

MONTHLY REPORT

January 2024



EUROPEAN
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEES



EU
Office

EOC EU Office
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Erasmus+ #SportInfoDay

The EOC EU Office presented the @GamesErasmus Project and showed the synergies between the Olympic movement & Erasmus+ priorities while discovering EU funding opportunities for European NOCs and the EOC EU Office's partners

PiaAhrenkildeEU @PiaAhrenkilde
A pleasure to conclude the #ErasmusPlus #SportInfoDay, kicking off 2024 as an exciting year for Sport.
to all sport stakeholders & communities for the BIG difference you make.
Don't forget to apply to the call for proposals by 5 March 2024!
europa.eu/16BK8JM



GAMES Erasmus+ Project
@GamesErasmus · Follow

The #GAMESPROJECT's Final Conference is approaching!

SAVE THE DATE
8 March 2024
Brussels

Learn more about the conference's programme and stay tuned for further insight on the speakers



Opening Final Conference		Session 1: Policy, Subsidies of Erasmus+ for implementing policies	
9:30h	Julien Hoffmann, Director of the EOC EU Office	9:30h	NOC Croatia - NOC Greece - NOC Latvia - NOC North Macedonia
Presentation by Sports Project partners and stakeholders		Presentational Session 2: Effectiveness of Erasmus+ gender equality	
9:45h	Session Study: Invited Jack, Director Youth Sport National Action Plans; NOCs of Ireland and Turkey; National Learning Events; NOCs of Belgium and Germany; Prof of Antwerp, Carliene Driessen, GAMES Project Management	9:45h	General Steering, Project Coordinator, Olympic Solidarity; Olga Poljak, EU Trade and International Cooperation Coordinator, NOC Croatia
Panel Discussion: GAMES impact Olympic and European goals		Closing Final Conference with remarks	
9:55h	Valérie Brasseur, Sport Unit European Commission; Prof. Evenske Van Praet, Equal Rights in Sport; Anne-Marie Peeters, EOC Gender Commission; Pedro Dias, EOC Gender Equality and Diversity Unit	9:55h	Julien Hoffmann, Director of the EOC EU Office; Carliene Driessen, GAMES Project Management
10:00h: Concluding panel and concluding opportunities			

8:39 AM · Jan 30, 2024

OCEAN Project
@OCEANErasmus · Follow

The #OCEANPROJECT met online for its 3rd Consortium Call today

Climate Action Officers from the 18 partner NOCs received feedback from @oekoinstitut on the progress of the #carbonfootprint measurement and saw the programme of the meeting in Lausanne in March



3:07 PM · Jan 23, 2024

SIGGS 3.0 Project
@SIGGS3_0Erasmus · Follow

SIGGS 3.0 is officially kicking off in Brussels! The @EOCEUOffice is ready to welcome its partner @Symantra & establish the foundation for the project.

@EuSport @EUErasmusPlus



10:17 AM · Jan 25, 2024

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EU SPORT POLICY AND FUNDING NEWS

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

The interpretation of the decisions of the European Court of Justice of 21 December 2023 is still ongoing. In the cases concerning the European Super League and Home Grown Players Rules, the decisions of the national courts in Spain and Belgium are still pending. However, the judgement in the lesser-noticed ISU case has implications for international arbitration in sport that were not expected by all parties involved. The court concluded that in cases involving EU law, the Swiss Federal Court is not sufficient as an appeal instance and that other national courts must be involved.

Even though the court largely confirmed the existing case law in cases such as Wouters, Meca-Medina or Olympique Lyon, it clearly deviated from the opinion of Advocate General Rantos in some respects. This applies in particular to the "constitutional recognition of the European Sports Model through Art. 165 TFEU. In addition, sports federations will in future only be able to justify exceptions to competition law via the demanding catalogue of criteria in Art 101 (3) TFEU if an intentional infringement ("infringement by object") has been determined. In this respect, the previous Meca-Medina test has been curtailed in its application.

