

PRIORITIES OF THE EOC EU OFFICE REGARDING THE EU SPORT POLICY 2019-2020

1. ORGANISATION OF SPORT IN EUROPE

Acknowledging the European Sport Model and recognising its specificities

- ✓ The unique role of the organised sport in Europe, based on solidarity, inclusivity and voluntary engagement, and its benefits to society (e.g. fight against physical inactivity) should be safeguarded. The key components of the European Sport Model, including the role of federations and National Olympic Committees, should be recognised and supported by the EU institutions. This structure notably ensures the sustainability of grassroots sport and its societal benefits, through the solidarity mechanisms of redistribution of financial resources between the different actors, including athletes, of the organised sport pyramid.
- ✓ To ensure that sport organisations can govern their sport effectively, the specific nature of sport in Europe should be recognised. One particular example is the application of EU antitrust policy where the unique role of sport federations in governing their sport should be taken into consideration in all sport-relevant cases. As underpinned by the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, a differentiation should be made between non-profit sport organisations and commercial providers of sport services.
- ✓ When developing and implementing its policies, it is crucial that the EU takes into account the geographical organisation of sport in Europe. Competitions organised by European umbrella sport organisations gather athletes, teams and federations from the geographical European continent not only from EU member states.

2. INTEGRITY OF SPORT

Enabling sport organisations to strengthen their governance and support clean athletes and competitions effectively

- ✓ A successful fight against threats to the integrity of sport (including doping and match-fixing) is key and should be strengthened for the sake of athletes, coaches, volunteers, and all other stakeholders involved in sport.
- ✓ In this regard, the coordination between sport organisations, public authorities and other actors in the EU and at international level should be enhanced, in particular through mechanisms such as the Convention of the Council of Europe on the Manipulation of Sport Competitions and the Olympic Movement Unit on Prevention against Manipulation of Competitions.

- ✓ With good governance being a pre-condition for the autonomy of sport, sport organisations welcome an in-depth dialogue with the EU institutions to promote good governance. The EU should acknowledge the ongoing developments in different sport organisations, and should support and encourage the use of practical tools developed e.g. by the Olympic Movement as a result of the implementation of the Olympic Agenda 2020, such as the SIGGS tool of the EOC EU Office.
- ✓ The EU should continue to support, e.g. through its Erasmus+ programme, the activities of the sport movement to advance gender equality, as well as fight against harassment, abuse and gender stereotypes in sport. A follow-up for the EU “Gender Equality in Sport – Proposal for Strategic Actions 2014-2020” should be planned.

3. EU FUNDING

Increasing the participation of sport organisations to the Erasmus+ and other EU programmes

- ✓ The access of organised sport to the Erasmus+ should be facilitated in order to improve its impact and sustainability. Furthermore, the European Commission should minimise the administrative and financial burden (e.g. increased pre-financing and simplified application and reporting procedures and forms), both in the current and the new programme 2021-2027. This would facilitate greater access of grassroots sport to the programme.
- ✓ Sport has a substantial impact on societies, e.g. in terms of economy, health and social inclusion, as well as disease prevention. Thus, the potential of sport to help achieving the objectives of the relevant EU funding programmes, such as the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), should be fully recognised.
- ✓ The EU should encourage investment in sport infrastructures (e.g. by better use of the ERDF).
- ✓ As sport in Europe is organised on continental basis, the access of non-EU countries to the Erasmus+ programme should be facilitated. Furthermore, the forthcoming external action financing instruments should include sport as part of their thematic priorities.

4. SPORT AS A HEALTH-ENHANCING ACTIVITY

Promoting sport as the most efficient and cost-effective means to improve public health

- ✓ According to the WHO study (2018), globally, more than 1.4 billion adults are at risk of disease due to insufficient physical activity. Taking into account these alarming figures, the EU should promote access to sport for all EU citizens. Sport should be fully recognised as a preventive tool through better cooperation between sport, the health and the social insurance sectors, with a focus on the use of physical activity as prevention for non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
- ✓ Collaboration between schools and sport clubs should be strengthened and physical activity in schools should be increased.
- ✓ The membership in the sport clubs should be promoted by the EU and the Member States as efficient and cost-effective means for physical activity.

5. SOCIETAL ROLE OF SPORT

Acknowledging the contribution of sport to society

- ✓ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the role of sport in sustainable development and recognizes its contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals. The EU, not only by the means of its Sport diplomacy activities but also in other cross-sectorial policy areas, should continue to promote “*Sport as an important enabler of sustainable development*”.
- ✓ Sport has a unifying and educative role within and among societies. The EU should better acknowledge this societal role of sport by supporting the various initiatives already undertaken by sport organisations (e.g. on the inclusion of refugees, migrants and persons with disabilities).
- ✓ The EU should further promote the recognition of informal/non-formal learning and experience acquired in sport (e.g. through volunteering) in the framework of the implementation of the EQF and the EU Skills Agenda, as well as in the activities of reducing youth unemployment in Europe.
- ✓ The non-profit nature of grassroots sport should be taken into account in the EU legislation and judgements, e.g. in taxation, to safeguard the future of sports clubs in Europe. Furthermore, following the recommendations of the High Level Group on Grassroots Sport, the EU should encourage initiatives to guarantee the sustainable financing of sport, including maintaining the possibility of exemptions or reduced VAT rates for sport in the reform of the VAT Directive.

6. FURTHER CHALLENGES

- ✓ The commercial exploitation of sport events is an important source of revenue for sport organisations. This revenue is re-invested in the development of sport (including into grassroots and youth sports as well as in athletes development) through the existing solidarity mechanisms. The economic value and integrity of sport events are endangered by their illegal use (e.g. illegal live-streaming and illegal online betting) and should be protected.
- ✓ The EU should facilitate the establishment of the sport satellite accounts in all EU Member States.
- ✓ The EU should better cooperate with Athletes’ Commissions, which are democratically elected bodies and which represent athletes from the organised sport movement, and not only those competing in professional leagues.
- ✓ The EU, and especially the Member States, should continue to support dual career of athletes (through the implementation of the EU Guidelines on Dual Career and through the support of Erasmus+ Sport projects).
- ✓ In the framework of hosting major sport events, public authorities and sport organisations should effectively cooperate to ensure the sustainability of major sport events in all aspects. Furthermore, the EU should support activities of sport organisations, which aim to implement both climate and environmentally friendly policies and activities, e.g. through the Erasmus+ or Life programme to actively tackle the climate change.