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Council Expert Group on HEPA (XG HEPA)

The second meeting of the Expert Group on health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) took place in Budapest on 9 and 10 February 2015. For the EOC EU Office, being an observer in all expert groups, it was the first opportunity to take part in the discussions regarding this topic.

During the meeting the observers were given the opportunity to present themselves and their contributions, before the discussions focused on the two deliverables of this group: (1) Recommendations to encourage physical education in schools, including motor skills in early childhood, and to create valuable interactions with the sport sector, local authorities and the private sector, and (2) Coordination of the implementation of the Council recommendations on HEPA.

However, the Member State experts in this particular group decided to only allow observers for the first part of the meeting and to hold their subsequent discussions of the second deliverable *in camera*.

Regarding the first deliverable, the European Commission insisted that the deliverable include very concrete and practical recommendations. The Portuguese lead expert Paulo Rocha had sent a questionnaire to Member States to clarify which points should be included in recommendations on Physical Education (PE). This questionnaire

was subdivided into sections on PE itself (curricula, PE taught time, pupil assessment, teacher specialisation, extra-curricular activities), and on the interaction with the sports sector, local authorities and the private sector. The Member States generally agreed with the proposals made. Some experts pointed out that the recommendations should also include references to early childhood development (a priority under the upcoming Presidency of Luxembourg) and the role of parents in the physical activity of children.

Both the EOC EU Office and ENGSO gave their input to the topic before the meeting and contributed to the discussion by pointing out the need for PE classes to attract children to and motivate them for sports activities and to subsequently build bridges with sports clubs, so that continued physical activity outside of school could be ensured. It furthermore insisted on close, local collaborations between sports clubs and schools.

The experts aim to finalise the part of the deliverable on Physical Education on the interaction with the sports sector before the end of the Latvian Council Presidency, before finalising it under the Presidency of Luxembourg. The next meeting of the XG HEPA will take place on 4 and 5 June 2015.

Council Expert Group on Human Resource Management (XG HR)

The EOC EU Office took part as an observer in the second meeting of the XG HR in Riga

on 17 February 2015. The main aim of the meeting was to discuss the first two

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deliverables of the XG: (1) Recommendations to encourage volunteering in sport, and (2) Practical guidance on compliance of national qualifications with international qualifications standards of international federations.

While national experts already agreed on the structure of the first deliverable, which will include a section on different policy areas as well as a list of best practices, and exchanged information on the regulatory and policy framework in their respective countries, the topic of qualifications proved to be rather complicated to be framed. In general terms, however, it was agreed that the deliverable should be very practical and give a clear guidance to Members States on how the qualification standards and systems (coaching levels) developed by European and international federations could be mapped to their national systems.

In the discussion on the promotion of volunteering, the EOC EU Office made a case for the reduction of the administrative burden, for the societal recognition of

volunteering and of the skills gained through volunteering as well as for the preservation of legal and other incentives such as tax breaks for both individual volunteers and sport organisations, in order to ensure the sustainability of the financing of grassroots sports. The issue of having volunteering accepted as a contribution in-kind in the EU Programmes was also raised.

On the latter deliverable, the EOC EU Office stressed the importance of an individualised approach as the system of coaches and trainers' qualifications and the implication of NOCs in these systems differs significantly from Member State to Member State.

The next meeting of the XG HR will take place at the end of June 2015 and along with the above mentioned topics, participants will discuss the issue of employability. They will also gain knowledge from the Amsterdam University of Applied Science on the progress of its Study on the Minimum quality requirements for Dual Careers, commissioned by the European Commission.

The role of sport for the Development of the Human Capital

On 16 February 2015 the Latvian Presidency of the EU hosted a conference on one of its priority topics in the field of sport and physical activity i.e. the role of sport for the Development of the Human Capital.

The topics discussed in the opening panels and in the subsequent workshops were diverse and ranged from the societal role of sport in terms of its impact on personal and societal development to more concrete issues such as the role of cities in the promotion of physical activity or the use of sport for integration and for the development of competences for low educated youth. A common denominator of all of them was the focus on grassroots

sports. Guy Taylor of Sport England, for example, spoke about the role of qualified staff and about the necessity for grassroots sport organisations to make full use of the opportunities presented by the progressive professionalisation of the sector while maintaining the structures based on volunteering, to, among other things, guarantee a "great participant experience".