However, it is also important to note that the court fundamentally recognises the regulatory role of federations. This means that the potential conflict of interest of the federations by being both, regulator and the organiser can be resolved through transparent, anti-discriminatory regulations that are applicable to all actors in the same way.

The Belgian Council Presidency has begun its work in the field of sport and is primarily focussing on the discussion of the new work plan of the Sports Ministers. In close coordination with its partner organisations, the EOC EU Office took part in the relevant survey of the EU Commission, shared its own position paper with the Member States, participated in the stakeholder meeting of the EU Commission and reported to the informal meeting of the Council Working Group on Sport. The Office's proposals for change included insufficient communication and cooperation with sports federations and a lack of coherence between the EU Presidencies.

At the end of this Editorial, and on behalf of the EOC EU Office I would like to take this opportunity to thank Yves le Lostecque, who went into well-deserved retirement at the end of January. As head of the EU Commission's sports unit for many years and most recently as head of unit at the EACEA, he was always a trustworthy contact who knew the structures of sport very well and had its best interests at heart. He played a decisive role in the establishment of the Erasmus+Sport programme and was also a welcome guest at the Olympic Games and European Games. Yves, thank you very much for all your support and excellent cooperation in the last decade!

Yves, a bientôt, une bonne retraite et reste #BeActive!

With kind regards,



Folker Hellmund
Director EOC EU Office





EU SPORT POLICY AND FUNDING NEWS

Belgium takes over Presidency of the Council of the EU

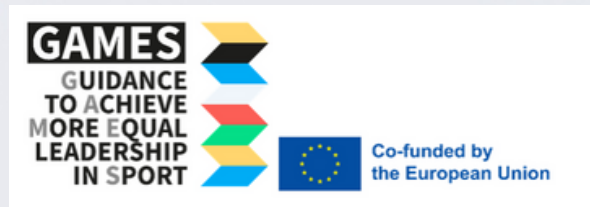
Belgian Presidency (January- June 2024)

In January, Belgium took over the Presidency of the Council of the EU from Spain for the upcoming 6 months.

The Presidency [programme](#) is structured around [six general priorities](#):

- Defending the rule of law democracy and unity,
- Strengthening our competitiveness,
- Pursuing a green and just transition,
- Reinforcing our social and health agenda,
- Protecting people and borders,
- Promoting a global Europe.

During the Belgian Presidency, the primary focus will be on the approval of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2024-2027, slated for adoption on 14 May. Serving as the strategic roadmap for sports ministers in the upcoming years, this document has significant implications, especially in a year that also features EU Parliament elections and the renewal of the EU Commission. The EOC EU Office, having been in direct contact with the Belgian Presidency, responded to their invitation by presenting its position paper at the informal meeting of the Working Party on Sport on 30 January. In addition to the EU Work Plan adoption, the Belgian Presidency will also finalize Council Conclusions concerning the role of non-organized sport and free physical activity within the European Sport Model. Building on the initiatives started by the previous Presidency in Spain, the Belgian Presidency will persist in prioritizing the elimination of acts of hate and promoting the training, visibility, and leadership of women in sport. This commitment resonates with the objectives of the EOC EU Office's [GAMES](#) project, dedicated to advancing gender equality in key leadership and decision-making positions within the sports domain. Its forthcoming Final Conference on 8 March marks the culmination of 24 months of concrete efforts to achieve more equal leadership in sport.



Furthermore, the Belgian Presidency will address the organization of large-scale sports events, aiming for a more human-sized approach to their management and execution.

Programme of sport-related events under the Belgian Presidency:

- 30-31 January (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium): [Informal meeting of the Working Party on Sport of the Council of the EU](#)
- 20-21 February (Genval, Belgium). [Thematic Presidency conference on non-organised sport and free physical activity](#)
- 12-13 March (Genval, Belgium): [Informal meeting of Member States sports administration directors](#)
- 16-17 April (Liege, Belgium): EU Sport Forum
- 25-26 April (Bruges, Belgium): [Meeting: \(Digital\) solutions to engage the unaffiliated athlete / sport practitioner](#)
- 13-14 May (Brussels, Belgium): [Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council](#) - including adoption of EU Work Plan for Sport 2024-2027 and lunch debate on women in sport

The EOC EU Office will maintain contact with the Presidency throughout the term to make sure that the Olympic movement is represented during the various events.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Programme of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU](#)

European Court of Justice decides on European Super League, International Skating Union and Royal Antwerp cases



On 21 December, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Justice (CJEU) made decisive rulings in three cases related to competition policy in the realm of sports.

