

MONTHLY REPORT

March 2023



EUROPEAN
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEES



EU
Office

Interview of the month

Annamarie Phelps - Chair of the EOC GEDI Commission



"We still have a long way to go to begin to approach parity in sport across Europe. Whilst the visibility of women's sport is growing and beginning to be better resourced at the elite level, globally we lag behind other continents in gender representation at decision making tables; in participation; in coaching and leadership roles."

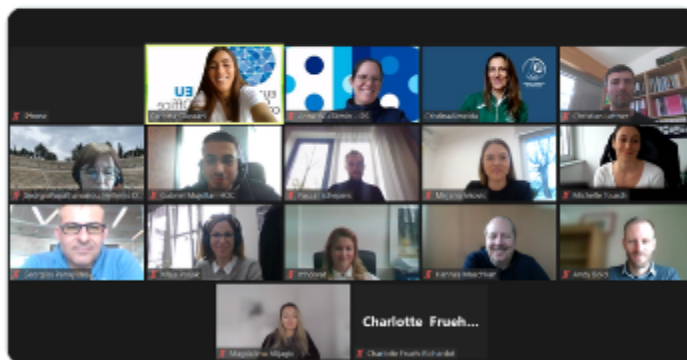
See full interview on page 5



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The @EOCEUOffice host the introductory meeting for the in-house training for writing project proposals! Congratulations to the selected NOC representatives 🇸🇪 🇷🇺 🇮🇹 🇩🇪 🇬🇷 🇪🇺 🇳🇱 🇮🇹 🇵🇹 🇧🇪 🇭🇺 🇮🇹
The EOC EU Office is looking forward to welcoming you all in Brussels on 24-26 April!



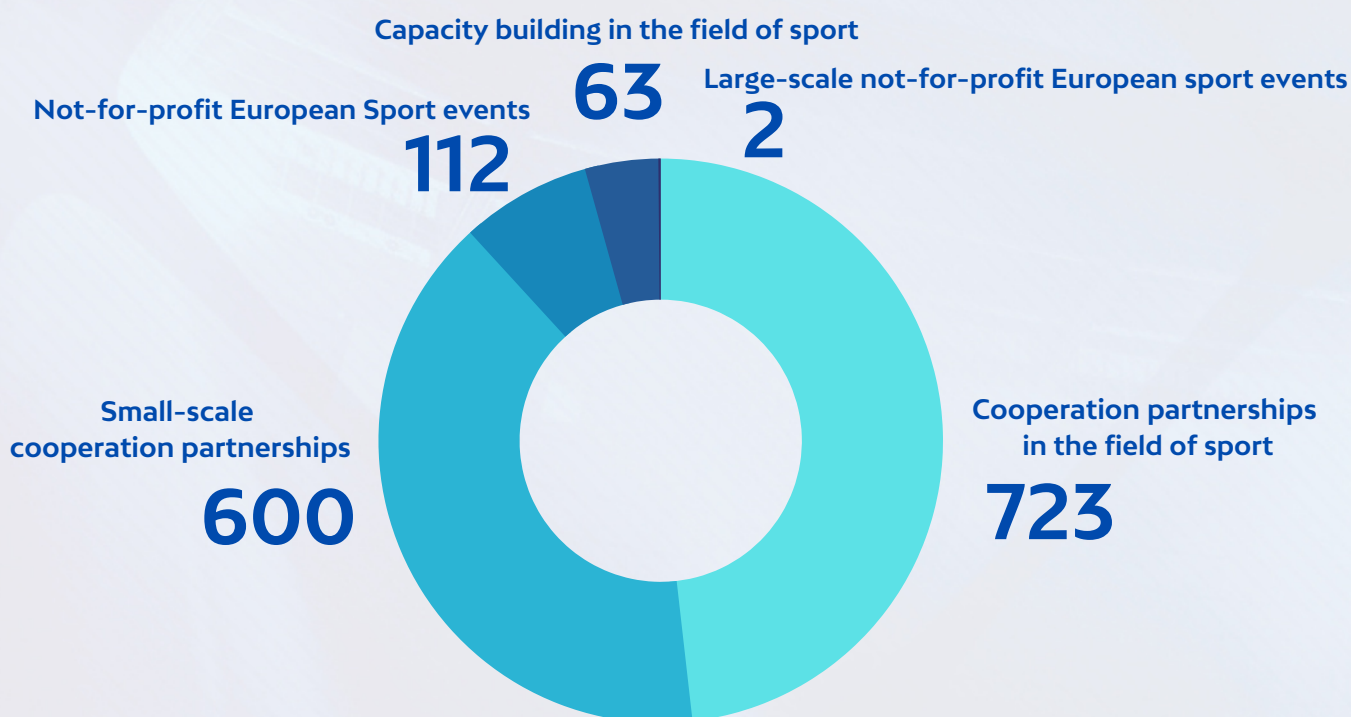
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Erasmus+ Sport 2023 calls for proposals

The European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) received a record-breaking 1,500 proposals (increase of 17% compared to 2022) which are distributed as follows:



Source: [European Commission](#)

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INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

The discussions about the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes in international sporting events have intensified once again with the decision of the Executive Board of the IOC on 28 March. The conditions defined by the IOC for a possible return of these athletes to international sport were received differently.

While the umbrella organisation of the Olympic Committees, ANOC, fully supports the IOC's decision with its statement, the International Federations do not seem to have reached a unified position on this issue. This is at least what first statements from athletics and fencing indicate. In the next few weeks, all IFs are called upon to position themselves to implement the IOC's guidelines in the organisation of their international competitions or, if necessary, to go other ways.

This means that the main burden now lies with the IFs. If they do not allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete in the qualifying tournaments, they will not participate in the Olympic Games in Paris 2024. But even a successful qualification would not automatically ensure participation in Paris. In its meeting of 28 March, the IOC explicitly reserved the right to decide on Russia's participation in Paris 2024 later. This passage has gone unnoticed in some commentaries but secures the IOC the final decision on this issue.

On another note, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Competition is currently looking into the question of whether funds from the European Recovery Fund can also be used for the financing of larger sports infrastructures.

Corresponding projects, such as multifunctional sport halls, have already been funded in the past through the European Regional Development Fund in some Member States. As a reminder, the Recovery Fund, which was established in February 2021, is a European economic recovery plan to counteract the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since in some Member States the funds have been rather sparse, projects such as those in Venice and Florence are now also being discussed, which are supposed to generate economic development through investments in sports infrastructure. Should the Directorate General for Competition bring itself to wave through the investments of more than 90 million EUR in Venice and more than 60 million EUR in Florence for the renovation of the football stadium, this would certainly be a signal for other Member States to push ahead with similar projects. The funds must be implemented by 2026. With more than 200 billion EUR Italy benefits most from the Recovery Fund.

