



# The Holy See

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**GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
TO THE DIRECTORS OF LEN EUROPEAN AQUATICS**

*Monday, 4 July 2022*

**[Multimedia]**

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*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am pleased to welcome you, the leadership of LEN European Aquatics, and I thank your President for his kind words of greeting on your behalf.

You have come in preparation for the European Aquatics Championships, which will be held in Rome next month. I am happy that our city once more hosts this impressive sporting event. These days, we need sports more than ever – real sports! – as a counterbalance to the conflict and hostility weighing down on our world and, sadly, also our continent of Europe.

For this reason, I readily accepted your proposal to address a Message to all those athletes who will take part in the Championships. I will read it here in your presence and you can convey it to them at a suitable time.

I offer my best wishes to you and your families, and for your work. God bless you all. Now, I will read my Message.

*Dear Athletes!*

I send you my greetings from Rome, where, a month from now, you will take part in the European Aquatics Championships. This pleases me greatly, because every great sporting event is a special moment when young people from different countries can encounter and interact with one another, and that is a wonderful sign of hope for the future of our human family. It is also appropriate

because Rome is historically a universal city, open to the world, the city from which the Church spreads everywhere the Gospel of fraternity.

I am sure that you, like myself, are saddened because the war in Ukraine casts its shadow on this celebration. At the same time, I would hope that this will make us all the more committed to showing our desire for a world of peace, a world without wars, without hatred between peoples, without nuclear threats.

Dear athletes, I pray that the European Championships here in Rome will be for all of you a serene and joyful experience of friendship and fraternity, and that each of you will be able to offer, in healthy competition, the very best of yourselves. With affection, I bless all of you and your loved ones. And I would ask you, please, to say a prayer for me. Thank you!