Furthermore, the Court highlighted that organizing competitions and exploiting media rights are economic activities, necessitating compliance with EU competition rules and respect for freedom of movement in the EU. Recognizing the dual role of sports governing bodies as regulators and organizers, the Grand Chamber however stressed the need for "transparent, objective, non-discriminatory, and proportionate rules" to mitigate potential conflicts of interest.

These rulings carry implications for the legal landscape governing sports within the European Union.

The ruling is now up to the referring Madrid Commercial Court to interpret the apply the European Superleague judgment.

European Superleague Company

The case was triggered by a breakaway league designed by the European Superleague (ESL) Company, comprising the 12 most successful football clubs from England, Spain, and Italy, which faced immediate challenges as UEFA's rules required prior approval for new competitions. While UEFA had not published criteria for the approval of third-party competitions, the 12 clubs were promptly threatened with expulsion from their national leagues if they joined the European Superleague. The General Advocate's [opinion](#) on 15 December 2022, was rather favourable to Europe's football governing body, as it emphasized that UEFA's actions did not constitute restrictions of competition by object, arguing that these restrictions aligned with legitimate objectives. In a long-awaited ruling rendered on 21 December 2023, the [Grand Chamber of the CJEU](#) determined that UEFA's authorization rules at the time of the Superleague proposal did not meet these criteria, concluding that UEFA had abused its dominant market position and effectively restricted the freedom to provide services. The decision offers guidance for designing legitimate authorization rules, allowing the European Superleague Company to submit a renewed proposal subject to these new criteria. However, the significant role played by fans and spectators in the initial dismissal of the SuperLeague project underscores their ongoing importance in shaping the future of such endeavours.

International Skating Union v Commission

Similar to the ESL case, the International Skating Union (ISU) case revolves around a sports governing body's actions against potential breakaway competitions and athletes participating therein. This case originated in 2014 when the ISU refused to authorize a breakaway event in Dubai and threatened participating skaters with a lifetime ban to ISU competitions for participating in the event in Dubai. [General Advocate Rantos](#) delivered his opinion on 15 December 2022, concurrently with the ESL case, and proposed to dismiss the appeal made by the ISU.

The [Grand Chamber's ruling](#) on the ISU's appeal affirmed a restriction of competition within the ISU eligibility rules. It is final and gives no further possibility to appeal. The lack of transparent, objective, non-discriminatory, and proportionate reasoning was deemed a violation of EU competition rules, reinstating the Commission's initial assessment. Recognizing sports competitions as economic activities, the ruling stressed the need for rules to be "transparent, objective, non-discriminatory and proportionate", especially when they impact athletes' livelihoods, restrict new competitions, and deprive audiences of opportunities to witness fresh contests.

This decision, moreover, influences the functioning of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) but also challenges the validity of forced arbitration clauses. It opens the door for athletes and clubs to directly approach national courts of EU Member States to contest decisions made by sport governing bodies provided that EU law is affected.

Royal Antwerp Football Club

This case concerned UEFA's Home-Grown Player (HGP) rule, initially designed to balance player movement and protect sporting competition integrity.

[Advocate General Szpunar's](#) assessment (rendered in March 2023) identified these rules as indirectly discriminatory, extending beyond legitimate objectives to protect the integrity of the sport.

However, the [Grand Chamber of the CJEU](#) distinguished that the home-grown players rule, in itself, does pursue a legitimate objective. Nevertheless, This decision prompts a reconsideration of the homegrown players rule by UEFA, emphasizing the need to reshape strategies for incentivizing the training of young players.

