

The European Athletics U23 Championships are a biennial athletics competition for European athletes U23, organized by the European Athletic Association.

The event was held for the first time in 1997 in Turku, Finland, with the participation of 632 athletes from 37 nations.
The U23 Championships replaced the European Athletics U23 Cup, a biennial event with "A" and "B" level championships held in 1992 and 1994.

Men's and women's walking events have always been part of the championships program.
The men's race was held over 20 km until the last edition, when the 10,000m track walk was contested. The women's race was held over 10 km on the road in the first edition in 1997, but since 1999 the distance has been increased to 20 km. As with the men's race, the last edition featured a 10,000m track walk.

The highest number of participants in the men's races was in Bergen 2025, with 33 participants from 17 countries. The women's race with the highest number of entered athletes was in Bydgoszcz, Poland, in 2017 where 27 athletes from 16 countries participated.

The highest number of disqualifications for incorrect walking occurred in Gothenburg in 1999, with 4 out of 19 men DQed. In the women's race, in Bydgoszcz in 2017, the judges suspended four out of 27 athletes.

Unfortunately, even at the European U23 Championships, there were events in which the finishing order was changed following the disqualification of several Russian athletes for anti-doping rule violations. The incriminated races are those of 2011, 2013, and 2015.

In 2011, in Ostrava (Czech Republic), the winner of the men's 20 km, Pyotr Bogatyrev. The same fate befell Nina Okhotnikova in the women's race, who had placed second.
In 2013, in the men's race held in Tampere (Finland), Pyotr Bogatyrev and Alexander Ivanov, who had placed first and second, were disqualified.

In the women's event, the winner Svetlana Vasilyeva was disqualified. Finally, in 2015, in the women's race held in Tallinn (East), the winner Mariya Ponomaryova was disqualified.

The U23 20km championship records for the men are held by Aigars Fadejevs (Lat), who won the inaugural edition in Turku with a time of 1:19:58.
Anežka Drahotová (Cze), with a time of 1:27:25 set in Tallinn in 2015, holds the women's record.

The most decorated athlete is Andrea Cosi of Italy, who has won two silver medals and one bronze. No other athlete has managed to repeat this feat in multiple editions.

Among the women, five athletes have won two medals in different editions.
They are:
- Russian Tatyana Shemyakina, gold in 2007 and third in 2009
- Italians Antonella Palmisano, silver in Tampere 2013 and bronze in Ostrava 2011, and Alexandrina Mihai, winner in Bergen 2025 and second in Espoo 2023
- Ukrainian Lyudmyla Olyanowska, gold in Tampere 2013 and silver in Tallinn 2015
- French Pauline Stey, first in Espoo 2023 and second in Tallinn 2011.

The nation with the most medals in the men's event is Spain (6 gold- 3 silver- 1 bronze). The Iberian nation is followed by Russia (3 gold- 5 silver- 3 bronze) and Poland (2 gold). In the women's event, Russia is first (6 gold- 3 silver- 4 bronze), Italy is in second place (2 gold- 2 silver- 2 bronze), and Turkey is in third place, having won 2 gold medals.