

# RUGBY LEAGUE EUROPEAN FEDERATION

## ANNUAL REPORT | 2011 |





*Spartak-Losinka Moscow and Dynamo Moscow U16s compete in the “50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cosmonaut Cup” - April*



*Limoux beat Lezignan in France’s Elite 1 final, to claim the club’s fourth successive championship - May*

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It has been a progressive period for the sport of rugby league across the federation in 2011. The sport continues to make great strides, both on and off the field, and it is very satisfying to see the game prosper on all levels as we continue to build up to the Rugby League World Cup in 2013.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Hervé Guiraud as the vice chairman to the RLEF Board. Hervé is a visionary and like the rest of the Board is focused on raising the profile of the sport across the continent for many years to come. It is also gratifying to have welcomed Richard Graham and Christen Farmer as independent directors to the Board in the summer. Their wealth of experience and expertise will greatly assist the growth of the sport. They join elected directors Graeme Thompson and Nebojsa Sretenovic. It is a positive sign of how the federation is growing as an organisation.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the year was rugby league's recognition by the Commonwealth Games Federation. After a thorough seven-month preparation and application process, the CGF gave its unanimous support to an application for rugby league to become a Category Three sport, an important step which will enable us to continue to expand and develop across the globe.



Not only has it allowed us to establish partnerships with the likes of UK Sport International, it also generates lobbying power to have the sport's NGBs recognised by their supreme national sports authorities, now that rugby league is part of the global sports community.

The autumn was also a pivotal moment in the development of international rugby league with USA and Italy both progressing to the Rugby League World Cup finals for the first time in their history.

In what was a compelling, thrilling and hugely successful qualifying competition, the US, under the stewardship of highly experienced coach Matthew Elliott, defeated Jamaica 40-4 in the Atlantic Zone and Italy claimed the 14th and final berth after a dramatic 19-19 draw with Lebanon; the *Azzurri* taking the place by virtue of a better points' difference.

The qualifying tournaments involved seven nations which showcased the progress being made in international rugby league worldwide. There are huge positives for the nations who took part and we continue to work with all governing bodies so that all of them can recognise and aspire to a credible pathway to future world cup finals. The likes of Jamaica, Serbia, South Africa, Russia and Lebanon are already planning for the next shot at a world cup, and they will be joined in qualifying by other nations that are currently benefiting from the RLEF's commitment to long-term planning.

Elsewhere on the international scene Germany and Czech Republic won their first pieces of major silverware. Germany won the European Shield, edging out Malta and Norway, while the Czechs saw off stiff competition from the Hungarians to lift the European Bowl.

Europe's financial problems have dominated the news in 2011. The stresses to the Continent's economy have seldom been out of the headlines. Therefore in this tough fiscal environment I am pleased to report the RLEF's most successful financial year to date. In the calendar year the RLEF signed contracts worth over €230,000, including grants from the European Commission, marking the first time the federation has received direct support from this institution.

On the commercial front, Alitalia doubled its investment in the sport, a result of the positive experience they had in 2010. The acquisition of consistent, blue riband sponsors not only provides investment but also raises the profile of the federation's competitions, in this case the European Cup, and we are delighted to continue working with Italy's national airline.

There is an enormous amount of development work being undertaken on the ground, supported by the RLEF, and it is strong development work, which is illustrated by the quality we have seen on the field in 2011. The sport as a whole should be very proud of the genuine progress being made and we should see continued growth as we work hard to develop the most successful World Cup in the history of the sport a year after the London Olympics.

Richard Lewis  
Chairman



# RLEF PROFILE & VALUES

The Rugby League European Federation's statutory objectives are to foster, develop, extend, govern and administer the sport of rugby league throughout Europe. Its rapid growth since 2003 has impelled the extension of that remit to additional, non-European regions. In 2011, the RLEF administered national governing bodies [NGBs] in North Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean and North America, in addition to its diverse European responsibilities. Towards the end of the year work also commenced on the West African Rugby League Project, further expanding the RLEF's geographical profile.

## EMPOWERMENT

Enhance the growth of rugby league among members, in all facets, through a policy of empowerment



*Maltese coach tutor candidates enhance their skills at Central Europe  
Phase 2 Coaching of the RLEF Technical Strategy - August*

## DYNAMISM

The RLEF recognised as a dynamic, results based leader

*Russia and Serbia clash in the  
Milan Kosanovic Cup decider -  
October*



## CULTURE

Cultivate rugby league culture among member nations, making the sport a habitual part of participants' lives



*Spanish Town High were part of Jamaica's expanding youth programme -  
November*



# GENERAL MANAGER

This report marks the first full year of operations under the eight-year RLEF strategy adopted by the Council in August 2010. I remarked in my report twelve months ago that 2010 was essentially a year of two halves, split fairly evenly between overhauling the governance and strategic direction of the federation, and then launching our strategy throughout our Membership and affiliates.



2011, then, has seen the federation's core values further diffused throughout our Members and affiliates with positive results. Activity and productivity have significantly increased in all major areas of the business. Primarily, and in keeping with our strategic imperative, we have seen increased local activity. In 2011 an additional four countries ran club championships that met RLEF criteria, taking the number of active domestic competitions within the RLEF to fourteen; there was an increase in the scope of our existing domestic championships, notably among our Full Members; and we have seen an increase in the amount of youth activity.



*Left to right: the Czech Republic won the European Bowl; Germany edged out Malta and Norway to take the Shield; and France won the Autumn Test series against Scotland and Ireland*

Embedding principally open age national championships through lengthening the number of competition rounds [a more reliable growth indicator than adding new teams], registering clubs in line with the respective national legal system and logging participation numbers remains our objective and the best possible way to achieve our mission: long-term, sustainable growth through the cultivation of rugby league culture, where our sport plays a habitual and increasingly more important part in its practitioners' lives.

A central theme of 2011 has been the work on governance practices within the RLEF and, perhaps more importantly, throughout our affiliated nations. Good governance results in more efficient and productive National Governing Bodies, and we continue to work with NGBs to ensure that best practice in this area of the business pervades. It is noteworthy that all our Members have fully bought into the importance of improved governance and are committed to playing an active part in the process.

Our mission, then, to strengthen our NGBs is ahead of schedule, with eight Members and Observers elevated in 2011. Less visibly, work through our clusters to establish functional administrations in several as yet unclassified nations – Greece, Hungary, Morocco, the Netherlands, Palestine, Poland, Saudi Arabia and Trinidad & Tobago - continued throughout the year. Burgeoning Member activity presents its own challenges, with the federation's ability to support this activity in a proportionate manner continually tested. This, though, is exactly the type of challenge that we welcome, with the corollary greater rugby league development.