With kind regards,



Folker Hellmund
Director EOC EU Office



INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH



Annamarie Phelps CBE is a former World Champion in Women's Lightweight Coxless Fours and indoor rowing and represented Great Britain in the women's eight at the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996. She is the current Chair of the British Horseracing Authority and Vice Chair of the British Olympic Association. In 2017 Annamarie was elected to the European Rowing Management Board. She is the Chair of the EOC GEDI Commission.

1. Every year on 8 March, International Women's Day is an opportunity to take stock of progress for women rights and hurdles that remain on the path to gender quality. Today, in March 2023, how do you see the situation for women's rights in Europe in general?

The fact that IWD has become such a phenomena speaks to the profile of women's rights in Europe, but I am very cautious that much of the rhetoric and celebration on 8 March is superficial. To really make a significant shift we need everyday actions and not annual celebrations.

I hope that in future we use IWD to focus on progress and on reporting on a closing gap in opportunities for women's and (especially) girls' rights to participate in the decision-making and delivery of sports and physical activity.

2. The lack of women in leadership positions in sport organisations is an obvious and visible fact. How have you personally managed to overcome the existing obstacles and which obstacles do you still encounter?

I have been involved in sports administration and leadership for a long time (almost 30 years!!) and things have changed enormously. I really benefitted from having strong female role models and supporters as I grew into my roles. The President of my national federation, British Rowing, when I was an athlete was a woman – she was in the role for 24 years. She was always very happy to talk about how she approached difficult situations and brought people together to lead with integrity and in a way that was true to her values. She persuaded me to stand for President when she retired and, although I was convinced that the sport would want change and opt for a male candidate, I was elected by and held the post for 5 years, until funding requirements around term limits were imposed and meant I needed to step down.

My (male) coach and (male) sponsor also recognised and encouraged my engagement in the administrative and 'political' side of sport. There is however still an expectation at international level that sports leaders are male and this is probably the greatest hurdle. If you feel you have to justify why you are in a role then you are on the back foot to start, but this happens less and less nowadays. However, I am now old enough and brave enough to be very open in a difficult situation, because I know I am preparing the way for future generations of women leaders, not trying to promote my own career.

3. How advanced is the European sport movement when it comes to gender equality, compared to some years ago?

When I first attended a meeting of European Rowing federation Presidents exactly 10 years ago I was the only women attending and the only women involved at all. I am now President of European Rowing and at our annual meeting of federation leaders in Copenhagen this weekend, ten of the thirty participants were women, and more if you include those helping with administration and organisation: a significant shift across the continent. I now hear (male) colleagues actively promoting gender equality and the need to impose quotas and targets to help accelerate change: this is probably the most significant step because many of the barriers are cultural and it is people who create and can change the culture.

However, we still have a long way to go to begin to approach parity in sport across Europe. Whilst the visibility of women's sport is growing and beginning to be better resourced at the elite level, globally we lag behind other continents in gender representation at decision making tables; in participation; in coaching and leadership roles. We have a lot of work to do to ensure our sports bodies have appropriate safeguarding procedures in place to support participants from marginalised and more vulnerable groups.

4. The GEDI Commission has recently adopted the Recommendations 2023-2030. Notably, this set targets in leadership, portrayal, participation, resources and safe sport. Which area of intervention remains more challenging for European NOCs?

That is a difficult question, many of these are interlinked and we need to be working across all of them at once. I would say that the most challenging part is getting to a position where our NOCs recognise the missed opportunities if they DON'T engage with change. So for example, if half the medals at Paris are for women's events and you have a team of only male athletes, you are denying your team access to half the medals.

Every NOC will have a different starting point – the important thing is not to be afraid of trying and the EOC GEDI Commission is there to help you and there are grants and incentives out there that can help.

5. You are involved in the GAMES project of the EOC EU Office, which supports a number of National Olympic Committees in developing action plans and strategies for gender equality in leadership positions. Could such European projects become a game changer?

Engagement is the key. If you invest time and resource in any project you are much more likely to complete it and to deliver real benefits for your organisation. The GAMES project has the additional benefit of partnering leaders from across sports organisations who have similar ambitions to make sport more sustainable, accessible and relevant for future generations.

We have seen great collaboration and sharing across the GAMES project in a way that benefits the wider European sporting environment. This is key to sport retaining the privileged position it has at the moment, both in political influence, attracting government and commercial funding and in the high profile it has across media.

6. Do you think one could compare the fight for gender equality to the fight against climate change? Everybody knows a different behaviour is needed but it seems that only few are willing to do those changes both at professional and personal level.

Yes and no. I think everyone knows that ignoring climate change will not only impact the ability for sport to hold its place in society, attract commercial income and public funding, but we are already seeing the impact on facilities and the natural environment that sport takes place in. We have to do something about this or sport's time is limited. Gender issues are a little more complex, many people still don't see the need to change – 'we have been like this for a hundred years and we have done pretty well, why change?' – and can't see the opportunity, or perhaps they feel threatened by a change to culture, or a potential loss of power and influence.

Experiencing the benefit of change and a move towards equality is the best way to expedite and embed change. Equal funding of men's and women's elite sport can open up the opportunity to increase medal tallies, more diverse boards and executive teams have been shown to be more profitable and successful; making sport attractive to boys and girls can double the immediate marketing opportunity and future fan-base, the list goes on: it is not just the right thing to do it is the smart thing to do.

7. The GEDI Commission is proposing to establish a cross-Commission Working Group with athlete Commission and IR&EU Commission to support advocacy and education on Safe sport among European NOCs. What are the main challenges that European NOCs face in the realm of safeguarding, currently?

I think knowing where to start is the biggest hurdle for many NOCs when we talk about safeguarding. Unbelievably there are still leaders in sport that believe that because they don't have current cases their organisation doesn't have a problem – but this is a reckless approach. Harassment and abuse are societal problems, in many cultures misogyny and gender violence exacerbates this, and sport is not immune. Sports leaders need to recognise the part they play in safeguarding both their staff and participants and ensuring the sports environment is a positive, inclusive and accessible place for everyone – not just today but for future generations. The legislation on safeguarding and requirements for sport across European nations vary widely.

Many governments still don't link safeguarding to sport as a funding requirement, yet sport is a sector that is hugely vulnerable to abuse because of the power dynamics in play. There is also a real fear of opening 'Pandora's Box' – let's put it on the table: once you start to put safeguarding policies and education in place you will increase the likelihood of reports, because abuse is happening, people just don't know what to do with the information they have. Reporting is a positive thing and should be welcomed and encouraged. It is much better to deal with bullies, prevent abusers accessing your sport, to create positive environments, and to prevent further harm, than it is to sit back and pretend its not happening. The long term consequences for individuals and organisational reputation are too serious to ignore.

8. How close (or far) are we to having a female President of IOC or FIFA?

That will depend on the voting members of both organisations of course. I hope not too far – my money is on the IOC to be first. Thomas Bach has been a very prominent and proactive ‘He for She’ leader investing in and driving change in the IOC as an organisation as well as publicly advocating for change across the Olympic Movement.