In its closing remarks, the Deputy Director General of the European Commission's DG Education and Culture, Jens Nymand-Christensen, addressed the contradiction between sport being undervalued underestimated in terms of its potential and role in society. Referring to one of the main

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priorities of the European Commission i.e. the fight against youth unemployment, Mr. Nyman-Christensen highlighted that "sport and physical activity is not the answer to all problems, but we cannot ignore the possibilities which it brings for the

development of skills". In conclusion, he pledged to the "mainstreaming" of sport within the Commission structures, especially in terms of recognising its role in the fight against youth unemployment.

Funding programmes, studies and projects

Info Day on Erasmus+ Sports in Brussels

On 11 February 2015, the European Commission and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) organised the second Info Day of Erasmus+ Sports in Brussels. As in its first edition in the spring of 2014, the second Info Day was mainly organised for potential applicants with the aim of discussing the funding opportunities and explaining the application procedure. The event was also available through online live-stream and the videos will be uploaded on the Agency's website in the near future.

The European Commission devoted the first half of the day in presenting the policy context of the sport chapter, before discussing the first Programme year and comments from the first round of applications. EACEA admitted a need for more experts to assess the applications and asked for expressions of interest. This was presented as one aspect delaying the decisions of projects in 2014. For the 2015 call for proposals (deadline 14 May 2015), the Agency is aiming to decide by October and sign the grant agreements with successful applicants in November / December.

In the afternoon, workshops were organised on financial aspects, on the online

submission of applications and on other EU funding opportunities.

In the latter, representatives of EACEA presented funding opportunities under other chapters of the Erasmus+ Programme (staff and youth mobility, vocational training and Large European Voluntary Service Events). Additionally, Anthony Lockett from DG REGIO of the European Commission spoke about the opportunities provided by the Structural Funds. He insisted that opportunities were relatively limited and that sports projects would have to fit with the overall aims of the Funds. In this regard, he considered the objective of social inclusion as a possible topic from which sports projects could receive support.

The session on the online submission of applications offered a run-through of the different application steps and especially highlighted the importance of using the existing document templates and of providing consistent information across the different parts.

Regarding financial aspects, more information was provided on eligible expenditure and income. A longer discussion took place on the acceptance of volunteering as a source of own contribution. It was stressed that volunteer time can never be

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eligible as a cost, but might potentially be accepted as own contribution in future calls. Considering the important role of volunteers in sports, the EOC EU Office considers the acceptance of volunteer time as a crucial point to increase the participation of grassroots sports to the Programme.

The Info Day was closed by a session presenting three successful project applicants.

The EOC EU Office used the opportunity of the Info Day to confront both the European Commission and EACEA of their lack of involvement of organisations from the sports movement in the 2014 calls and received several reactions to its questions. An

overview of the points raised can be found in the EOC EU Office's proposals for the adaptation of the funding criteria in order to ensure a higher participation of grassroots sports.

Further information:

More information about the Erasmus+ Sport Info Day is available on the [website of the Executive Agency EACEA](#) – additionally to the presentations the videos from the web stream should be added soon.

More information on the call for expressions of interest for the database of experts assessing applications of the Erasmus+ Sports can be found [here](#).

[EOC EU Office Recommendations for future calls for proposals](#)

Internal and visits

1st meeting of the EOC EU Commission in Tallinn

On 2 March 2015, the first meeting of the EOC EU Commission 2014-2017 took place in Tallinn, Estonia. The meeting was hosted by Neinar Seli, President of the Estonian NOC and Chair of the EOC EU Commission. Attending were Niels Nygaard, representative of the EOC Executive Committee, Juri Tamm (Head of President's Office in the Ukrainian NOC), Olga Piperidou (General Director of the NOC from Cyprus), Jean-Michel Brun (Secretary General of the French NOC), Rusudan Aptsiauri (Head of International Relations of the NOC of Georgia), Achilleas Mavromatis (NOC Board Member in Greece), Peeter Lusmägi (Head of Sport for all in the Estonian NOC) and Ott Kiivilas (Chairman of the Estonian Athletes' Commission).



