

# MONTHLY REPORT

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December 2023



EUROPEAN  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEES



**EU**  
Office



### BEST OF MEETING YOU IN 2023



#### OCEAN



#### In-house Training



#### EOC Seminar



#### Annual Partner Meeting



#### GAMES



#### Special Competence Seminar



### Season's greetings from the EOC EU Office!



## SHARE 2.0 initiative



### What is it?

SHARE 2.0 will structure and strengthen collaboration and knowledge exchange on key subjects in the field of sport:



### Who can participate?

- public authorities
- grassroots sports organisations
- federations
- policy experts
- practitioners interested in developing sport at local, regional, national, or European level



### When?

- December 2023 - January 2024 : call for interest to join communities
- February 2024 - December 2025 : workshops and yearly conference

[➔ More information here](#)

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### EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

The European institutions in Brussels are not quite ready to get into the Christmas spirit. The European Union has been busy dealing with the crisis caused by the Russian attack on Ukraine, the attacks in Israel and the armed conflict in the Gaza Strip. The new Belgian Council Presidency will not be an easy task, as the €50 billion aid pledge to Ukraine must be implemented in January, despite the Hungarian veto, and possibly outside of the EU budget.

The International Olympic Committee's decision to admit neutral athletes from Russia and Belarus to the Olympic Games in Paris, subject to a number of criteria, has not caused a tremor, at least in Brussels' political arenas. No new arguments have been exchanged in recent weeks; ultimately, the IOC has made a political decision and considered the fact that a clear majority of international sports federations and NOCs have spoken out in favour of the conditional admission of Russian and Belarusian athletes. Critics claim the fact that the strict admission criteria cannot be properly checked and that neutral athletes can also be misused for propaganda purposes. This remains to be seen; however the fact is that the number of neutral athletes will ultimately only represent a small group.

The upcoming decision of the European Court of Justice in the legal dispute between UEFA and the European Super League (ESL) on 21 December keep sports politicians, lawyers and association representatives busy. One of the most exciting questions that the court will address is the concretisation of Art. 165 TFEU. It will be interesting to assess whether the judges will follow Advocate General Rantos and see it as a constitutional anchoring of the European sports model. On this point, the opinions of Advocates General Rantos and Szpunar appear to be diametrically opposed.

Another question concerns the sanctioning possibilities of sports federations against competing event organisers. In this specific case, was it compatible with European competition law for UEFA to sanction clubs and players involved in the ESL? There is some evidence to suggest that the ECJ is setting limits to UEFA's sanctioning options, at least as far as the threatened exclusion of players is concerned.

The proceedings that UEFA is conducting against the Royal Antwerp football club are also significant. The ECJ will decide whether the "home-grown players rule", which has been in force since 2008/2009, violates the EU's free movement of labour. In applying the Meca-Medina test, the CJEU could come to the conclusion that the rule is not suitable for furthering the legitimate aim of training youth players in clubs. But let's wait what the ECJ will tell us on 21 December.

The team at the EOC EU Office wishes all of our partners and readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