Increased activity has been supported by a strong financial performance, principally through agreements with the European Commission and its advocate agencies. With the EU's investment in sport set to increase significantly according to the *2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework*, it is vital that the RLEF interacts with the Commission fully. In 2011 RLEF officials attended six EC events and meetings. As a result the federation is very much within Brussels' sphere and can show direct results.

***The first phase of the Technical Strategy saw 48 coach tutor candidates collect their RLEF Level 2 Coaching certificate – March***



Commission investment has enabled the RLEF to divert central funds to other areas of the business and allows us to plan with confidence, in the knowledge that some of our priority projects, such as the capacity building Technical Strategy, are well resourced. The funding, which depended on close cooperation with our NGBs and their ability to meet project specifications, also meant that some RLEF Members and affiliates - Germany, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Norway – were responsible for their healthiest ever financial years due to an improved service provided by the RLEF's intervention with Brussels on their behalf. It is encouraging to report that our Members are continuing to develop their revenue streams further, through municipal, state and commercial support.

2011 also saw the beginning of two important institutional partnerships, with the Commonwealth Games Federation [under the aegis of the RLIF] and UK Sport International.

The clear synergy between the RLEF and the latter organisation suggests a long-term relationship of strategic significance to the global game, while the effect our CGF recognition can have in terms of facility and financial provision will present itself in the coming months and years, but can only have a positive impact on world rugby league.

Our increased activity depends on the impressive amount of time invested by volunteers and the RLEF's own staff. Their productivity and dedication continues to drive our organisation forward and it is my pleasure to be able to work with them on a daily basis. Our sport is fortunate to have this calibre of personnel, and largely through their endeavours we look back on a successful 2011 and look forward to continuing the robust work undertaken over the past twelve months.

Danny Kazandjian  
General Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DK', with a long diagonal stroke extending downwards and to the left.



# TECHNICAL

## COACHING

2011 has been a highly exciting and very successful year on the coaching front. The RLEF Technical Strategy was launched in March, when 48 delegates from 19 countries attended a four-day seminar at Brunel University in London. We included some high calibre deliverers in the programme, ensuring the best possible experience.



The programme included sessions with Steve McNamara, the England Head Coach, Dave Rotheram, the Scotland Assistant Coach, Rob Powell, the Harlequins Head Coach, and Paul Broadbent, Assistant Coach at Wakefield Trinity Wildcats and Technical Adviser to the Italian Rugby League. We were also pleased to work closely with Thierry Dumaine of the French Federation's technical department, the first example of such close cooperation with the FFRXIII on foundation coaching issues.

All delegates successfully qualified for the new RLEF level 2 Coaching Certificate. I was hugely impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of all the coaches; it is good for those of us who have been involved in the sport for a long time to meet such dynamic and motivated individuals, trail blazers all. It reinvigorates us and reminds us why we became devotees of The Greatest Game.

*From left: the Technical Strategy Phase 1 Coaching course-director team delivered the four-day course; Harlequins RL's Rob Powell and Latham Tawhai offered candidates a unique tactical insight into the sport*



Phase 2 of the strategy involved visits to regional clusters to deliver tutor training to the Brunel delegates and familiarise them with the new RLEF Level 1 qualification. Once coaches have been through this training they will be able to deliver the Level 1 in their own countries. In August Stuart Wilkinson and I went to Belgrade and delivered to delegates from the Czech Republic, Russia, Germany, Italy and Serbia. In September I visited Beirut and worked with coaches from Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine. In Morocco's case, where the RLEF is assisting establishing rugby league from its foundation, the coach delegates will need to work in the field for several months, delivering rugby league to players in organised sessions, before we can elevate them to tutors, but they are, without doubt, on the right pathway

The lessons of March had clearly been learned, and the coaches proved very capable of delivering quality core skills sessions to the local players. Furthermore the tutor training demonstrated that we will have some excellent deliverers of coach education across Europe in 2012. Next year should see new Level 1 coaches qualifying across Europe and thus increasing the numbers playing the game. I was also very encouraged by the quality of the young players that I saw in both countries. Phase 2 will conclude in 2012, with courses in Ireland [19-22 January], Russia [Spring] and Jamaica [6-9 April].

The final phase of the strategy – I am in the process of scheduling dates with various countries - will see the new tutors deliver Level 1 courses in each of the countries. Once successfully completed and signed off the tutors in each country will then be able to deliver their own coach education at this level, another step on the way to the ultimate goal of self-sufficiency.

The other major area of activity was the World Cup Accelerator programme. We continued to support the countries involved in the World Cup qualifying campaign. Paul Broadbent in Italy, Stuart Wilkinson and John Stankevitch in Russia, Lee Crooks in Serbia, Craig Richards in Jamaica and Andy Lindley in South Africa all did sterling work in supporting those countries. The two successful nations to emerge from the qualifiers were Italy and the USA, Italy after a nail-biting game against Lebanon. Ultimately however, all countries were winners as domestic players received high quality coaching and coaches received high quality mentoring. The game has moved forward on both the playing and coaching fronts at an accelerated rate in 2011.

Martin Crick  
Coaching Manager



## MATCH OFFICIALS

Building on the previous year's success, in 2011 foundations were laid for match officials courses to be delivered locally. The RLEF held its first ever Match Officials Tutor Training event, part of the three-year Technical Strategy, at Brunel University in Uxbridge where 28 candidates from 15 nations were qualified to deliver the RLEF standard Rugby League Match Officials course.



Jointly delivered by the RFL's Match Official Development Officers, the primary objectives of the course were to ensure not only that the candidates have a suitable understanding of the laws but to train them and supply the resources required to deliver a course locally within their own countries. The RLEF Match Officials course is predominantly video and practical based to break down language barriers and levels of awareness.

Each module is accompanied by video footage of Super League fixtures clearly outlining the decision making process, positioning and action points. The practical element of the course takes course candidates through training drills focusing on continual movement of a referee during sets of tackles and decision making like change of possession, ten metre awareness, referee and touch judge teamwork as well as practising other skills like spatial awareness and peripheral vision.

*The match officials phase of the Technical Strategy saw 28 tutors attend the launch in London - May*



Following this course, the growing number of nations with domestic leagues are now poised to run their own match officials courses in 2012 under the supervision of experienced course tutors from the RLEF and the RFL. The challenge for them will be to ensure that there is enough interest in refereeing and to coordinate a course that will suitably support their domestic championships.

Leading RLEF members Lebanon and Serbia have great experience in recruiting match officials and they will have valuable lessons to share for individual nations regarding recruiting new match officials.