The European Sport Model

Advocate General Rantos asserted that Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) grants constitutional status to the European Sport Model. This approach was rejected by the CJEU. Nevertheless, the CJEU expresses a positive stance on essential aspects of the European Sport Model, such as competitive balance, meritocracy, open competitions, and solidarity.

These rulings usher in a pivotal consideration when it comes to the interplay between EU law and sports – the object/effect distinction outlined in Article 101(1) TFEU. This distinction becomes a crucial factor in shaping the justificatory framework applied to sport governing bodies. Essentially, it introduces a nuanced approach to assess the harmony between sports-related rules and practices and EU competition law.

Now it's up to the Madrid Commercial Court to apply the guidelines provided by the Grand Chamber in his ruling in the ESL case. What is already clear at this stage is the demand from the Court to sport governing bodies to adhere to high standards of good governance, ensuring transparency, objectivity, non-discrimination, and proportionality in pursuit of their goals.

FURTHER INFORMATION

C-333/21 - European Superleague Company

[Press release](#)

[Judgement](#)

C-124/21 P - International Skating Union v Commission

[Press release](#)

[Judgement](#)

C-680/21 - Royal Antwerp Football Club

[Press release](#)

[Judgement](#)

EU institutions approve new money-laundering obligations for football clubs



On 17 January, the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament made progress within the framework of the [Anti-Money Laundering package](#).

Initially proposed by the European Commission in 2021, the package consists of:

- A Regulation on anti-money-laundering requirements for the private sector or “single rule book” Regulation: provisional agreement between Council and Parliament in [January 2024](#) (more details in this article)
- A directive on anti-money-laundering mechanisms: provisional agreement between Council and Parliament in January 2024 (more details in this article)
- A Regulation to create an EU anti-money-laundering authority: agreement [between Council and Parliament in December 2023](#)
- A revision of the regulation on transfers of funds: provisional agreement on transparency of crypto asset transfers in [June 2022](#)

Football explicitly targeted by the EU “single rulebook” Regulation

This Regulation targets private sector entities and introduces new measures that “obliged entities” need to apply to comply with anti-money laundering standards. Professional football clubs and agents are now included in the scope of obliged entities, given the “high risk” represented by the football sector. In practice, this means that professional football clubs will need to “verify their customers’ identity, monitor transactions and report any suspicious transaction to Financial Intelligence Units”. However, a longer transition period has been granted to them (5 years after entry into force of the Regulation i.e. as of 2029, instead of 3 years for other entities), and exemptions can be granted by Member States for smaller clubs (i.e. below the top league and with a yearly turnover less than 5 million euros over 2 years).

Better access to national registers and improvement of cooperation between organisations with the 6th Anti-Money Laundering Directive

This text concerns the improvement of anti-money laundering organisations in Member States and their cooperation with European entities such as Europol or Eurojust. It also includes provisions to increase access to information within national registers for actors such as media, high-education, and non-governmental organisations.

Next steps

Both texts will now be finalised and presented to Member States’ representatives in the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the European Parliament for approval. The Council and the Parliament must formally adopt the texts before they are published in the EU’s Official Journal and can enter into force.

We are still examining the individual documents in detail and will inform you as soon as we draw further insights.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Regulation:

- [Press Release Parliament](#)
- [Press Release Council of the EU](#)
- [Procedure file](#)

Directive:

- [Press Release Parliament](#)
- [Press Release Council of the EU](#)
- [Procedure file](#)

Erasmus+ Sport Info Day 2024



Erasmus+ Sport Info Day 2024

The European Commission and European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) organised the 11th edition of the Erasmus+ Sport Info Day in Brussels on 30th January. The event provided future applicants with key information on the different facets of the Erasmus+ Sport programme, as well as a unique opportunity to network both online and in-person.