With kind regards,

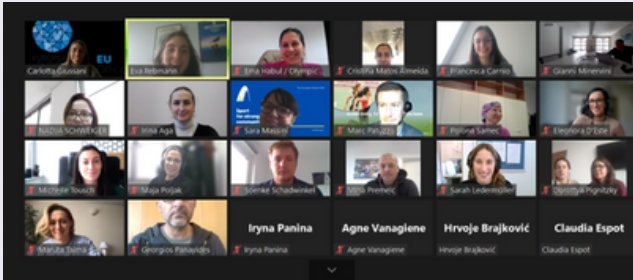


Folker Hellmund  
Director EOC EU Office



### EU SPORT POLICY AND FUNDING NEWS

## EOC EU Office organises webinar on the Erasmus+ Programme 2024



### Webinar on the Erasmus+ Programme 2024

On 6 December, the EOC EU Office organized its annual webinar dedicated to the Erasmus+ 2024 Programme, as part of its series dedicated to the topic of EU Funding. The webinar aimed to provide valuable and up-to-date information on the Erasmus+ Programme and its Calls for 2024. The webinar was attended by around 50 attendees from 26 National Olympic Committees and 8 sport federations. Eva Rebmann, Deputy Director of the EOC EU Office, welcomed participants and reminded participants about the anticipation of the Erasmus+ deadlines for applications and invited them to start working on their project proposals to obtain financial support through the Erasmus+ Programme. Francesca Carnio, Funding Officer at the EOC EU Office, then provided an overview of the structure of the Programme, horizontal priorities, eligibility criteria and overall annual budget dedicated to sport. The second session of the webinar was dedicated to the key elements of the specific sport actions, with the support of two external speakers:

- Violeta Birzniece, from the European Commission, presented the Mobility of Staff in the field of Sport action, which was first launched last year, and provided the participants with valuable insights on the priorities, objectives and type of activities supported by this action.
- Carlotta Giussani, from the EOC EU Office, provided an overview of the requirements, expectations and relevant examples for the Partnerships for Cooperation (both Cooperation Partnerships and Small-scale

partnerships and for the Not-for-profit European Sport Events, highlighting the main differences among the different types of projects.

- Marc Patuzzo, from the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, presented the main characteristics and novelties of the Capacity Building in the field of Sport action for 2024, particularly the expansion of the action to the Neighbourhood East (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan), and invited participants to pay special attention to the call requirements, as very often proposals are considered ineligible because they are missing very simple requirements.

After this session, the EOC EU Office provided further guidance on how to complete the technical and budgetary forms for Erasmus+ projects, as well as about the submission procedure and key functionalities both for Key Action 1 and 2. A series of practical tips to overcome the main challenges related to the Erasmus+ projects were also shared with all attendees. The webinar was also an opportunity for partners and NOCs to present their own project ideas and identify suitable partners for the upcoming Erasmus+ Programme. The NOCs from Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the EOC EU Office, presented their ideas and invited participants to contact them should they be interested in being partners in those projects. The EOC EU Office warmly thanked the external speakers for their insightful presentations and invited partners and European NOCs interested to apply for the 2024 Erasmus+ Programme to reach out to the EOC EU Office to receive support, guidance and knowledge if needed.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

[Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2024](#)

[Erasmus+ Info Day 2024](#)

### Expert Group Green Sport: EU Member States and sport movement's recommendations for a more environmentally friendly sport published

On 19 December, the European Commission's Sport Unit published the long-awaited recommendations of the Expert Group on Green Sport for a more environmentally sustainable sports sector: "[Sport's contribution to the European Green Deal – A sport sector playbook](#)".

#### Green sport: context and sport initiatives

Starting from the baseline assessment that sport is increasingly affected by current climate trends, the Playbook emphasises the dual role played by sport: reduce its own environmental impact, and inspire change of behaviour within its ecosystem (federations, clubs, leagues, sponsors, host cities, NGOs, athletes, fans, etc.) thanks to its ability to disseminate messages and models. Setting the scene, the Playbook provides an overview of the policy context in which sport organisations and governments operate (e.g. the European Green Deal and EU legislation relevant to the sport sector such as the [Fit for 55 package](#) or the [EU Renovation Wave strategy](#)).