From the tutor training event, which also included refereeing and touch judging local junior and senior fixtures in London, it is clear that the standard of refereeing has improved. There are now several referees capable of officiating international fixtures and it is expected that there will be an increased number of European referees and touch judges appointed to RLEF Shield, Bowl, youth festivals and other internationals.

Special congratulations go to Radoslav Novakovic from Serbia and Dirk Frase from Germany who both refereed their first international representative fixtures in 2011 with appointments in Hungary for the European Bowl and at the four-team Germany U16 Festival respectively.

Steve Davis

Match Officials Manager

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Steve Davis', is positioned below the text 'Match Officials Manager'.

# MEDIA

There is little doubt that the coverage of the greater activity that falls under the realm and remit of the RLEF increased in 2011.

With the rise of social networking, specifically Twitter, stories generated by both the federation and NGBs have had greater visibility although impact and penetration are impossible to quantify.



The two most notable successes have been the institution of the RLEF Thursday Round Up sent to key broadcast media partners worldwide and the coverage gained for the 2013 World Cup Atlantic and European Qualifiers. A total of 32 Round Ups were sent out with that week's news stories condensed into bullet points to give an ongoing overall picture of the news and development work undertaken within the organisation.

Every nation was featured at some point and discernible, valuable spin offs were that Sky Sports went to Norway to record a feature for their magazine programme about the growth of the sport in Norway and 'the most Northerly club' and an all encompassing blog on their website by pundit Phil Clarke about the game's spread internationally. BBC Radio Five Live carried a half time interview during a Super League game and contact has been made from other broadcasters who receive the Round Up as to its value.

The World Cup Qualifiers throughout Europe and in Philadelphia served notice that the media templates worked on during previous competitions have laid down a system that works. Squad announcements, pre-match quotes, instantaneous match reporting and more considered post-match analysis and implications pieces not only fulfilled demand but gave the matches added credibility. A lot of that was down to the hard work of individuals on the ground but the need for defined media officers within each nation and the governing body to have a media presence at each game was again highlighted.

The ability to update scores while matches were in progress on Twitter certainly created fervour as the groups reached their climax. The occasional downside of social networking is that some nations are prone to releasing news before an official release which negates and undermines the full, accredited story.

**Gazzetta dello Sport covered Italian RL for the first time since the 1960s - August**





That said, there is no doubt that 2011 has seen the RLEF and the countries they serve become much more media savvy, not least in creating links with local news outlets, a good example being Italy's prominent national sports daily *Gazzetta dello Sport*, and refining and targeting contact databases.

A rebranded website has also added to the sense of increased activity and a more professional feel, not least the interactive world rankings which drove traffic and created debate.

The posting of more domestic-led news such as weekly competition results on the site has also meant content is refreshed more often.

Phil Caplan  
Media Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Caplan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

# GOVERNANCE

Reinforcing and emphasising best practice in the field of governance played a central role in 2011. RLEF officials attended two governance events in London - on 20 September, hosted by the Sport and Recreation Alliance, and on 20 October, hosted by the European Commission – and signed the *Governance Foundation Project* into being with the European Commission. This two-year programme, involving ten RLEF members, begins in March 2012.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There were three changes to the Board of Directors in 2011. In accordance with the new constitution, adopted by the Council in August 2010, two independent Directors, Christen Farmer and Richard Graham, were invited to join the organisation after a nine-month selection and interview process. Richard Graham, a senior executive within the professional sports sector and Christen Farmer, a business and media consultant based in Belgrade, joined Chairman Richard Lewis, Vice Chair Nicolas Larrat and fellow Directors Graeme Thompson and Nebojsa Sretenovic in June.

The third change saw Hervé Guiraud, the secretary general of the French Federation, replace his compatriot Nicolas Larrat, who resigned due to professional time constraints, in October. With the addition of the independent directors, the now plenary Board's mandate expires in August 2013.

## COUNCIL

There were a total of six changes to the Council. Lebanon and Serbia became Full Members in August, both submitting exemplary applications, while the Czech Republic, Germany, Norway and Ukraine became Affiliate Members.

These changes increased the representative nature of the federation and strengthened democracy.

### COUNCIL AT A GLANCE

2010		2011
25	→	35
VOTES		VOTES
10	→	14
COUNTRIES		COUNTRIES

## CONFERENCE | AGM

The annual general meeting was held on 26 August in London. A record number of 21 nations attended the AGM and accompanying conference, which welcomed key note speakers from the EU Sport Unit, UK Sport International Development and Bartlett's insurance brokers.

# STRATEGY

The first full year of the strategy produced a number of positive indicators of growth throughout the Key Focus Areas.

## KEY FOCUS AREAS

### PARTICIPATION NUMBERS

Domestic championships  
Technical empowerment

### STRONG MEMBERS

Independent Members  
Cluster system  
Increase in Membership

### CORPORATE RLEF

Staff productivity  
Focused investment  
Increase revenue & visibility

## PARTICIPATION NUMBERS

Significantly increasing participation numbers is the principal aim of the 2010-2017 RLEF strategy. Developing national championships is the main indices to realise this strategic imperative, while the creation of technical departments, manned by trained and qualified local tutors, will support increasing participation numbers by providing competent coaches and match officials all of whom meet an RLEF standard.

*"The growth in participation numbers in Jamaica was satisfying and terrifying in equal measure due to the sheer number of new people falling in love with the sport - a trend we have seen continue into the new year"*

- Romeo Monteith, JRLA Director of Rugby

## Domestic championships

All Full Members saw an increase in their domestic activity. Four NGBs organised championships that met RLEF minimum standards for the first time, with the Czech and German competitions one year ahead of schedule. Czech, Jamaican, Norwegian and Scottish domestic activity more than doubled; while the first ever club matches took place in Germany and Canada. All four countries have confirmed further championship growth in 2012, through additional teams and competition rounds.