The Erasmus+ Sport Info Day was opened by Commissioner Iliana Ivanova (European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth), who underlined the success and importance of Erasmus+ Sport and mentioned specifically the “Equestrian Young Leaders Europe” project, run by the European Equestrian Federation. Pierre-Yves Jeholet, Ministre-Président de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, on behalf of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, informed the participants about the priorities of the Belgian Presidency in the field of sport and their alignment with the priorities of the Erasmus+ Sport programme.

Two panel discussions then completed the programme for the morning session. The first panel, moderated by Yves Le Lostecque (Head of the Erasmus+ Mundus and Sport Unit, EACEA), focused on the Erasmus+ Sport Programme and presented its main features, including the priorities, different key actions (Partnerships for Cooperation, Not for Profit European Sport Events and Capacity Building in the Field of Sport), as well as the foreseen timeline, budget and deadlines for submission.

For this call, the European Commission expects to fund approximately 310 projects in total. The evaluation of the project applications will be carried out between March and September, and the results are expected to be announced in September 2024. External speakers also contributed to the discussion and shared their experience with the Erasmus+ Sport Programme.

The second panel discussion moderated by the Head of the European Commission’s Sport Unit, Florencia Van Houdt, focused on how EU policy priorities are implemented through Erasmus+ Sport Programme, particularly focusing on sustainability, gender equality and sport for all. In this panel, the EOC EU Office Head of Funding, Carlotta Giussani presented the achievements of the GAMES project, funded by the Erasmus+ Sport 2021 Programme, in advancing gender equality in the field of sport. Panellists also shared their experience and advice on the application process, with practical tips especially for first-time applicants.

In the afternoon, the Erasmus+ Sport Info Day continued with three parallel sessions to inform potential applicants on different aspects of the Erasmus+ Programme:

- How to apply? This workshop was primarily dedicated to new applicants as it provided insights on finding the suitable call on the Funding Portal, as well as on the procedure to register an organisation and submit an application.
- How to present your proposal? This workshop aimed at presenting the application templates, the funding mechanism of lump sum, as well as providing insights on the selection process and awarding criteria.
- How to present a Capacity Building proposal? This workshop was primarily aimed at those interested in applying to the Capacity Building call as it presented the main eligibility criteria of the call, its funding mechanisms, as well as providing insights on the selection process and awarding criteria.

After the parallel sessions, the European Commission and EACEA gave an overview of the Erasmus+ Key Action 1: Mobility of sport staff, and of other funding opportunities, such as the Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions and the BeActive and BeInclusive Awards.

The Sport Info Day ended with concluding remarks by MEP Iban Garcia del Blanco, Co-Chair of the European Parliament Sport Group, and Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen, Director-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission.

For further insights, the presentations and web streaming are available on the [webpage Erasmus+ Info day 2024](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#)

[Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal](#)

[Erasmus+ Sport Info Day 2024](#)

SIGGS 3.0 kicks off with clear ambitions for good governance in sport

Project Overview

SIGGS 3.0, short for "Supporting the Implementation of Good Governance in Sport," represents a step forward in advancing good governance standards within sport. This Small-scale partnership co-financed by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme is set to be running from January 2024 to March 2025 together with our partner Symantra. This project is an update of the SIGGS self-evaluation tool which was originally designed for European National Olympic Committees, International Federations, European Federations, and National Federations. The tool empowers sports organizations to conduct a comprehensive self-assessment, benchmark their governance standards against peers, and receive personalized action plans for continuous improvement.

Beyond the foundational features, SIGGS 3.0 comes equipped with new enhancements. Updating existing content and adding new topics to the dimensions "Integrity", "Autonomy", "Transparency", and "Democracy", SIGGS 3.0 ventures into new dimensions, addressing the critical themes of "Inclusion and Diversity", Human Rights, Safe Sport, Gender Equality as well as "Environmental Sustainability". With a focus on user-friendliness, the tool will also receive an improved interface, offering a more intuitive and multilingual experience.

Kick-off Meeting

The project's journey began with a successful kick-off meeting held on 25 and 26 January 2024. The meeting, hosted at the EOC EU Office's premises, served as a moment for the project consortium to come together, discuss key parameters of cooperation, and align on the work plan for the upcoming phase. Discussions encompassed not only the general framework of collaboration but also delved into the initial deliverables, setting the stage for an ambitious and impactful project.