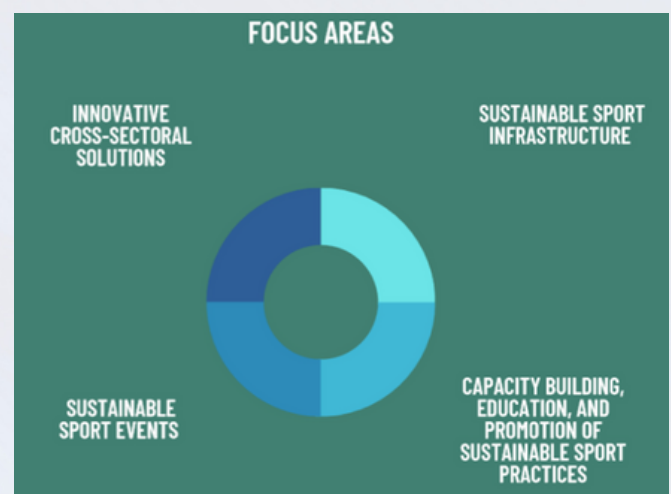
Moving forward, the Playbook also recognises that many sport organisations already are committed to tackling climate change and sheds light on previous and current initiatives within the sport movement, including international frameworks such as the [UN Sports for Climate Action Framework](#), the [IOC Sustainability Strategy](#), but also EU-funded projects (e.g. the [OCEAN Project](#), coordinated by the EOC EU Office, the [ASAP Project](#), coordinated by the Czech National Olympic Committee, or the [Green Sports Hub Europe](#) Project, in which Rugby Europe and CEV are partners).

The Playbook presents a set of challenges that hinder the improvement of the sport movement's sustainability, among a general structural challenge: "a lack of understanding and corresponding governance structure, job responsibilities and measuring and reporting commitments", before listing opportunities.

Sport is described as a great "catalyst for positive action and behaviour change on green issues", with powerful communications platforms and athletes or sponsors acting as role models. Intentionally set positive side-effects of sports events through nature restoration projects or community outreach and education campaigns are mentioned as ways to connect with people to show good practices and induce behaviour change.

#### Key recommendations

The context and list of existing initiatives is topped up by a set of recommendations to governments, sport organisations and related stakeholders to improve the impact of the sport sector and contribute to the objectives of the European Green Deal.



Policymakers and the sport movement are given recommendations for governance, policy, funding and communication in each of the following area: Mobility and Transport; Technology and Apps; Tourism; Food; Construction; Energy; Sporting Goods; Infrastructure; Events; Capacity building.

### Recommendations for policy makers include:

- Measure the baseline carbon footprint for sport.
- Develop an environmental sustainability policy guidance with national sport governing bodies.
- Promote funding schemes that support sport and sustainability projects.
- Ensure events have a sustainability strategy, including for transportation of fans.
- Prioritise the use of existing infrastructure over new construction for sport events.

### For the sport movement, some of the recommendations are:

- Develop a sustainability strategy and measure the carbon footprint of the organisation.
- Develop mobility plans promoting the use of public transport, low-carbon vehicles and active options to access events.
- Identify a senior staff member with sustainability responsibility in your governance structure.
- Mobilise the power of sport to raise awareness on climate change and encourage greener behaviours.
- Invest in sustainable renovations of sport facilities.
- Favour local, seasonal and organic supply of food for sports events.

With the [OCEAN Project](#), the EOC EU Office is already pursuing several of the above-mentioned recommendations, as it is upskilling one “Climate Action Officer” in each of the 18 partner NOCs to measure and reduce their organisation’s carbon footprint, and designing a tool that will be publicly available for sport organisations.



### About the Expert Group Green Sport

The Expert Group Green Sport was established by the EU Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024 and gathers representatives from EU Member States’ governments (e.g. Ministry of Sport), observers from the world of sport (including the EOC EU Office and the IOC) and institutions such as the European Environment Agency or the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Members convened regularly for two years to draft the recommendations and share updates and initiatives on sustainability in sport.

The EOC EU Office has been actively taking part to all meetings and put pen to paper to include the Olympic movement’s expertise and existing good practices in the Playbook.

### New life for the Expert Group Green Sport: SHARE 2.0

The Playbook is the ultimate delivery of the Expert Group, which gathered for the last time on 13 December. From February onwards, a new community of practice will convene regularly in the form of the SHARE 2.0 network, with four working groups: EU funding; Sport and health; Sport innovation; Greening of sport. The community of practice is open to public authorities, (grassroots) sports organisations, policy experts and sports practitioners at large. SHARE 2.0 aims to help stakeholders to exchange good practices ideas, as well as identify and use EU funding to develop sport and develop physical activity.