There are credible female candidates in the Olympic movement. If the IOC Members don’t make the leap next year, after the Paris Games, it will be another four, or more likely eight, years away...that’s a whole generation in athlete terms.

The EOC EU Office is thanking Annamarie Phelps for her interview and contribution to the monthly report.



EU SPORT POLICY AND FUNDING NEWS

European Parliament addresses UEFA & IOC on Belarusian athletes' participation to EURO 2024 & Paris 2024

On March 14, 104 MEPs addressed UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin a letter objecting to Belarus' participation in the EURO 2024 qualifications. MEPs from all the major political parties urged the European football governing body to exclude Belarus from EURO 2024 qualification matches.

MEPs cited a number of human rights issues, such as the incarceration or imprisonment of political prisoners, including athletes and sportspeople, as justification for taking harsh action against the Belarusian football team. The letter also highlighted the role that these transgressions had in Russia's actions against Ukraine.

Additionally, MEPs emphasized that the regime might utilise the Belarusian national team's participation for propaganda purposes: “The very fact of participating in UEFA Championship by the Belarusian national team will be later used by Lukashenko and his propaganda team to prove he is well-received in the international community”.

MEPs therefore encouraged UEFA to “reconsider its position on the Belarusian football team”.

“It is clear from an international standpoint that the current measures are inadequate and fail to reflect what the Belarusian authorities are doing in relation to human rights and other UEFA values”. The letter has not yet received a response from UEFA.

Additionally, on 15 March, a [resolution](#) regarding the further repression against the people of Belarus was adopted by the European Parliament. The IOC's January 2023 [statement](#) on the prospect of looking into measures to permit Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games qualifiers under neutrality circumstances was criticised by MEPs through this motion.

As a result, the European Parliament: “Reiterates its condemnation of the recent decision of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to allow Belarusian athletes to compete in qualifications for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games under a neutral flag, which runs counter to the multifaceted isolation of Belarus and will be used by the regime for propaganda purposes; calls on the Member States and the international community to exert pressure on the IOC to reverse this decision and to adopt a similar position on any other sporting, cultural or scientific events”.

On 28 March, the IOC issued new [recommendations](#) for international sports event organisers regarding the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes in sports competitions. These recommendations reinforced the aforementioned neutrality requirements for the athletes, which means that athletes who have actively supported the war as well as those who are enlisted in the Russian or Belarusian military will not be permitted to compete in international competitions.

Additionally, teams sports of Russian or Belarusian athletes cannot be considered to participate; A final decision has yet to be made in regard to the Paris 2024 and Milano-Cortina 2026 Olympic Games.

European Parliament hosts e-sport and videogames exhibition in Brussels

On 7 March, an exhibition on "Virtual words: how videogames are helping to shape Europe's digital future" was held in the European Parliament building in Brussels, hosted by MEP Laurence Farreng (Renew) in collaboration with the S&D, the EPP, the Greens, and the International Software Federation of Europe (ISFE).

In their interventions, several MEPs emphasized the importance of e-sports as a rapidly expanding industry with enormous potential for economic expansion. MEPs Iban Garcia del Blanco (S&D) and Viola von Cramon (Greens) made specific note of the need to advance gender equality in e-sports and video games, which remain predominantly masculine/are still overwhelmingly dominated by men. In addition to that, MEP von Cramon urged for more legislation to ensure the security and welfare of young people taking part in e-sports. Furthermore, MEP Tomasz Frankowski (EPP) emphasised the need for a clear European strategy for e-sport as well as the establishment of a common definition of e-sport in comparison to traditional sport, as already iterated by the European Parliament [resolution on e-sports and videogames](#) in October 2022.

The exhibition inauguration opened the way to a series of roundtables in the parliamentary institution, i.e.. on how videogames can contribute to the future of technological developments (hosted by MEP Farreng) prepare for the jobs of the future in education (hosted by MEP Garcia del Blanco), promote top talent – women in videogames and e-sport (hosted by MEP Farreng), and deliver on the objectives of the Green Deal (hosted by MEP Nienass).

Likewise, German citizen Robert Sadowski submitted a [petition](#) to the European Commission on e-sport in Europe in June 2022. Similarly to MEPs, he urged the Commission, through this petition, to establish a definition for e-sport, potentially differing from the definition of traditional sport, and to create an open assessment of the similarities and differences between traditional and e-sport at the European level. The European Commission recently published its [answer](#) to the citizen petition, stating that no definition of 'sport' or 'e-sport' was developed under the current European legislative framework. Additionally, despite acknowledging the cultural, societal, and economic importance of video games and e-sports across the EU, the Commission reiterated that the EU lacked the authority to enact legislation in that field.

The European Commission is expected to publish a study on "Understanding the European Video Games Society" before the summer of 2023, which is expected to provide further insights as to the institution's intentions in this matter.

While these developments do not provide any additional legislative breakthrough at this stage, it is worth noting that the topic continues to be on the agenda and taken up by several MEPs and stakeholders close to sport, in general.

The EOC EU Office is closely following developments regarding e-sports and videogames at European level and will continue informing its partners on the potential impact on sport organisations.

The European Union moves forward on its way to climate neutrality

This month has been marked by significant developments regarding the EU's legislative plan underpinning its goal to reach climate neutrality by 2050 and reduce its CO₂ emissions by 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. Several legislative files have reached the final stages before implementation, while others have been proposed or made their first steps in the legislative process. Even though none of them considers sport as a specific target sector, they will all have an impact, in one way or another, on how sport organisations in the EU operate as the general rule and opportunities outlined below will be applicable to EU economies and societies across the board.

CO₂ emissions of cars and vans, Land use and forestry

Regulations on the land use and forestry sector, and CO₂ emissions for new cars and vans were finally approved at the end of March.

Under the [Regulation strengthening the CO₂ emission performance standard for new passenger cars and vans](#), the EU intends to lower emissions from road travel, which account for the largest portion of all transportation-related emissions, notably by:

- Reducing CO₂ emissions for new cars by 55% and for new vans by 50 % from 2030 to 2034 in comparison to 2021 levels.
- Ban the placing on the market of new CO₂-emitting automobiles and vans starting from 2035.

This will have an impact on NOCs and sport organisations' car fleets, which will progressively need to be electrified or replaced by other non-CO₂ emitting solutions by 2035.

With the [Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry \(LULUCF\) Regulation](#), which covers the use of soils, trees, plants and biomass:

- Each Member State will have a legally binding national objective for 2030 that will enhance net greenhouse gas reductions.
- Every Member State must pledge to meet a total for net greenhouse gas emissions and removals from 2026 to 2029.

Both texts will now be published in the EU Official Journal before being implemented at Member States level

Renewable energy and energy efficiency
Provisional agreements were struck between the Council and the European Parliament on two texts framing the development of renewable energy ([Renewable Energy Directive](#)), and the reduction of the overall energy consumption in Europe ([Energy Efficiency Directive](#)). If finally adopted in the current form, the revised texts will aim at:

- Increasing the proportion of renewable energy in the EU's total energy consumption to 42.5% by 2030, with sector-specific targets. For the buildings sector, the target would be at least 49% renewable energy in buildings by 2030;
- Reducing EU final energy consumption by 11.7% by 2030, compared to forecasts made in 2020;
- Making the public sector more energy efficient, with a 1.9% reduction of the sector's annual final consumption and with the renovation of 3% of public buildings every year to improve their energy performance.

