will the main components be used?**

The planned budget for the 2011 financial year will increase to EUR 166.7 million. Spain's sporting federations, the Spanish Olympic Committee and the Paralympics Committee will receive a share of EUR 80.8 million, with an additional EUR 17.8 million generated by the private initiatives in connection with the ADO and ADO (Paralympics) plans. Subventions intended for various administrative bodies to build and equip sporting infrastructure installations will reach EUR 5 million. The State Anti-Doping Agency will receive EUR 5.2 million and other allocations will be maintained, such as those for the



Julián Simón, racing driver of Aspar Team (world finalist in Moto2, 2010)

sports tuition plan (EUR 600,000), the “Women and Sport” policies (EUR 400,000) and for efforts to combat violence in sport (EUR 200,000). To be precise, this budget has been reduced by 7.98% as compared to its predecessor, but this is in keeping with current austerity and correction criteria, and the reduction also reflects the completion of some major infrastructure projects that were launched in prior financial years.

**Is there a “before” and “after” for Spain following its victory in the Football World Cup? Has this triumph increased the reliability of the “Spain” brand?**

Attaining victory in the Football World Cup in South Africa was a historic challenge for our country – not only because we won, but also because of how we won. The Spanish team was able to win the championship by playing football based on the talents of a generation of footballers who are not burdened by any complexes. Their “ordinariness”, their ardor for conquest,

their team spirit and their capacity for sacrifice have projected an image to the world of a country that knows how to deal with adversity.

**There is a whole list of sporting disciplines where Spain is significant: football, basketball, handball, cycling, tennis, motor sports, sailing, certain athletic disciplines and so on. In which other areas should we have a presence and make rapid progress? What is being done and how?**

We should savour this moment and appreciate it because the worst thing we could do is to let ourselves be lulled into complacency. We should carry on working to maintain the levels we have achieved in certain disciplines and to improve our results in others. Neither of these are easy challenges but the path is already staked out. For this purpose, the Spanish National Sports Council is working side by side with the sports federations to make all the resources available to us.



Rafa Nadal (current number one in ATP ranking)

**There is no doubt that insurance companies offer essential legal and medical cover for our sportspeople**

**What support is being given to our promising young talents? And the others that want to take Spanish nationality?**

I think it is essential to provide support for sport with the basic aim of ensuring continuity. For this purpose, among other measures, the Spanish National Sports Council has rolled out the National Program to Promote and Assist Sport in Schools (PROADES) and the National Program to Assist Sports Participants in Schools (ADE) in recent years. The objective is to encourage participation in sports by young students and pupils, without neglecting their overall education, with the help of subventions through the Autonomous Communities and the specific sports federations. Moreover, last October 14th, we signed a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Education to launch a national plan that will encourage physical exercise and sporting activities for young people throughout their period of schooling. As regards

policy on naturalization: I think that for such cases, objective criteria have always been taken into account and the interests of the sportspeople themselves have always been protected and respected. Apart from very exceptional cases, our policy has always been to aim for integration and due recognition of immigrants' rights in the context of Spanish sport.

**What is the relationship between insurance and sport? Where are they complementary or indispensable to one another? How can the insurance sector cooperate?**

There is no doubt that insurance companies offer essential legal and medical cover for our sportspeople. They provide the necessary peace of mind so that the athletes can devote themselves to their mission, knowing that they have guarantees. In this regard, I think it is fair to thank the insurance companies for supporting Spanish sports and sportspeople.



Spectators in European Championship of Athletics, Barcelona 2010

**In your opinion, which sporting activities are best suited to sponsorship from insurance companies?**

I believe that any sporting discipline can be appropriate for sponsorship offered by insurers. The values that sport enshrines and that are conveyed in exemplary fashion by our leading athletes, are the best way of securing a profitable identity in the business world. The value of sport is growing nowadays, and an investment in sport is a secure asset.

**The issue of doping is usually linked to sport and there is an international consensus that it should be combated. Which control measures have been implemented in Spain over recent years?**

Doping is a global problem, and one that requires everyone to be involved if it is to be progressively eradicated. Since I became President of the Spanish National Sports Council, I have shown my firm commitment

to implementing the “zero tolerance” principle with regard to doping. The Organic Law on Health Protection and Combating Doping in Sport came into force in 2006, after passing through parliament with very broad support and extensive backing from society as a whole. Prominent among the measures it envisaged was the formation of the State Anti-Doping Agency, which began operating in 2008 with the objective of encouraging policies of prevention, awareness-raising, research and collaboration at the institutional level. Spain currently has two doping control laboratories that are approved by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and are equipped with the most advanced facilities in the field. Furthermore, our commitment has met with international recognition in the form of my recent re-election as a member of the Executive Committee of WADA, and in fact, I am the sole representative of the European governments on that body.

**We should savour this moment and appreciate it, but the worst thing we could do is to let ourselves be lulled into complacency**



Juan Carlos Navarro, Spanish national basketball team (Europe Champion 2009)

**If you become Mayor of Madrid, what will you do to promote sport in the capital? Will the city make more attempts to be selected to host the Olympics?**

One of my main goals will be to work in order to increase the level of participation in sport by the people of Madrid, with the aims of improving their health and preventing medical problems related to a sedentary life. To achieve this, we shall encourage measures that can instill healthy living habits linked to sport. Regarding the idea of launching a new bid to host the Olympics in Madrid: I think that this has to be a well-considered decision, based on consensus and level-headed research, and we must take account of the circumstances at the time. For example, it will be necessary to analyze the suitability of a candidacy and our potential rivals. But what is clear is that the city of Madrid is ready to make its Olympic dream come true, and it deserves to host the games.



#### **ADO (Spanish Olympic Sport Association)**

ADO is a program to support "high-performance Olympic sport" with the principal aim of improving the results of Spanish competitors in the Olympic Games, underpinned by the key characteristics of demanding criteria and the pursuit of sporting excellence.  
<http://www.csd.gob.es>



#### **PROADES (National Program to Promote and Assist Sport in Schools)**

This program is based on a three-pronged approach: subsidies to the Autonomous Communities to finance programs within their scope, support for the Spanish Sports Federations for events that they stage, and the organization of the annual ADE scholarships (see below).

<http://www.csd.gob.es/csd/competicion/05deporteescolar/programa-nacional-de-promocion-y-ayuda-al-deporte-escolar-2011juega-en-el-cole2011d-proades>



#### **ADE (National Program to Promote and Assist Sport in Schools)**

The program's goal is to promote and encourage practical participation in sports among students who – either individually or in groups – qualify to compete in any of the specialist disciplines in the Spanish School-age Championships staged by the Spanish National Sports Council, with equal importance accorded to sporting and academic performance.



#### **WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency)**

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) is an independent international organization established in 1999 to promote, coordinate and monitor the fight against doping in sport in all its forms. The sports movement and the world's governments constitute and finance the Agency on a basis of parity. WADA works to realize the vision of a world that appreciates and encourages sport without doping.

<http://www.wada-ama.org/>