## MEMBER ACTIVITY

### SENIOR [community | military | professional | student | wheelchair | women]

	TEAMS 2010	TEAMS 2011	MATCHES 2010	MATCHES 2011
CZECH REPUBLIC	4	5	5	14
ENGLAND	850	850	8000	8000
FRANCE	128	133	1100	1200
GERMANY	4	5	-	6
IRELAND	17	20	38	42
ITALY	4	6	6	13
JAMAICA	8	12	19	43
LEBANON	7	11	44	43
NORWAY	3	5	7	15
RUSSIA	16	13	14	18 + 1*
SCOTLAND	9	15	14	52
SERBIA	11	13	51 + 2*	43 + 2*
UKRAINE	6	7	3*	4*
WALES	18	24	146	176

### YOUTH [clubs | schools]

	TEAMS 2010	TEAMS 2011	MATCHES 2010	MATCHES 2011
CZECH REPUBLIC	-	3	-	-
ENGLAND	2922	3001	11000	11000
FRANCE	430	457	3400	3600
GERMANY	-	4	-	-
IRELAND	8	12	1	1
ITALY	-	-	-	-
JAMAICA	4	10	3*	5*
LEBANON	12	12	18*	3 + 18*
NORWAY	-	8	-	-
RUSSIA	46	46	10*	10*
SCOTLAND	15	25	17	43
SERBIA	2	5	1 + 1*	11 + 2*
UKRAINE	-	10	-	12 + 5*
WALES	173	192	400	550

\*Number of 9s tournament days

### REPRESENTATIVE MATCHES [national | regional]

	YOUTH 2010	YOUTH 2011	SENIOR 2010	SENIOR 2011
CZECH REPUBLIC	-	-	3	2
ENGLAND	7	10	14	14
FRANCE	10	6	10	8
GERMANY	-	2	4	5
IRELAND	-	-	9	10
ITALY	-	-	3	6
JAMAICA	-	-	3	3
LEBANON	4	2	6	8
NORWAY	-	-	1	3
RUSSIA	1	2	2	6
SCOTLAND	3	7	7	6
SERBIA	1	5	5	12
UKRAINE	-	-	2	4
WALES	4	4	7	7

## Technical Strategy

The Technical Strategy was launched with two seminars in London, for both coaching [March] and match official [May] strands of the project. Its purpose is to train, qualify and support independent technical tutors throughout the RLEF's Membership, building their capacity as NGBs and supporting their increasing participation numbers by providing well trained and qualified personnel to a European standard, as well as increasing the number of Continental referees used to officiate European matches.

# 76

## PH.1 TUTOR DELEGATES

# 19

## COUNTRIES

At project launch seminars



## MENA PH.2

# 7

 DELEGATES

# 4

 COUNTRIES

## CENT. EUROPE PH.2

# 12

 DELEGATES

# 5

 COUNTRIES

Rugby League Ireland is hosting Western Europe Phase 2 in Dublin on 19-22 January 2012 and the Jamaican Rugby League Association is hosting Atlantic in Spanish Town on 6-9 April 2012. Eastern Europe Phase 2 will be staged in Russia in the Spring.

*"Czech Rugby League started to develop at a really rapid rate in 2011, due to impassioned Czech rugby league people taking control of the sport's destiny and building it in a steady, sustainable manner. From these solid foundations we can see rugby league becoming a broadly recognised part of the vibrant national sporting panorama"*

- Andy Mulhall, Czech Republic Development Manager



- More rugby league was played throughout the RLEF territories by more people and in more months of the year than 12-months earlier
- Longer involvement from players, coaches, match officials, administrators and other volunteers has definitively increased the role the sport plays in these people's lives

## RUGBY LEAGUE CULTURE



*From left: action from the Canadian Championship, Czech Championship, Norway's YIT Premiership, and Germany's Bundesliga*

- Building our NGBs' capacity through the Technical Strategy and governance projects
- Encouraging the growth of the game in communities, with locals taking ownership
- Prompting more independent action by sovereign NGBs, within regional clusters

## EMPOWERMENT

- Interaction with international institutions
- Increasing revenue from public and private sectors
- Lobbying to serve our Members' interests
- Increasing rugby league's presence and global footprint

## DYNAMISM

## STRONG MEMBERS

By assisting our Members to strengthen their off-field structure, through good governance and more efficient working practices, the RLEF is fostering an atmosphere of self-sufficiency and independent thought. In 2011 membership became aligned following adoption of one set of criteria by the RLIF.

The Lebanese Rugby League Federation and Serbian Rugby League Federation achieved Full Member status, while the Czech Rugby League Association, Rugby League Deutschland, Rugby League Norge and Ukrainian Federation of Rugby League all achieved Affiliate Member status. Sweden and Denmark became Observers.

*The UFRL launched its youth programme in 2011, with 10 teams formed in Kharkov and Donetsk*



A number of NGBs made significant changes to their organisations. RLD became officially registered according to German law in 2011, a move that enabled them to receive European funding for the first time, and formed three sub-committees to improve their internal efficiency; the SRLF re-drafted its entire constitution in keeping with new Serbian sports law; the Jamaican Rugby League Association applied to and was recognised by the Sports Development Foundation, a government agency, and consequently received funding from them; the Federazione Italiana Rugby League formed a Constituent Committee to overhaul its statutes in line with CONI, the Italian Olympic Committee, as it strives to become a more modern and professional organisation.



On the field, good practice contributed to a more mature European rugby league, with the central policing of national eligibility at Shield level and the creation of national team databases for 12 RLEF NGBs.

## Cluster system

Devolved regional leadership continued, and grew, with greater responsibilities assumed by more established RLEF Members. The growing maturity among the federation's Membership is well demonstrated by the ability of the Irish, Jamaican, Lebanese and Serbian NGBs to host Technical Strategy Phase 2 Coaching, where each NGB assumed the entire ground costs of the course.

Central Europe regional leadership led to Hungary playing its first rugby league matches, while contact was made with Slovenia, Slovakia, Montenegro and Poland. The MENA region nations continued to co-operate effectively, with the second editions of regional competitions taking place in Lebanon and the sense of regional identity further enhanced.

# 6

**Multinational events organised independently through the clusters**

In addition to the world cup qualifiers, the Atlantic cluster saw activity between Jamaica and Canada, while the Caribbean saw its first expansionist steps, with Trinidad & Tobago preparing its NGB application to both the RLEF and its own government.

The RLEF's Membership at the end of 2011 is as follows:

## FULL



# 2

**NEW FULL MEMBERS**

## AFFILIATE



# 4

**NEW MEMBERS**

## **OBSERVER**

Canada Rugby League, Dansk Rugby League Forbund, Latvian Rugby League, Malta Rugby League, Swedish Rugby League

## **UNRANKED**

Association of Catalunya Rugby League, Greece, Hungary, Maroc Rugby League, Nederlands Rugby League Bond, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Trinidad & Tobago

NOTE: under the new RLIF / RLEF Membership criteria Emirates National RL, NRLB, ACRL and MRL, all listed in 2010 as Observers, move to unranked, or are no longer active

*"2011 was a year full of major steps, and record achievements on and off the field. A new constitution in line with German law, Affiliate Membership of the RLEF and EU funding supported our first regular domestic activity at senior and youth level, while our national team won the European Shield. I am convinced that Rugby League Deutschland is on the right track."*

- Maximilian Schoengen, President, Rugby League Deutschland

## **CORPORATE ORGANISATION**

The RLEF is committed to becoming a more efficient and productive organisation at every level of the business.