The provisional agreement will be submitted to the European Parliament and Council for formal adoption and publication in the EU Official Journal.

-11.7%

in 2030 at EU level, compared with the energy consumption forecasts for 2030 made in 2020.

The revised legislation will make it compulsory for the EU as a whole to reduce final energy consumption.

Source: European Commission

Energy performance of buildings

The European Parliament has adopted its position on the [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive](#), under which all new buildings should be zero emission from 2028, or 2026 for publicly-owned buildings. Additionally, non-residential and public buildings will have to achieve minimum energy performance class E by 2027 and D by 2030 (three years earlier than residential buildings). National renovation plans, including financial support measures, would accompany the transition. The draft Directive now has to undergo negotiations with the Council before being finally shaped into law.



Source: European Commission

Circular economy and greenwashing

Besides the above “Fit for 55” files, which focus mainly on climate, the EU has also unveiled its third package of proposals under the [Circular Economy Action Plan](#). Part of the package is an important proposal for a [Directive on “Green Claims”](#), in other words, “greenwashing”, which is to establish new criteria to stop companies from making misleading claims about environmental merits of their products and services. The draft Directive aims at ensuring, for instance, that climate-related claims such as “climate neutral” or “100% CO2 compensated” are reliable and correctly accounted for. Even though, not directly in the scope of the draft Directive, the new rules will be important also for sport organisations and the way they communicate about their climate and nature-related activities.



40% of claims have no supporting evidence



Half of all green labels offer weak or non-existent verification

Source: European Commission

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Press release on the CO2 emissions for new cars and vans](#)

[Press release on the land use, land change and forestry](#)

[Press release on the Energy Efficiency Directive](#)

[Press release on the Renewable Energy Directive](#)

[Press release on the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive](#)

Sport Shooting: ECHA sends lead restriction proposal to the European Commission

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has published the combined opinion of its two scientific committees - RAC (Committee for Risk Assessment) and SEAC (Committee for Socio-economic Analysis) - on the restriction of lead in shot, bullets and fishing weights on its website and forwarded it to the EU Commission.

With regard to sport shooting, the following restrictions are proposed:

- sale and use of lead gunshot: ban after a five-year transition period. As current rules of international competitions specify the use of lead ammunition for certain disciplines, ECHA presents - as an option for the decision maker - a derogation for use of lead gunshot for sports shooting by licensed individuals only under strict conditions, i.e., when releases to the environment are minimised;
- use of lead in bullets and other projectiles: use can continue if releases to the environment are minimised within a five-year transition period. This means that sports shooting ranges are equipped either with trap chambers or 'best practice' sand traps.

In principle, both RAC and SEAC were in favor of a complete ban on lead in sport shooting. However, they formulated exemptions in case the legislator does not want to enforce a complete ban.

The exact wording of the restriction proposal can be found in the document "[Final Opinion](#)" on page 1.

Next steps

With the submission of its restriction proposal to the European Commission, ECHA's scientific work is completed. The European Commission is now expected to publish its own restriction proposal in the coming months. In doing so, it is not bound by ECHA's recommendations, but usually follows them to a large extent.

When the Commission presents this legislative proposal to amend the list of restrictions (Annex XVII of the REACH Regulation), it will consult all EU countries through the REACH Committee.

The final proposal will be voted on by all EU countries in the REACH Committee. In addition, the European Parliament and the Council will consider the restriction before it can be adopted.

As far as the EOC EU Office is aware, shooting sports federations are particularly concerned about the possible licensing of individuals for disciplines using lead gunshot. This could result in these disciplines becoming inaccessible to grassroots shooting sports.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[ECHA - Final Opinion](#)

[ECHA main page of the restriction proposal \(incl. stakeholder comments\)](#)

[ECHA Lead Overview Page](#)

European Commission announces #Be Active Awards 2023 prize competition



On 16 March 2023, the European Commission has officially announced the opening of the nomination to the #BeActive Awards 2023.

In 2023, the #BeActive Awards reach its 8th edition and it continues to recognise and celebrate sport-related projects which have been outstandingly implemented to promote participation in sport and physical activity in the EU Member States and [countries associated with the Erasmus+ Programme](#).

The #BeActive Awards prize competition was created in 2015 as a central element and contributor to the promotion of the annual European Week of Sport while showcasing best-practice projects to promote participation in sport and physical activity and encourage people to be active across Europe. In 2023, the #BeActive Awards 2023 continue to reward projects and initiatives that have successfully promoted sport and physical activity across Europe, particularly in relation the HealthyLifeStyle4All initiative and the promotion of sustainable and green sport.

Depending on the category, projects should be aimed at promoting intergenerational practice of sport and physical activity, focus on educational establishments and workplaces, as well as individuals in local communities in the EU Member States and [countries associated with the Erasmus+ Programme](#). The projects will not necessarily be transnational projects nor EU-supported; yet projects that are still in the development phase and have not yet been implemented are not eligible.

In 2023, the #BeActive Awards continue to feature four categories:

- #BeActive Across Generation Award aspires to reward projects promoting the inter-generational sport, celebrating the fact that everyone can benefit from activities that improve health and well-being. Projects may include promoting activities for raising awareness, promoting adapted activities or easing access to physical activities for all generations.
- #BeActive Education Award scope pertains to demonstrating how education can encourage kids to be more active in sports and physical activity outside the typical school curriculum dedicated to those activities. Projects may focus on an active educational environment (i.e outdoor sport-related classes) and complementary sports activities (i.e afternoon clubs), among others.
- #BeActive Workplace Award celebrates exemplary activities in the workplace that encourage an active work environment for all employees. In this context, projects setting up a staff task force responsible for promoting physical activity, organising lunchtime walks, implementing sports clubs/activities throughout the day and other creative solutions to form an active working environment appear eligible.
- #BeActive Local Hero Award aspires to celebrate those individuals who work consistently to motivate others to participate in sport and physical activity in their local community.

Since 2022, applications are no longer submitted via National Coordinating Bodies or Partners of the European Week; instead those interested can directly submit their proposal via the [Fundings and Tenders Portal](#) of the European Commission before to the deadline of 24 May 2023 at 17.00h (Brussels time). The Application is composed of Part A and Part B and the latter can be of 20 pages maximum whilst must contain all requested information according to the [call document](#) and set eligibility criteria.

For the #BeActive Awards 2023, eligible applicants include public authority, organisations or individual (aged over 18 years old only) that have successfully carried out a project aiming at promoting sport and physical activity in the EU Member States or third countries affiliated with the programme (i.e. North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). Besides, applicants from countries with ongoing negotiations (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Switzerland) may participate in the call and can receive a prize if the negotiations are concluded before the award.