The call for expression of interest to join is [here](#) – apply before the end of January! The first meeting will take place in February.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

[Factsheet](#)

[Executive Summary](#)

[Full report](#)



### European Parliament adopts reports on mental health and non-communicable diseases

During its December plenary session from 11 to 14 December, the European Parliament adopted two reports in the realm of health policies.

#### The role of sport for improved mental health

The [own-initiative report on Mental Health](#), the first of its kind, aligns with the Commission's Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health. Rapporteur Sara Cerdas (S&D) [emphasized](#) the social determinants of health and identified vulnerable groups and situations, proposing targeted actions to address them.

Recognizing the multifaceted nature of mental health, the report underscores the need for holistic measures, encompassing socio-economic, environmental, biological, and genetic elements. Embracing this comprehensive perspective, the report positions sport and physical activity in sport clubs as advocates for mental well-being, especially for children, adolescents, and young adults. Social prescribing is considered to be a useful, practical, holistic and effective approach that can be integrated into primary care settings and can involve physical activities. Physical activity, movement and play are beneficial in raising awareness for positive mental health.

#### Non-communicable diseases and using physical activity to reduce risk factors

The adopted [report](#) sheds light on non-communicable diseases (NCDs), attributing 80% of the disease burden in EU countries to conditions like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, and mental and neurological disorders. Physical inactivity emerges as a major risk factor.

To combat this, the [report](#) advocates for measures such as prohibiting alcohol advertising and sponsorship at sports events mainly attended by minors. Member States are urged to address obesity by providing healthy dietary choices and promoting sports.

A key focus of the report is the role of physical activity in preventing NCDs. Drawing inspiration from the HealthyLifestyle4All initiative, the report calls on the Commission and Member States to incorporate physical activity and sports into urban planning, making them accessible means of reducing NCD risk factors. The promotion of physical activity is also encouraged through awareness-raising campaigns.

#### Healthy Lifestyles

Additionally, on 23 November, the European Commission released a [Mapping on Healthy Lifestyles](#), building on the two-year [HealthyLifestyle4All campaign](#). The study analyzes initiatives undertaken, with Pillar 2, "Easier access to sport, physical activities, and healthy diets," comprising nearly one-third of all campaign pledges. Organisations have focused on increasing access to healthy diets, sports, and physical activity while promoting accessibility, inclusion, and non-discrimination of marginalized groups in infrastructures.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

[Factsheet](#)

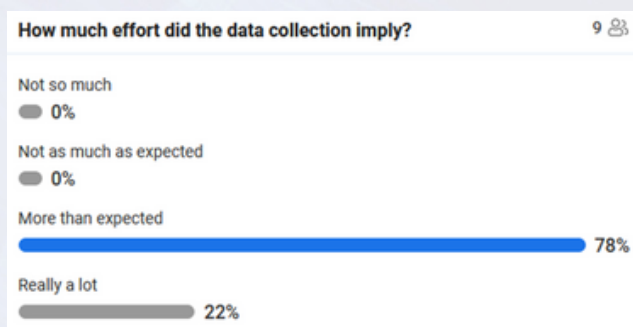
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[Full report](#)

### OCEAN holds its third Seminar on carbon footprint measurement

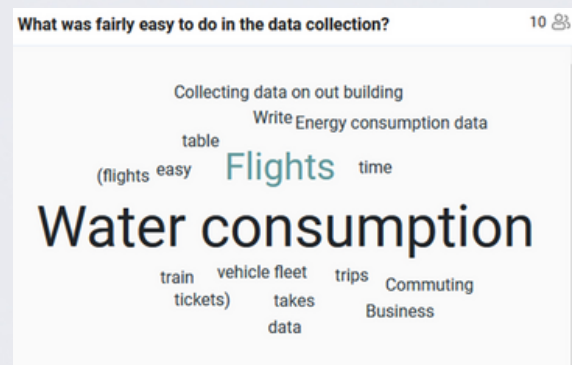
On 12 December, the 3rd Online Seminar focusing on Carbon Footprint measurement occurred, led by OCEAN's scientific partner, Öko-Institut. The primary goal was to unveil the initial findings of the carbon footprint measurement, fostering a platform for Climate Action Officers to engage in discussions and share experiences related to gathering essential data within their NOC. Partner NOCs are in the final stages of data collection, while Öko-Institut is completing the reception process, poised to integrate the data for the comprehensive finalization of the measurement tool by the NOCs.