### **Staff**

Three new staff joined the RLEF in 2011. Warren Heilig [Scandinavian Manager], Artur Martyrosyan [Ukraine Manager] and Kelly Rolleston [NW Italy Manager] and all had successful years. Warren, based in Norway, and Artur both oversaw their nations' successful Member applications, while Kelly expanded Italian rugby league's footprint into Milan and Piacenza.

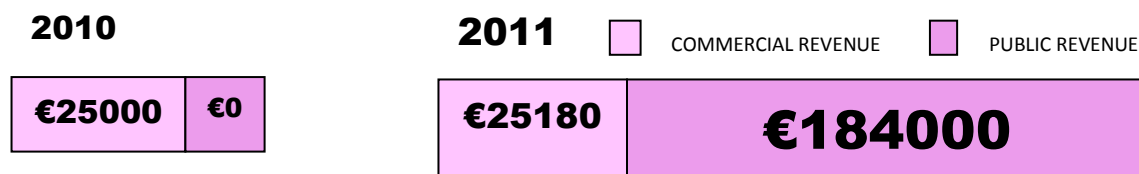
A full staff meeting was held in Frankfurt in February, and in August independent cluster meetings were held for the first time.

At the end of the year Julia Bennison's work with the RLEF came to an end following a strategic review of the RLEF's eastern European operations. The RLEF would like to thank Julia for all her hard work over the years and wishes her every success for the future.

## Revenue | visibility

The majority of external funding secured in 2011 was sourced from the European Commission, the result of regular interaction with Brussels and its agencies throughout the year, including two visits by RLEF officials to the Sports Unit in Brussels, two RLEF officials attending the EU Forum on Sport in Budapest and individual visits to three EU seminars in the UK.

These interventions resulted in three grants, two to support the Technical Strategy [through funding paid directly to the RLEF and its Members]: €50000 from the EC Office in the UK and €75000 from the Leonardo da Vinci programme - €25000 paid to the RLEF [as project leader] and the remaining €50000 paid to RLI, RLD, RLN, NRLB and CZRLA - which connects European partners in transnational vocational or educational projects, and €104000 for the *Governance Foundation Project*, through the Directorate-General of Culture's Sport Unit. This grant is paid centrally to the RLEF. Eighty per cent of the Leonardo grant and seventy per cent of the Sport Unit grant were paid in December, with the balance due upon the projects' completion, both in 2013.



Alitalia re-signed with the RLEF, doubling their investment in the sport to €50000 and endorsing the blue ribband status of the European Cup, the RLEF's premier property.

In March the new RLEF.eu.com website was launched, providing a modern look and serving principally as the RLEF's official archive. This archival project is ongoing, yet the majority of every Members' complete playing history has been uploaded onto the site in 2011.

The site also includes a public membership scheme, soft-launched in the latter part of the year and designed to allow the game's supporters to invest into the organisation.



*Dutch, Italian and Serbian coach tutor trainees began their education programme at the London launch seminar, supported by the European Commission - March*



## Strategic partnerships

In addition to the fruitful intervention with the European Commission, two notable partnerships were forged in 2011, with the Commonwealth Games Federation and UK Sport International, both of which represent long-term institutional allies of the future.

The RLEF played a pivotal role in the formation of the RLIF's Commonwealth Commission, chaired by the RFL's David Gent, whose purpose was to oversee the sport's application to the Commonwealth Games Federation, achieved in May following strong collaboration with the RLIF and a well received presentation to the CGF Sports Review Committee in Kuala Lumpur, and, finally, drafting a Commonwealth development plan, the implementation of which is due to commence in 2012.

The RLEF's relationship with UK Sport International, which supports the charity International Development through Sport [IDS], represents a good example of the kind of bilateral ties that can extend rugby league's international footprint and ability to operate in new territories. Regular meetings throughout the year resulted in UK Sport International awarding the JRLA a 'small grant' of £3400 as an early sign of good faith towards the RLEF and a further financial commitment of £20,000 to implement aspects of the Commonwealth Commission's development plan in west Africa.

*"Now we can count more than 43,000 participants – an undeniable success."*

- Nicolas Larrat, President, Federation Française de Rugby à Treize

# OFFICIAL COMPETITIONS

The RLEF's Members and affiliated nations played more international matches in 2011 than in any other year. The emphasis on regional competitions continued, with, in addition to the world cup qualifiers, the second editions of the Nordic Cup and MENA Championships, as well as the first youth festival, in Germany. Hungarian and Danish sides debuted while Morocco fielded a side on home soil for the first time since 2003.

# 75

**MATCHES PLAYED  
INVOLVING NATIONAL  
REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS**

## 2017 RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

The most significant competition played in 2011 was the world cup qualification tournament, played in the Atlantic and Europe zones. The winner of each zone claimed one of the last two remaining berths in the 2013 Rugby League World Cup in England and Wales.

### ATLANTIC ZONE



The USA qualified for the world cup finals for the first time in its history, defeating Jamaica and South Africa by the same score in a tournament played entirely in New Jersey, USA.



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
<b>USA</b>	2	0	80	8	72	4
<b>JAMAICA</b>	1	1	24	46	22	2
<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	0	2	10	60	50	0

<b>15 OCT</b>	<b>USA 40-4 RSA</b>	New Jersey
<b>19 OCT</b>	<b>JAM 20-6 RSA</b>	New Jersey
<b>23 OCT</b>	<b>USA 40-4 JAM</b>	New Jersey

## EUROPEAN ZONE

Italy qualified for the world cup for the first time courtesy of a last minute drop goal that snatched a draw against Lebanon, who missed out on the finals on points difference for the second successive time.



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
ITALY	2	0	163	31	132	5
LEBANON	2	0	147	23	124	5
RUSSIA	1	2	42	152	-110	2
SERBIA	0	3	38	184	-146	0

15 OCTOBER	ITA 92 – 6 RUS	Padova
16 OCTOBER	LEB 96 – 4 SER	Tripoli
22 OCTOBER	RUS 0 – 36 LEB	Vereya
23 OCTOBER	SER 6 – 54 ITA	Belgrade
29 OCTOBER	SER 28 – 36 RUS	Belgrade
29 OCTOBER	ITA 19 – 19 LEB	Belgrade

## EUROPEAN SHIELD



The 2011 Shield was the last before the new international structure is introduced in 2012, with a four-team, biennial championship format replacing the three-team round-robin format. The 2011 Shield was the first to see each participating nation win a match, with Germany winning its first silverware, on points difference.