Per each category, successful applications who are ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd will be awarded a prize. Each of the four categories will reward one winner with EUR 10.000 and two finalists (ranked 2nd and 3rd) with EUR 2 500 each. Those successful will receive their prizes at the award ceremony whilst further information on the #BeActive Awards 2023's results and award ceremony are expected to be announced in November 2023.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Call document BeActive Awards](#)

[Submission: BeActive Across Generations Award](#)

[Submission: BeActive Education Award](#)

[Submission: BeActive Local Hero Award](#)

[Submission: BeActive Workplace Award](#)

[Examples of previous winners BeActive Awards](#)

An Erasmus + international webinar to support Ukrainian sport

On 7 March, the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine together with the National Erasmus+ Office in Ukraine organised an [online webinar "Supporting Ukrainian Sport"](#) to which the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and the European Commission contributed. More than 100 European and Ukrainian organisations participated. The main objective of this virtual meeting exchange was to help Ukrainian organisations to get closer to EU partners so, to find opportunities for cooperation and possibly apply for new calls together.

Svitlana Shytikova, representative of the National Erasmus Office Ukraine and Andriy Chesnokov, Deputy Ukrainian Minister of Youth and Sports of Ukraine for European Integration presented the current needs of their country and their willingness to strengthen the integration of Ukrainian organisations into new Erasmus+ cooperation partnerships.

Many Ukrainian organisations have already participated in Erasmus+ funded projects, speakers highlighted. In the field of sport, their participation has increased since 2014 with participation in 7 ongoing projects for the period 2021-2022. Unfortunately, the Russian aggression is confronting Ukrainian organisations with the need to redefine projects. Moreover, the Ukrainian representatives repeatedly reminded of the importance of finding new support and cooperation as they will help to prepare the future of Ukraine. Svitlana Shytikova underlined that a cross sectoral cooperation of the 3 key pillars of the Erasmus + programme (education, youth and sport) is more relevant than ever.

Georg Häusler and Floor van Houdt, respectively Director and Head of Unit Sport of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) recalled the EU priorities in the field of sport and the legal basis of it, after which Yves Le Lostecque

(Head of Unit Erasmus Mundus and Sport at the European Education and Culture Executive Agency - EACEA) explained the opportunities and conditions for Ukrainian organisations to apply for Erasmus + calls .

As a third country not associated to the Erasmus + Programme, Ukrainian organisations can only take part in projects under the sub-action "cooperation partnerships in the field of Sport" of [Action 2](#) of the Erasmus + Programme. Nevertheless, Yves Le Lostecque pointed out that this represents two thirds of the budget, i.e. 38.6 million euros for 2023 (out of 59 million euros) and that as such, most funding opportunities were reachable to them. Furthermore, even though Ukrainian organisations cannot be coordinators of a project, they can be partners if they bring an added value to the project and therefore work actively during the application stage.

Facilitated by EACEA staff (Luciano di Fonzo, Deputy Head of the Erasmus Mundus and Sport Unit, Vincenzina Vinci and Izabela Pelczynska), the webinar also provided a practical session on the application process for funding for cooperation partnerships with third countries not associated to the Erasmus+ programme.

Although the call for applications for Erasmus + Sport projects closed on 23 March, there will be other chances to submit new innovative projects to support Ukrainian sport.

Following this, online match-making sessions allowed EU-based and Ukrainian organisations to meet and share their experience and to open their horizons for collaboration. A [contact file](#) inclusive of all participants details is available online.

Nataliia Radchuk from the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine concluded the webinar by expressing her hope concerning the extension of a wider cooperation between sport organisations, NOCs, Ministries and other institutional organisations and Yves Le Lostecque concluded that cooperation with Ukrainian sport organisations should be considered as something to be done as a priority.

The [webinar recording](#) is available online.

EOC EU Office hosts the introductory meeting of the in-house training for writing project proposals

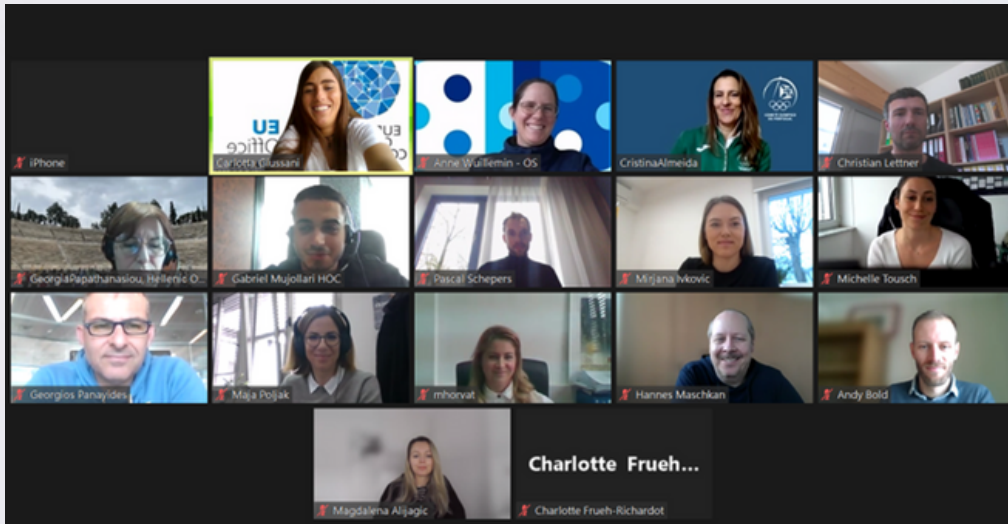
On 10 March 2023, the EOC EU Office with the support of Olympic Solidarity organised the "introductory meeting" for the in-house training for writing project proposals.

The in-house training for writing project proposals is designed to respond to the demands among European NOCs to further boost cooperation among NOCs whilst empowering its staff capacity to develop, write and submit a project application to acquire EU funding. Accordingly, the in-house training is designed with two main goals:

- to create capacity-building among European NOCs to develop, write and submit successfully project applications in the Erasmus+ Programme and/or the Pilot Project and Preparatory Actions in Sport.

- to lay the foundation for the establishment of an informed network of "main contact points for EU funding-related matters" operating in various European NOCs and ultimately boost cooperation and exchanges, in future.

In this regard, the "introductory meeting" defined the first step of the in-house training for writing project proposals by providing representatives from selected NOCs with key information regarding the upcoming in-house training for writing project proposals foreseen to be held at the EOC EU Office between the 24th and 26th of April 2023.



The 1st cohort of the in-house training is composed of 14 participants representing 11 European NOCs (Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Serbia). Notably, the 1st cohort is foreseen to further lay the foundation for an informed network within European NOCs of qualified experts in the realm of EU funding working together to boost knowledge exchanges and cooperation among European NOCs in this field.