By the end of 2024 the SIGGS 3.0 tool is foreseen to be launched together with a Users' Audio-Visual Manual, ensuring its effectiveness in fostering good governance principles.





Engaging SIGGS self-evaluation tool users such as European Athletics, the International Ice Hockey Federation and Olympic Committees from Belgium and Portugal, we organised a dynamic hybrid session. The aim was to benefit from their valuable past experiences, gaining insights that will play a pivotal role in shaping future updates and enhancements to the tool. This interactive gathering fostered a collaborative environment where user perspectives became instrumental in refining the SIGGS self-evaluation tool for an even more user-centric and effective experience.

Looking ahead

As we officially launch SIGGS 3.0 in January 2024, the journey ahead promises a year of substantial progress and engagement. The first half of 2024 will be dedicated to refining the SIGGS 3.0 tool. In the second half of the year, there are two online multiplier events foreseen which will serve as a pre-launch introduction, providing a sneak peek into the tool's capabilities and functionalities. These events are crafted to gather valuable feedback and insights from the target groups, ensuring that SIGGS 3.0 is tailored to meet their needs.

Stay tuned for regular updates, insights, and opportunities for engagement. The [SIGGS 3.0 webpage is available here](#) and we are looking forward to interacting with you also on our [SIGGS 3.0 LinkedIn](#) and [SIGGS 3.0 Twitter](#).



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Expert Group on Covid-19 recovery publishes final report



Following the conclusion of the last meeting in October 2023, the European Commission has recently released the final report from the Expert Group on "Strengthening the recovery and crisis resilience of the sport sector during and in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic."

Beyond assessing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the report also addresses geopolitical events such as Russia's war against Ukraine and the resulting energy crisis.

The document not only reflects on the lessons learned but also offers recommendations for various stakeholders, including sport policymakers, sports organizations, clubs, industry players, athletes, coaches, and the general population.

The Expert Group was initially formed in 2021 to address the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic in the realm of sports. The EOC EU Office had been an observer in the group since the beginning and provided insights on the impact of the organised sport movement in the second meeting of the Expert Group back in 2021. By evolving beyond its original mandate, the Expert Group sought to provide a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the sports sector in the wake of various global crises, while keeping a focus on the Covid-19 pandemic.

Here are a few key takeaways from the report:

- National authorities are recommended to prioritise sporting activities during possible future lockdowns and maintain access to sports facilities, provide reopening guidelines and offer organisational resilience and risk management guidance.
- The international and national sport movement is asked to gather and share data and evidence which is to be used for policy decisions and the implementation of well-informed measures.
- Sport umbrella organisations are requested to provide guidance on enhancing organisational resilience, managing risk, and ensuring business continuity.
- Sport clubs are advised to strategize stakeholder management and consider forming beneficial partnerships for peer support.

The discussions among members and observers underscored the significant impact of networking and sharing best practices on effective crisis response. This collaborative approach informs individual actions and helps overcome barriers. The report emphasizes the importance of risk preparedness, raising awareness about the need for robust crisis management plans.

Moving forward, the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic, including the imperative of resilience and global cooperation, align with the enduring challenges of sustainability and good governance in the sports realm. This entails recognizing and addressing the environmental impact of sports, promoting inclusivity and diversity in governance structures, and fostering holistic strategies that prioritize health, well-being, and ethical decision-making. By integrating these aspects, the sports movement can forge a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future that draws on the experiences and insights derived from navigating the complexities of the pandemic.

The EOC EU Office thanks its partners for contributing to the report with good practice examples.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Factsheet](#)

[Report](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

06 - 07 February 2024

EOC Executive Committee (Madrid)

29 February 2024

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (Brussels)

06 - 08 March 2024

GAMES Final conference &
Workshop on Safeguarding and Female Athletes' Health (Brussels)



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