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
GERMANY	1	1	64	44	20	2
MALTA	1	1	76	60	16	2
NORWAY	1	1	56	92	-36	2

9 JULY	NOR 32-28 GER	Oslo
23 JULY	GER 36-12 MAL	Hochspeyer
2 SEPTEMBER	MAL 64-24 NOR	Hamrun

## EUROPEAN BOWL



Hungary was introduced onto the international rugby league stage as the Bowl served its function as an entry level tournament. The Czech Republic won its first silverware. The growing number of rugby league nations has allowed nations like the Czech Republic to play at a more appropriate level.



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
<b>CZECH REP.</b>	1	0	38	16	22	2
<b>HUNGARY XIII</b>	0	1	16	38	-22	0

**4 JUNE**      **HUN XIII 38 – 16 CZE**      Keskemet

## AMATEUR FOUR NATIONS

Wales won an eighth title in ten years, completing the grand slam with three victories from three matches. Despite the Dragonhearts' dominance, the 2011 Amateur Four Nations was one of the most evenly contested.



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
<b>WALES A</b>	3	0	118	68	50	6
<b>SCOTLAND A</b>	1	2	72	82	-10	2
<b>ENGLAND A</b>	1	2	66	78	-12	2
<b>IRELAND A</b>	1	2	66	94	-28	2

**25 JUNE**      **ENG 30-22 SCO**

**2 JULY**      **IRE 22-54 WAL**

**16 JULY**      **ENG 12-26 IRE**

**16 JULY**      **WAL 34-22 SCO**

**6 AUGUST**      **WAL 30-24 ENG**

**13 AUGUST**      **SCO 26-9 IRE**

# AFFILIATED COMPETITIONS

In support of the 'cluster system' mapped out in the 2010-17 RLEF strategy, the series of self-funded regional competitions continued.

## MENA CHAMPIONSHIP

The second edition of the MENA Championship served to support the ongoing rehabilitation of rugby league in Morocco. Lebanon was the first ever full national side to play rugby league in Morocco.



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
<b>LEBANON</b>	2	0	150	4	146	4
<b>MOROCCO XIII</b>	0	2	4	150	-146	0

<b>29 JUNE</b>	<b>MOR XIII 4-72 LEB</b>	Berrechid
<b>2 JULY</b>	<b>MOR XIII 0-78 LEB</b>	Berrechid

Note: the 2010 RLEF Annual Report referred to BARA. The correct name was British Asian Select XIII.

## MILAN KOSANOVIĆ CUP

Rising rugby league nations Serbia, Ukraine and Russia competed against one another in the first of what is hoped to be a regular three-match series. The winner will lift the trophy named after the Yugoslavian who played in the 1963 Challenge Cup final for Wakefield Trinity. Russia won the first edition, with their world cup qualification match against Serbia doubling for points in this series.



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
<b>RUSSIA</b>	2	0	72	32	40	4
<b>SERBIA</b>	1	1	38	40	-2	2
<b>UKRAINE</b>	0	2	8	46	-38	0

<b>10 SEPT</b>	<b>UKR 4-36 RUS</b>	Kharkov
<b>29 SEPT</b>	<b>SER 10-4 UKR</b>	Belgrade
<b>29 OCT</b>	<b>SER 28-36 RUS</b>	Belgrade



## NORDIC CUP



Denmark XIII joined Norway and Sweden in the second edition of the developmental Nordic Cup. The Sweden v Norway fixture was cancelled following two attempted fixture re-schedules.



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
<b>DENMARK XIII</b>	2	0	80	8	72	4
<b>NORWAY</b>	0	1	24	46	-22	2
<b>SWEDEN</b>	0	1	10	60	-50	0

<b>2 JULY</b>	<b>SWE 18-52 DEN XIII</b>	Gothenburg
<b>17 SEP</b>	<b>NOR - SWE</b>	Oslo
<b>2 OCT</b>	<b>DEN XIII 28-8 NOR</b>	Copenhagen

## MENA UNDER-16s CHAMPIONSHIP

The same three sides from 2010 contested the tournament, with the Saudi Schools Select side repeating their dramatic victory in the final match against Lebanon U16s. The success of the tournament model in providing organic growth is demonstrated by a planned 2012 tour to Lebanon by Saudi Arabia RL U18.



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
<b>SAUDI RL SEL.</b>	2	0	34	8	26	4
<b>LEBANON</b>	1	1	34	18	16	2
<b>PALESTINE XIII</b>	0	2	4	46	-42	0

<b>24 MARCH</b>	<b>LEB 26 – 4 PAL XIII</b>	Beirut
<b>31 MARCH</b>	<b>KSA 20 – 0 PAL XIII</b>	Beirut
<b>2 APRIL</b>	<b>LEB 8 - 14 KSA</b>	Beirut

## GERMANY UNDER-16s YOUTH FESTIVAL

Under the RLEF's re-organised international structure youth rugby league festivals have been introduced to take precedence over formal championships, the aim being to encourage participation, limit the pressure of performance and remove logistical hardships. The hosts debuted at age group football, while the fourth and final match between Scotland and Russia was described by one attending RLEF official as one of the most bitterly fought matches he had ever seen.



19 AUGUST	<b>SER 0-32 RUS</b>	Heidelberg
19 AUGUST	<b>GER 4-22 SCO</b>	Heidelberg
21 AUGUST	<b>GER 28-6 SER</b>	Heidelberg
21 AUGUST	<b>SCO 14-0 RUS</b>	Heidelberg

## OTHER INTERNATIONALS

Below is a list of all internationals with at least one RLEF Member national team participating. It does not include student level competition.