In this regard, the “introductory meeting” was divided into separate but complementary sessions to provide attendees with an overview of the scope and general expectations of the training, insights on the pedagogical content and training’s timeframe, as well as the logistics and financial procedures whilst receiving ad-hoc “preparatory resources” and clarifications to ensure a shared understanding and common knowledge among attendees of the in-house for writing project proposal.

RINGS project: participants of the Belgian Olympic Academy use Stakeholders Mapping Tool

On 10 March, Eva Rebmann, Acting Deputy Director of the EOC EU Office and manager of the RINGS project, facilitated a workshop on stakeholders’ management for sport organisations, alongside Matthias van Baelen, Head of External Affairs, Press and Corporate Communication at the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee (BOIC) and partner of the RINGS project.

This workshop took place in the framework of the 1st session of the Belgian Olympic Academy, a post-graduate education programme for sports managers, which took place at the ADEPS Sport Centre in Spa and focused on strategic management of sport organisations.

This session’s topic was a perfect opportunity for a practical session on stakeholders management, during which participants had the opportunity to learn about – and test – the RINGS Stakeholders Mapping Tool.

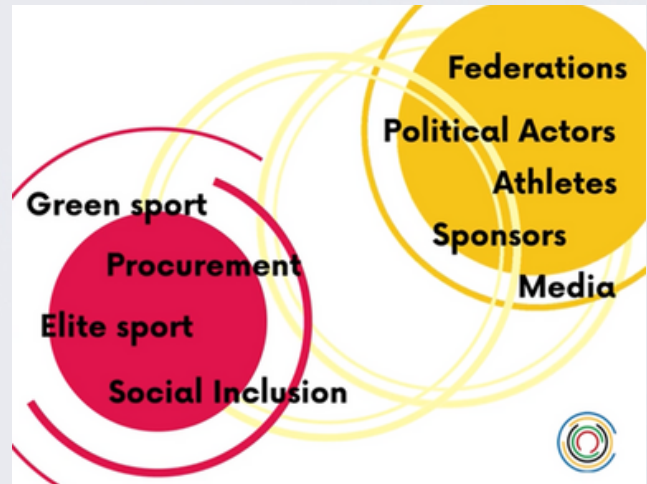
After a presentation of the EOC EU Office and the RINGS project, participants were given a concrete case to work on in groups on a situation that any sport organisation could face: “Your organisation is preparing a bid to host a sport event. List all stakeholders that you will need to deal with, rate their power, interest, alignment, and their ‘influenceability’, and define action for all of them”. They were guided by Eva Rebmann and Matthias van Baelen to assess the most relevant stakeholders and then discuss some first ideas of action with all mapped actors.



Source: Sport Management UC Louvain

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The [RINGS Stakeholders Tool](#) provides a free and easy-to-use tool for all sport organisations to visualise their ecosystem and manage the identified stakeholders. Other tools developed during the RINGS project can be accessed on the EOC EU Office [Sport Governance Platform](#).



Source: EOC EU Office Sport Governance Platform

About the RINGS Project

The RINGS project officially came to an end in December 2022. The main purpose of the RINGS project was to develop and modernise the strategic management of National Olympic Committees (NOCs) in Europe. Co-funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Sport Programme, the RINGS project gathers an important consortium with 13 organisations including 11 NOCs (Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Slovakia and Turkey), the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, and the EOC EU Office as project leader.



International Women's Day serves as opportunity to discuss gender-based violence in sports

EPAS Council of Europe Roundtable

On the occasion of International Women's Day on 8 March, the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) of the Council of Europe hosted a breakfast roundtable focusing on combating gender-based violence in sports. The event focused on prevention while addressing the underlying causes of gender-based violence in sports.

- The Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention

The Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was presented to kick off the gathering. Carolina Lasen Diaz (Head of the Violence against Women Division, Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity, Council of Europe) described this Convention as being "victim-centred," i.e., aiming to protect victims. Because the phenomenon is complicated, she continued, a variety of actors must be considered inside the Convention for it to function effectively. She then went on to offer a list of violences that specifically impact women, including some that also affect women who participate in sports (sexual, mental, physical). The speaker then emphasised how other forms of violence, such as sexist insults or sexist media portrayals of female athletes, also negatively impact women in sport.

Afterwards, a panel discussion was conducted to examine prevention strategies and ways to address the underlying causes of gender-based violence in sports. The need for prevention was highlighted, as many sports continue to be reactive rather than proactive in their approach to addressing gender-based violence.

- Preventing gender-based violence in sport and calling out harassment

Mhairi Carmen Maclennan (Co-founder and General Manager, Kyniska Advocacy) noted that significant reforms were required to advance the situation, including advocating for the creation of an independent, regulatory authority for duty of care and protection in sport. A national coaches licensing registration, mandatory reporting of sexual abuse and misconduct, ringfenced financing from funders for safeguarding and welfare, and lifelong bans for coaches found guilty of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse were all mentioned as feasible remedies.

Lombe Mwambwa (Research Director, Global Observatory for Gender Equality in Sport) underlined the fact that sports organisations bear a collective responsibility to care for all activities related to sport. In order to build a safe and inclusive environment, it is essential to foster a sense of shared accountability for resolving gender-based violence, she sustained.

- Improving women's position in sport

The panel discussion that followed featured testimonies from academics, athletes, and women in leadership positions in sport about their encounters with gender inequality and gender-based violence in sport as well as suggestions for improving women's status in sport.

Susana Monserrat (Sport Management and Sociology of Sport Group, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences) notably emphasised the value of including lessons on gender equality in sports management programs, as future sports managers must be aware of the significance of this subject. She also made note of the gender disparity in high management roles, where there were relatively few women in these positions.

She made a point of highlighting the bias against female leaders and stated that one of the most pressing issues to be resolved to improve gender equality in sport is the lack of women in sports leadership roles. The discussion notably echoed the EOC EU Office's EU-funded [GAMES Project](#) (Guidance to Achieve More Equal Leadership in Sport), which aims to advance gender equality in the decision-making roles of sports organisations by paving the way for more women to hold leadership roles in sports governance and giving NOCs the opportunity to build capacity in gender equality.



IOC x UN Women

On 10 March, UN Women and the IOC in collaboration with the Permanent Representation of Monaco to the UN organised an [event](#) on strengthening the role of sport in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. The event welcomed sports organisations representatives, athletes and experts who shared their experience and knowledge on gender-based violence against women in sport.

- Launch of the 'Gender Equality Through Sport Bridging Project'

After the success of the One Win Leads to Another (OWLA) programme, the IOC and the UN Women have launched the Gender Equality Through Sport Bridging Project, a new joint initiative that will use sport as a tool to advance gender equality and prevent gender-based violence.

The project was revealed at the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which took place at the UN headquarters in New York. The CSW brought 300 leaders from around the world together to discuss innovative programme models and ways to advocate gender equality.

