



3rd Spercheiada Half-Marathon Phthiotis, Greece

SPERCHEIADA, February 25, 2018—The Roumeli Bicycle Club organized this year’s Spercheiada Half-Marathon with a pledge towards sports and sustainability from the outset. This is one of the first road races in Greece to implement a sustainability policy in its event execution. The organizing committee made an environmental commitment announcing its mission to reduce the negative impacts that the race would have on the surrounding landscape in addition to raising environmental awareness in the local community.

Spercheiada, Phthiotis is a small rural town in central Greece with less than 3000 permanent residents. The running event drew participants from all over Greece, including Crete, Naxos, Paros, Thessaloniki and Athens. In total, 355 people participated in the various races: 180 in the Half-Marathon, 90 in the 5km race and 85 in the 11,400 m walk.

Anastasia Zotou (ZOTEN), a sustainability consultant, worked in collaboration with the organizing committee to create and implement the following environmental program:

1. Manage, collect and recycle all plastic waste produced during the race.
2. Environmental Awareness Campaign.
3. Use of biodegradable cups at all water stations.
4. Encourage local school students to participate in an environmental awareness curriculum.

Despite limited resources, the organizing committee was dedicated to the successful integration of the environmental program accomplishing the following sustainability initiatives:

- The Half-Marathon route provided 9 water stations where 1,272 water bottles were distributed. All water bottles were returned to the organizing committee and accounted for - 768 bottles had not been used and 504 empty bottles were returned and given to the local recycling company.
- ZOTEN’s Environmental Awareness Campaign took place in the town’s central square where the start/finish line was also located. Three kiosks were set up, one by the local school, one by

ZOTEN and one by the local Recycling Company. Information was disseminated about local environmental problems, waste management statistics in Greece and Europe and ZERO WASTE GOALS, as well as alternative choices to plastic products.

- A presentation was made of biodegradable household products (provided by SKG-ECO SHOP), complimented by an exhibit made by local students showing the time required to decompose typical household trash items.
- The local school presented a photo/art exhibition collage of images they felt represented the main problems in their community, under the supervision of Niki Karageorgiou and Katerina Harilaou. They also created a mixed-media collage using found plastic objects depicting a runner.

GREEN OUTCOME: An unprecedented environmental message was sent out to the community through the athletic club's commitment to sustainability practices. The organizers utilized local media and social media networks as tools to aid in the communication and planning of this Green Sports Event. All stakeholders, ranging from the participants, clubs, associations, schools and local authorities benefited from the sustainability practices implemented and information disseminated, and a strong environmental legacy was left after the completion of this race.

ZOTEN looks forward to partnering with the organizing committee in future sustainable event initiatives, adding more comprehensive sustainability practices. It is our hope to inspire other athletic organizers to follow our lead and make sustainability a fundamental part of planning and operating sports events.