## SENIOR INTERNATIONALS

DATE	FIXTURE	COMPETITION	VENUE
16 APRIL	GERMANY 24-68 1 YORKSHIRE REGT	FRIENDLY	Hochspeyer
22 APRIL	GERMANY 6-90 SERBIA	FRIENDLY	Hochspeyer
10 JUNE	ENGLAND 12-16 EXILES	FRIENDLY	Leeds
25 JUNE	SERBIA 0-38 GB COMMUNITY LIONS	TOUR	Belgrade
2 JULY	FRANCE FEMENIN 6-40 ENGLAND WOMEN	TEST	Avignon
6 JULY	FRANCE FEMENIN 6-56 ENGLAND WOMEN	TEST	Avignon
31 JULY	CANADA 40-10 JAMAICA	FRIENDLY	Toronto
27 AUGUST	USA 18-2 CANADA	FRIENDLY	Philadelphia
16 SEPTEMBER	LOUGHBOROUGH UNI 24-22 ITALY A	TOUR	Loughborough
17 SEPTEMBER	COVENTRY BEARS 38-8 ITALY A	TOUR	Coventry
17 SEPTEMBER	CANADA 18-16 USA	FRIENDLY	Toronto
9 OCTOBER	CANADA 22-36 SOUTH AFRICA	FRIENDLY	Toronto
10 OCTOBER	ENG 34-32 FRA [WHEELCHAIR]	TEST	Leigh
15 OCTOBER	ENGLAND KNIGHTS 38-18 FRANCE	FRIENDLY	Leigh
16 OCTOBER	SCOTLAND 26-6 IRELAND	TEST	Glasgow
21 OCTOBER	FRANCE 18-32 ENGLAND	TEST	Avignon
22 OCTOBER	WALES 30-6 IRELAND	TEST	Neath
22 OCTOBER	CUMBRIA 12-26 ENGLAND KNIGHTS	FRIENDLY	Whitehaven
29 OCTOBER	ENGLAND 42-4 WALES	4 NATIONS	Leigh
29 OCTOBER	FRANCE 46-10 SCOTLAND	TEST	Perpignan
29 OCTOBER	FRANCE FEDERALE 10-40 THATTO HEATH	FRIENDLY	Le Barcarés
5 NOVEMBER	ENGLAND 20-36 AUSTRALIA	4 NATIONS	Wembley
5 NOVEMBER	IRELAND 16-34 FRANCE	TEST	Limerick
5 NOVEMBER	WALES 0-36 NEW ZEALAND	4 NATIONS	Wembley
12 NOVEMBER	ENGLAND 28-6 NEW ZEALAND	4 NATIONS	Hull
13 NOVEMBER	WALES 14-56 AUSTRALIA	4 NATIONS	Wrexham
19 NOVEMBER	ENGLAND 8-30 AUSTRALIA	4 NATIONS	Leeds

## YOUTH INTERNATIONALS

DATE	FIXTURE	COMPETITION	VENUE
22 APRIL	ENGLAND U16 18-19 FRANCE U16	TEST	Bradford
22 APRIL	WALES U16 18-24 ENGLAND U16*	TEST	Caerphilly
24 APRIL	ENGLAND U16 58-14 FRANCE U16	TEST	Bradford
3 JUNE	FRANCE U18 19-28 ENGLAND U18	TEST	Palau
11 JUNE	SERBIA U21 6-50 BARLA U19	TOUR	Belgrade
26 JUNE	ENGLAND COLL. U18 46-14 SCOTLAND U18	FRIENDLY	Cumbria
13 AUGUST	SCOTLAND U18 14-12 ENGLAND COLL. U18	FRIENDLY	Glasgow
24 AUGUST	ENGLAND U16 18-6 WALES U16	TEST	Hull
4 NOVEMBER	ENG COMM. LIONS U18 25-22 FRA U18	FRIENDLY	Hemel
9 NOVEMBER	ENG COMM. LIONS U18 34-10 SCO U18	FRIENDLY	Whitehaven
13 NOVEMBER	WALES U18 29-28 ENG COMM. LIONS U18	FRIENDLY	Wrexham
23 NOVEMBER	FRANCE U19 12-40 AIS	TOUR	St Gaudens
25 NOVEMBER	FRANCE U18 35-32 AIS	TOUR	Plaisance du Touche
30 NOVEMBER	WALES U18 0-36 AIS	TOUR	Neath
4 DECEMBER	ENGLAND U18 20-22 AIS	TOUR	Leigh
7 DECEMBER	ENG COMM. LIONS 24-38 AIS	TOUR	Heworth

\* England fielded two U16 teams on the same day

# FINANCIAL REPORT

In 2011 the management of the RLEF built on the work begun in 2010, with a focus on generating additional revenues and expanding activity across Europe and other areas within the organisation's sphere of influence.

Grants from the RLIF increased to £144,189 (2010: £126,241), partly the result of exchange rate movement. The support of the RFL continued strongly through 2011 in both support for the European Cup and yet again, indirectly through officer time dedicated across many disciplines. The continued support of Alitalia resulted in sponsorship income remaining relatively static at £20,944 (2010: £21,830).

EU Grants received within the year were £21,455 (2010: nil) which partly funded increased activity in the development of coaches and players. Agreement is already in place for increased support over 2012, which is welcomed by the RLEF management.

Grants to nations fell to £13,300 (£23,200) as resources were redirected to supporting the operations of members. Improving administration support and the programmes of activity detailed elsewhere. Direct activity costs rose to £58,847 (2010: £34,268), through programmes utilising EU funds.

Administration costs for 2011 were £159,096 (2010: £150,330), a reflection of the additional work in managing grant funded activities and new support roles in both Scandinavia and the Ukraine.

**Income Statement**

for the year ended 31 December 2011

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>		
Members Fees	2,100	1,980
RFL & RLIF Contribution	200,642	190,599
Grant Funding	21,455	-
Sponsorship	20,944	21,830
Turnover	<b>245,142</b>	<b>214,409</b>
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>		
Grants	13,300	23,200
Activity	58,787	34,268
Administration	159,504	150,330
Other	13,551	6,611
Total Expenditure	<b>245,142</b>	<b>214,409</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

# THE RLEF BOARD

## **RICHARD LEWIS – CHAIRMAN**

A former Davis Cup player, Richard Lewis joined the RFL in April 2002 as Executive Chairman, a role he fulfilled until 2009 when he became chairman following his appointment as chairman of Sport England. He became the RLEF's chairman in 2004 and is currently the vice-chairman of the RLIF.



## **HERVE GUIRAUD – VICE-CHAIRMAN**

One of France's most celebrated international halves, Hervé Guiraud became vice-chairman of the RLEF in October 2011, while serving general secretary of the FFRXIII. Hervé served 12-years as president of the Limoux club, and was the director of France's national teams and an FFRXIII vice-president.



## **CHRISTEN FARMER - DIRECTOR**

Chris comes to the RLEF board with over 20 years of international experience in sportswear brand distribution and strategic corporate communications in Europe, the US, and the Far East. Chris is currently president of the communications firm MACH IV Consulting based in Belgrade, Serbia.



## **RICHARD GRAHAM - DIRECTOR**

Following a 25-year career in sport, including stints as chief executive of the Professional Squash Association and Parallel Media Group plc, Richard joined the RLEF Board in July 2011. Currently, he is the Executive Director of Impact Sports Recruitment, Special Executive Advisor to Sporting Equals and Chairman of London Swimming.