Lydia Nsekera, (Chair of the Gender Equality and Diversity Commission, IOC and President, NOC Burundi) introduced the Gender Equality Through Sport Bridging Project. She explained that the project aimed to support sport and community development organisations, as well as policymakers, across three continents, to address the important issues of gender equality and gender-based violence through sport-based programmes. The Gender Equality Through Sport Bridging Project builds on the IOC's longstanding partnership with UN Women, from which the One Win Leads to Another (OWLA) programme was created. This flagship programme, which uses sport as a tool to prevent violence against girls and women in Brazil and Argentina, was established as a legacy programme from the Olympic Games Rio 2016 and was replicated in Argentina as a legacy of the Youth Olympic Games Buenos Aires 2018. As part of the Gender Equality Through Sport Bridging Project, the IOC and UN Women will launch a year-long transfer-of-knowledge programme, ensuring the exchange of information and insights generated through OWLA in Latin America with South-East Asia and the Pacific.

The project will be guided by the IOC's Olympism³⁶⁵ strategy, which has been expressly designed to strengthen the role of sport as an important enabler for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Online harassment of female athletes and journalists and how to address it

The event also counted with the testimonies of current and former female athletes, who shared their experiences with gender-based violence and online harassment, and provided an opportunity to encourage governments, UN organisations, sport for development and peace organisations, and all those working within the sports movement to sign up to the [Sports for Generation Equality Framework](#) (launched in 2020).

Sarah Hendrick, UN Women Director of Policy of the Programme and Intergovernmental Division, opened the first panel discussion by introducing the [Sports for Generation Equality Framework](#): Network for powerful institutions – advocacy and collection of good practices. She also stressed how sport reflected society and was still affected by gender inequality, and criticized sexist media and screen portrayals, the lack of women in sports leadership positions, and the lack of targeted funding for women's sports.

Representatives of sports organisations also had the chance to discuss the best procedures used by their group to protect athletes from cyberbullying. Notably, Dr Stuart Miller (Executive Director, Science & Technical Department, International Tennis Federation) explained that as the governing body of tennis, they provide coverage for athletes over the course of their careers, during which time they may have various issues. The ITF takes proactive action by employing AI to continuously monitor each professional player's social media accounts and detect abuse. He also emphasised the importance of education and how it would assist athletes in using social media tools to reduce abuse. He argued that by developing this service for athletes, they as a sport accept responsibility and take action.

EU Work Plan for Sport: DOSB hosts Peer Learning Activity on digitalization in coaches' education

On 21-22 March, sport education managers from 13 European countries met in at the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) in Frankfurt to exchange ideas on the possibilities of digitalisation in coaches' education. Together, they reflected on the potential of digitalisation in coaches' education within the framework of a so-called Peer Learning Activity (PLA). The conference promoted mutual learning and networking among the partner countries.

The conference was designed as a blended conference in accordance with the blended learning format used in coach education. This means that the participants had already been working together on an online learning campus since January. On the learning campus, the experts uploaded videos in which they presented digital projects from trainer education in their country and discussed the different systems and concepts of coach education in blog posts. Afterwards, a synchronous online meeting took place on 28 February, in which the developments on the learning campus were jointly reflected and good examples were discussed. The two-day face-to-face event in Frankfurt was the highlight of the Blended Conference.

Through the preliminary online phases of a blended learning conference, a lot of knowledge has been already exchanged and information gathered in advance. This means that the focus during the face-to-face meeting can be much more on testing and networking with each other. On the first day of the Peer Learning Activity, the participants had the opportunity to try out 360° cameras and drones and test them for use in coach education. On the second day, several rounds of workshops took place in which more specific questions were discussed in small groups, such as conceptual framework conditions, obstacles and pitfalls in the use of new technologies or the use of VR glasses.





Dr. Friederike Zedler, Head of international sport matters at the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community said: "Peer learning activities are a wonderful format where experts from across the EU exchange practical ideas on specific issues and build valuable networks. We share the same challenges in the EU and yet we all have different solutions to them. Learning from and being inspired by each other in the constructive atmosphere we experienced in Frankfurt is European cooperation at its best."

Wiebke Fabinski, Deputy Head of Education at the DOSB, drew a very positive conclusion: "The exchange among the partner countries was extremely beneficial. We can see that we are facing similar challenges in the digitalisation of coach education in all countries. The network that was built up through this peer learning activity is therefore very valuable in order to continue learning from each other and exchanging ideas in this dynamic field in the future".

Peter Fischer, Policy Officer at the European Commission said: "I congratulate the hosts for a successful event: the level of discussions was high and the atmosphere very pleasant. The useful multi-phase preparation of the meeting on the online education platform was in itself an example of how digital education can be used in sport. I hope that the new [Erasmus+ mobility action in the field of sport](#) will lead to further strengthening the European exchange of coaches, especially in grassroots sport".

The Peer Learning Activity forms part of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024 of the European Ministers of Sport. It was funded by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI) and the European Commission. The DOSB was responsible for the planning and implementation of the conference. The conference is still running digitally until the end of May at the joint learning campus.



Sport organisations, Member States and European Commission gather for the 8th Expert Group on Green Sport

On 24 March, the 8th Meeting of the European Commission Expert Group on Green Sport took place in Brussels and online. The main aim of the meeting, which brought together Member States and sport organisations' experts, was to review the structure of the forthcoming Expert Group Recommendations on a Framework for Sustainable Sport in Europe and agree on the next steps in the content development.

During the review session, participants had an exchange on the state of play of the document and next steps to finalise it. Targeting both policy makers and the sport sector, the document will provide recommendations and good practices on how to make sport activities, including construction and maintenance of sport infrastructure, organisation of sport events, or communications and education, "greener". The EOC EU Office has been actively contributing to the drafting process since the beginning.

The second part of the meeting was dedicated to the sharing of good practices and information about interesting initiatives and projects covering various aspects of environmental sustainability in and through sport:

- The [ASAP Erasmus+ project](#) (presented by Jana Janotova, Czech Olympic Committee and EOC EU Office) which gathered beginner NOCs in the field of sustainability (mentees) with experienced NOCs (mentors). Together with their mentors, the mentees developed fully-fledged sustainability strategies for their respective organisations, alongside a number of guidance document (Roadmap, Toolbox) to support any sport organisation in creating their own sustainability strategy.
- [We Play Green](#), which aim is to mobilise the football family to influence change towards sustainability in sport and beyond.

[Zukunft Fahrrad](#), which advocates for the promotion of cycling as a sustainable mode of transport but also as a tool for education and promotion of physical activity.

The presentation echoed the recent European Parliament's Resolution on Developing an EU Cycling Strategy, in which the EP asks the European Commission to develop a dedicated European cycling strategy aimed at utilising cycling as a key tool to achieve long-term climate goals.

The discussions reflected the objectives of the EU-financed "[OCEAN](#)" project coordinated by the EOC EU Office, which aims to equip European NOCs with the tools necessary to calculate their carbon footprint and provide them with guidance on how to create carbon reduction action plans.

Next steps

Next meeting of the Expert Group will take place on 6-7 June and the Framework for Sustainable Sport in Europe will be published in June 2023.