The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the recent developments of the European sports policy and their potential impact on sport. Representatives of the EOC EU Office, Folker Hellmund, Director, and Florence Lefebvre-Rangeon, Policy Officer, provided an update on policy fields such as data protection, good governance, EU funding, state aid, visa policy, match-fixing, etc.

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Over the course of the presentation on EU Funding, participants discussed ways to increase participation of organised sport in Erasmus+ Sports and other EU funding Programmes. In this regard, the recent assessment made by the EOC EU Office on Erasmus+ Sports was very much appreciated.

Participants also expressed their interest to contribute to topics such as visa policy, which are relevant for both EU and non EU members. Regarding EU legislative activities, the discussion focused mainly on data protection and expectations were raised that the European institutions will allow sports organisations to fight effectively against doping and match-fixing.

The pledge of Commissioner Navracsics to be the ambassador for sport within the

European Commission was highly welcomed. In that perspective, participants expressed the hope that the impact of EU policies on sport would be better taken into account.

In the end, all participants concurred on the importance of discussing EU policies and their potential consequences for sport on a regular basis. The active contribution of all participants demonstrates a high commitment to European policies and establishes a good basis for future discussions. Steps for further activities, such as meetings in Brussels, have been discussed and will be implemented in the coming months.

All participants express their thanks to Neinar Seli and his team for the great hospitality and organisation of the event.

The EOC EU Office gathers partners and NOCs to exchange Erasmus+ project ideas

On 12 February 2015, the EOC EU Office organised a networking event for its partners and NOCs to exchange on the Erasmus+ Sports Programme and to share project ideas. Following the Sport Info Day organised by the European Commission and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), the networking event provided a platform to discuss the outcomes of the Sport Info Day and to clarify several aspects (a separate report on the Sport Info Day will follow).

In providing more practical guidance to the participants, both ENGSO and the EOC EU Office presented their projects which were selected by the European Commission for the 2014 call. Heidi Pekkola, Manager of



ENGSO's SCORE ("Strengthening Coaching with the Objective to Raise Equality") project, and Matthias Van Baelen, Manager of the EOC EU Office's SIGGS ("Support the Implementation of Good Governance in Sport") project, explained their methodology and gave practical recommendations to potential applicants.

The participants were then given the opportunity to present their project ideas,

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and to spark interest and gather comments from other NOCs and sports federations. The EOC EU Office remains at the disposal of their partner organisations and NOCs who

are seeking advice on project proposals or partner.

Kick off of ENGSO SCORE project in Stockholm



The SCORE ("Strengthening Coaching with the Objective to Raise Equality") Project promoting equal opportunities,

namely gender equality in coaching, held its kick-off meeting in Stockholm on 16-17 February. The project led by ENGSO, is supported by the Erasmus+ Sports Programme and will run for two years. The project aims to promote equal opportunities in sport coaching and focuses on increasing the number of employed and volunteer female coaches. Furthermore, the aim is to enhance knowledge on gender equality in coach education.

A toolkit with tools targeted both at coaches and sport organisations will be developed during the course of the project. Another element of the project is an education for mentors, which will be developed and executed during the project. The toolkit and the education for mentors were the main topics on the agenda of the kick-off meeting.

Representatives from all 13 partner organisations, including coaching associations, national sport confederations and Olympic Committees, were present in Stockholm and actively contributed to the development of the toolkit and the education for mentors.



Picture taken by Andrej Pisal

Further information:
[ENGSO website article](#)

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Dates in March 2015

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| 5 | Expert Group Good Governance, Brussels |
| 9 | Hearing on "Sport and Values" of the Economic and Social Committee |
| 20 | MESGO (Master of European Sport Governance) meeting with EOC EU Office |
| 24 | Expert Group Match-Fixing, Brussels |

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