### **NEBOJŠA SREtenović - DIRECTOR**

The first ever Serbian national team captain, Nebojša Sretenović played a pivotal role in the formation of the Serbian rugby league in 2001 and has been an ever-present member of the SRLF Board, serving as president from 2009-11. In 2010 the RLEF Council elected Nebojša to the RLEF Board.

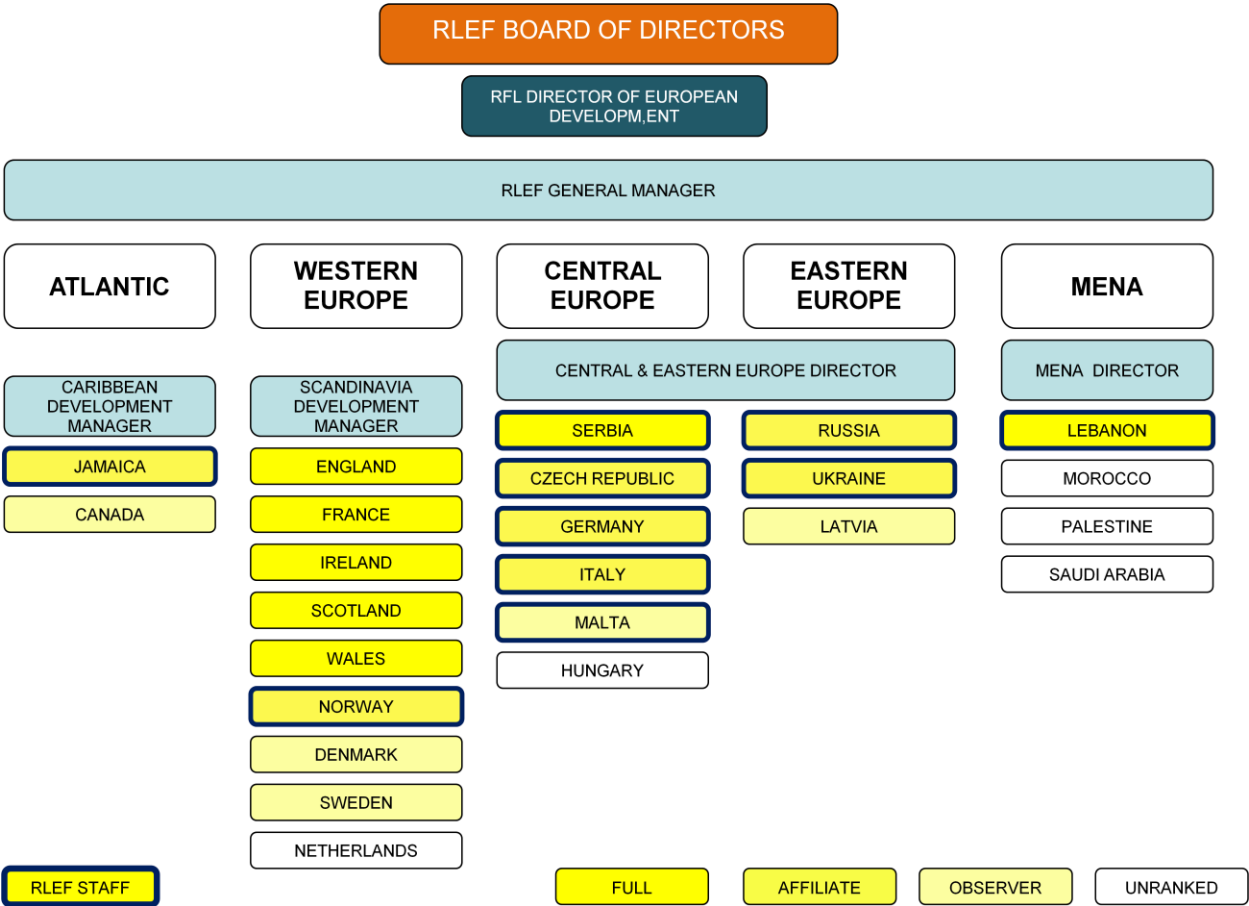


### **GRAEME THOMPSON - DIRECTOR**

The RFL's former Performance Director and England team manager during the 2008 Rugby League World Cup, ex-Scotland international Graeme was elected to the RLEF Board in 2010. He is currently a performance advisor with UK Sport.



# APPENDIX 1: RLEF ORGANISATION



## APPENDIX 2: DOMESTIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

In 2011 the following members ran domestic championships:

MEMBER	STATUS	Sr. LEAGUE [clubs] CHAMPIONS	2 <sup>ND</sup> DIVISION* [clubs]	Jr. LEAGUE
ENGLAND	FULL	Engage Super League [14] Leeds Rhinos	Cooperative Ch. [10] Cooperative Ch. 1 [9] Multiple amateur comps	Multiple
FRANCE	FULL	ELITE 1 [10] FC Lézignan	ELITE 2 [9] 1 Sr. amateur ch. [8] 6 regional leagues	Multiple
IRELAND	FULL	Carnegie Ulster [6] Carnegie Leinster [7] Carnegie Munster [4] Treaty City Titans		
LEBANON	FULL	Bank of Beirut RL Ch. [7] LAU Immortals RLFC	RL Shield [4]	7 schools
SCOTLAND	FULL	RL Conference [10] Edinburgh Eagles	University [5]	15 clubs
SERBIA	FULL	Serbian RL Ch. [4] Dorćol Spiders	Second Division [4] University [5]	5 clubs
WALES	FULL	Cooperative Premier Div. [6] Bridgend Blue Bulls	Championship [4]	4 divisions
CZECH R.	AFFILIATE	Czech Ch. [4] Pardubice Jets		
GERMANY	AFFILIATE	Bundesliga [5] Heidelberg		
ITALY	AFFILIATE	North-West Ch. [3] North-East Ch. [3] XIII Del Ducato Piacenza		
JAMAICA	AFFILIATE	Jamaican Ch. [8] Duhaney Park Red Sharks	Colleges [4]	10 schools
NORWAY	AFFILIATE	YIT Premiership [5] Tromsø Polar Bears		
RUSSIA	AFFILIATE	Centre Ch. [6] Vereya Bears RLFC	South Ch. [6]	16 clubs

<b>UKRAINE</b>	<b>AFFILIATE</b>	Ukrainian Ch. [7]** Legion XIII	4 clubs
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>OBSERVER</b>	Canadian Ch. [4] Niagara Bobcats	
<b>MALTA</b>	<b>OBSERVER</b>	Championship [2]** South Malta	

\* Minimum criterion for Full Members is four second grade or U21 or student teams. “Clubs” in this section can include university or college teams as well as private sports clubs.

\*\* Not recognised as official RLEF domestic championship due to minimum number of teams [4] or number of rounds [3]