European Commission's 7th Expert Group meeting on Covid-19 Sport recovery addresses impacts of pandemic on sport and challenges ahead

On 23 March, the European Commission hosted the 7th meeting of the Expert Group on Covid-19 Sport recovery. The meeting gathered representatives of Member States and sports organisations who discussed the multifaceted long-term impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on sport.

Floor Van Houdt, Head of the Sport Unit of the European Commission, introduced the meeting with a few words on the outcomes of the first subgroup meeting dedicated to the Expert Group's recommendations.

She also announced that the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) would launch a study on athletes' rights by May 2023, after having briefly presented the report '[Tackling the burden of insufficient physical activity in Europe](#)' published on 17 February 2023. This report was co-produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and World Health Organisation (WHO), and co-funded by the European Commission.

It showcases interesting data on insufficient physical activity in Europe. Notably, it reveals that only 'four in ten adults in the EU exercise regularly'.

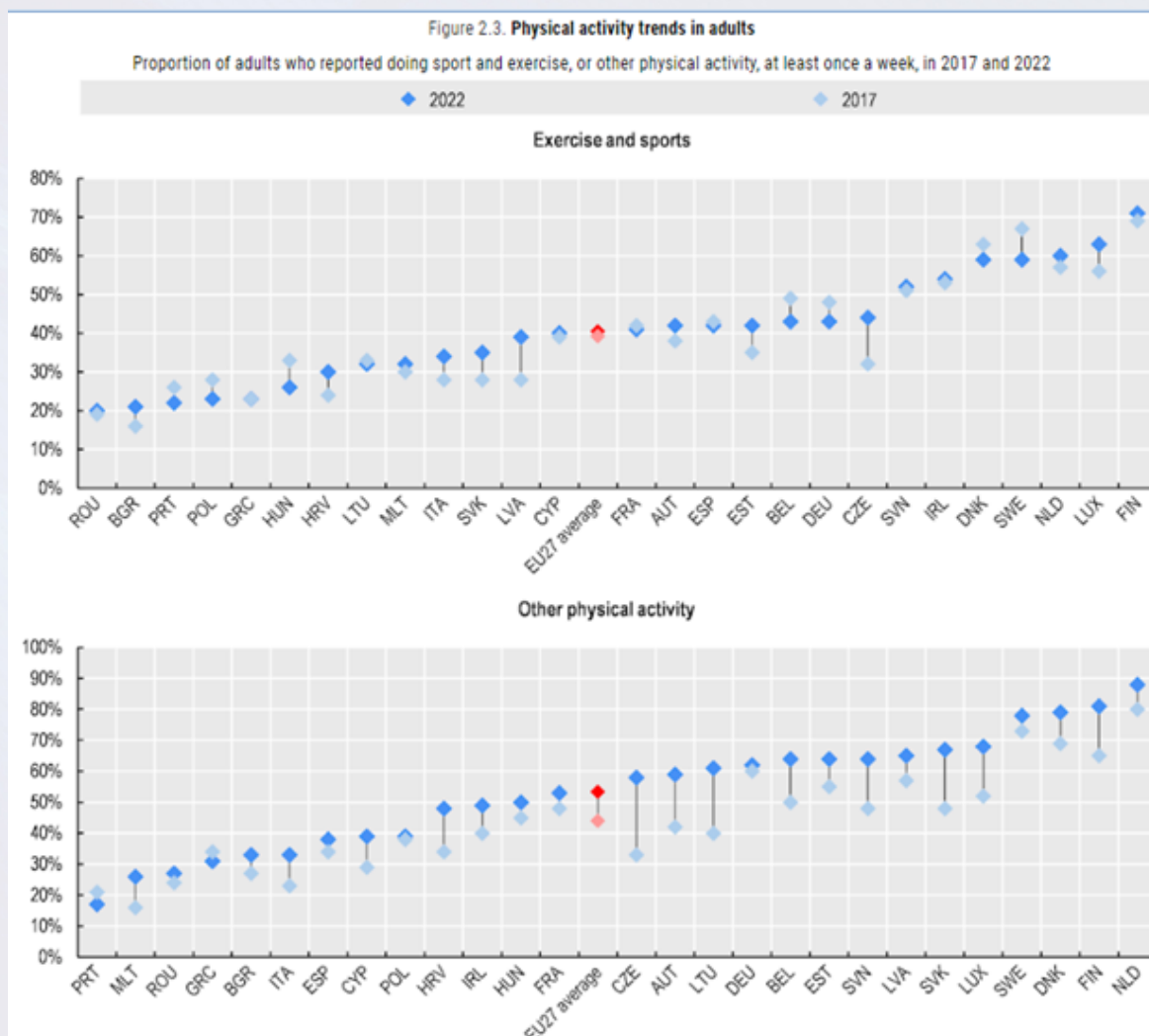
The [variation across countries](#) is considerable, with on average, Nordic countries such as Finland having almost two-thirds of adult doing sport or exercise weekly, whereas countries such as Romania and Bulgaria count only 20% of adults doing sport or exercising sport weekly.

To finish with, Floor Van Houdt presented some of the major upcoming events currently on the Sport Unit's calendar. Among them:

- 30 May 2023: Sport and Innovation Summit (Brussels, Belgium)
- 14 November 2023: Conference on 'Gender Equality in Sport' organised by the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European (Madrid, Spain)
- 22 November 2023: #BeActive Awards Ceremony (Brussels, Belgium)

The introduction was followed by two presentations on the impact of Covid-19 on sport. First, [ENGSO](#) President Stefan Bergh highlighted the Covid-19 pandemic's various effects on sport in different countries and underlined that not all nations received the same amount of national financial aid to assist in their recovery. Then, Geoff Carroll, Director of Skills Development at the [European Observatoire on Sport and Employment \(EOSE\)](#), presented the impact of Covid on volunteering and grassroots sport identified through the Erasmus+ Sport project [V4V project](#).

The two presentations led to an open discussion on how the pandemic affected sports organisations in each country represented during the meeting, and what practices or policies were put in place to support the sport sector.



During the afternoon session, Michael Mathys, Head of the CEO Office & Special Projects, and Luke Skipper, Director of Communications and Public Affairs at [Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile \(FIA\)](#), presented the 'Purpose-driven strategy' developed by FIA to face the pandemic, as well as the main takeaways FIA learned for future crisis.

To finish with, the main challenges for the year ahead (e.g., energy crisis, war in Ukraine) and application of best practices learned during the pandemic were discussed by the attendees before to conclude the meeting.

Next steps

The subgroup will meet a second time in April 2023 to further discuss the Expert Group's recommendations that are currently being drafted.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[OECD and WHO study: Tackling the burden of insufficient physical activity in Europe](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

18 - 20 April 2023

OCEAN Module 2 (online)

24 - 26 April 2023

In-house Training for Writing Project Proposals (EOC EU Office, Brussels)

01 - 03 May 2023

EU Sport Forum (Stockholm, Sweden)

11 - 13 May 2023

EOC Seminar (Paris, France)



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