Following an overview of the data collection status provided by the Öko-Institut, partner NOCs were given the chance to exchange insights on their respective experiences with the data collection process. The consortium addressed key queries, including: 1) Assessing the level of effort involved in data collection; 2) Identifying aspects that were relatively straightforward during the process; 3) Highlighting challenges encountered in data collection; and 4) Proposing potential enhancements for the measurement tool.



Climate Action Officers stated to have provided more effort than expected on the data collection process due to the proportion and variety of data to collect. The consortium encountered obstacles regarding the calculation of the data, for which the use of online platforms was identified as a potential solution, especially regarding indicators for commuting. More importantly, Climate Action Officers were recommended to use estimates of travels and roughly compile reported numbers, rather than seeking the exact detailed data.

To improve the measurement tool, partner NOCs will use a collaborative document for options for improvements regarding the data collection. The consortium was overall confident about future measurements (i.e. for 2024) as they are now equipped with adequate processes and tools to collect the necessary data within their NOC.



During the concluding part of the meeting, the Öko-Institut delivered an overview of the initial findings from the carbon footprint measurement, encompassing an overview of relevant terms within the context of carbon footprint assessment, along with a discussion on methodological choices and their implications. The conclusive results of this measurement are slated for presentation in March 2024, during Module 3 of the Training Course in Lausanne. The final words of the meeting were dedicated to set the next steps of the project. The OCEAN consortium will convene virtually in January 2024, anticipating the forthcoming in-person meeting scheduled for March 2024 to kick off Module 3 of the Training Course for Climate Action Officers.





### PARTNERS' CORNER

#### EOC EU and International Relations Commission meets in Brussels



On 7-8 December, the EOC EU Office hosted the EOC's EU and International Relations Commission. Led by Chairman Jose Manuel Araujo, Secretary General of the NOC of Portugal, the Commission not only deliberated on its activities for 2024 but also engaged in insightful discussions with external guests.

A significant focal point of the meeting was the crucial theme of integrity. In a dynamic exchange with the Council of Europe, EPAS Executive Secretary Sophie Kwasny and Ambassador Andriy Zayats, the group – comprising both EU and non-EU members – delved into discussions surrounding the Council of Europe's Human Rights approach to sports policy. Of particular interest was the [Macolin Convention](#), which specifically addresses the manipulation of sports competitions.

In another thought-provoking exchange, the Commission explored the evolving landscape of e-sports and exchanged about national practices.

The second day featured a comprehensive presentation by the EOC EU Office on European funding, with a detailed analysis of the Erasmus+ 2023 calls and a forward-looking overview of the open calls for 2024. Following illuminating presentations showcasing successful applications from various National Olympic Committees, the EOC EU Office unveiled its proposal for the 2024 call, focusing on Safeguarding in sport.

Maja Zalaznik, from the NOC Slovenia, presented the successful experience of the 2023 European Youth Olympic Festival, held in Maribor, and their Erasmus+ project "Active, Healthy and Happy Volunteers".

To cap off the session, Matteo Zacchetti, Policy Officer at the Sport Unit of the EU Commission, joined the group to provide valuable insights into the ongoing activities at the EU Commission level most notably on topics such as athletes' rights and the European Sport Model.

The EOC EU Office thanks the EU & IR Commission for its interest and enthusiasm and looks forward to collaborating in 2024.



### UPCOMING EVENTS

**13 - 15 January 2024**

EHF Grassroots Convention EHF (TU Munich)

**25 - 26 January 2024**

SIGGS 3.0 Kick-off (EOC EU Office, Brussels)

**30 January 2024**

Erasmus+ Sport Info Day (European Commission, Brussels)



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