

# MONTHLY REPORT

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November 2023



EUROPEAN  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEES



**EU**  
Office



## New partner!

We are delighted to announce that as of 1st of October 2023, the European Equestrian Federation (EEF) has become partner of the EOC EU office, bringing the total number of partners to 33! We are looking forward to working with EEF and warmly welcome them as new partner.



## New colleague!

As of 15th of November 2023, Francesca Carnio has joined the EOC EU Office team! After working on sport policy at the Council of Europe and the European Commission, she will reinforce our team to further support sport organisations in making use of EU Funding opportunities. Welcome to the team, Francesca!



## Job offer!

The NOC of Germany (DOSB) is looking for a new Policy Officer (DE/EN) for sports advocacy who would be joining our office in Brussels! If you are interested, please check the job offer [here](#).



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### EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

The recent elections in the Netherlands have confirmed the ongoing shift to the right in many European countries. More or less openly, their representatives are discussing whether to leave the European Union or transform it into another structure in which the safeguarding of democratic standards is called into question. In the past, the European right has not managed to organise political majorities in the Council or the European Parliament. In the upcoming European Parliament elections in June 2024, it must be expected that right-wing populist parties will make significant gains and that it will become even more difficult to organise majorities in the EP.

Against the backdrop of the particularly difficult budgetary decisions on the future financial framework after 2027, which may also include the next wave of EU enlargement, this new Parliament will play a key role.

Organised sport, as the largest civil society group in Europe, will have the task in the coming months of raising awareness of these elections among its members and getting them to the polls.

It already appears that there are hardly any majorities left in the EP for one of the European Commission's core files, the "European Green Deal". For example, the adoption of the "Pesticides Regulation", which would have affected some sports, such as golf and football especially, has been rejected for the time being and will most likely not be renegotiated under the current EP.

The EOC EU Office would like to take this opportunity to thank all partner organisations that took part in the Special Competence Seminar last week, either in person or online. In particular, the discussions on esports, the upcoming judgements of the European Court of Justice on the Super League and the International Skating Union and the exchange on the activities of the Council of Europe and the negotiations on the new Work Plan of EU Sports Ministers 2025-2028 were rated as very informative by the participants. Special thanks to all external speakers for their inspiring interventions!

On a personal note, after 4 years as a DOSB representative, Andreas Bold will leave the EOC EU Office at the beginning of January and return to Germany. On behalf of all my colleagues, I would like to thank Andreas for his commitment and loyalty, and we wish him and his family a successful new start in Frankfurt! Applications for his successor can be submitted to the DOSB or directly to the EOC EU Office until 15 December.

The EOC EU Office team wishes all the office's partners and readers an enjoyable read of the monthly report!

With kind regards,



Folker Hellmund  
Director EOC EU Office



### EU SPORT POLICY AND FUNDING NEWS

## EU Sport Ministers come to a conclusion on gender equality and safe sport and discuss European dimension of Olympic & Paralympic Games

On 24 November, Sport Ministers met in the realm of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council.

### Council Conclusions on women and equality in the field of sport

The highlight of this meeting was the approval of conclusions on women and equality in the field of sport. The endorsed document underscores the significance of fostering a safe, inclusive, and equitable playing field, free from any manifestation of inequality, discrimination, or violence.

The [Council Conclusions](#) place particular emphasis on the imperative to augment the representation of women, particularly in coaching and leadership roles. Additionally, they advocate for the principle of equal pay for equal work in professional sports, accompanied by a commitment to ensuring stereotype-free and broader media coverage of women's sporting events.

Furthermore, the Conclusions call upon Member States to elevate the proportion of women in sports leadership positions, combat harassment, sexual abuse, and violence across all levels, and institute measures to safeguard witnesses and victims of gender-based violence. The European Commission is specifically invited to integrate the sports sector into its gender equality strategies and to sustain support for awareness-raising initiatives throughout the EU.

The call extends to the sports movement, urging it to enshrine gender equality as a fundamental aspect of good governance. It advocates for mainstreaming gender equality in all sports strategies, policies, and actions, and encourages concrete steps to augment the presence of women in leadership, coaching, and officiating roles.

### Debate on safe environment in sport

In alignment with the principles outlined in the document, Sports Ministers engaged in a debate on safe environments in sports, exchanging national best practices. Two distinct dimensions emerged prominently in the discussions – ensuring the provision of safe and accessible sports infrastructure and promoting emotionally safe environments. Representatives from Member States reached a consensus that the EU could facilitate more of these exchanges and leverage the Erasmus+ program to implement tangible actions.

### Announcements on the EU dimension of the Games

Additionally, the French delegation provided information on the European dimension of the Olympic and Paralympic Games of Paris 2024. The French Minister for Sport and the Olympic and Paralympic Games assured that the EU would be given visibility and space during the Games, in celebration zones and in the media, and called the Organising Committee to make sure that the EU flag is visible on competition sites and villages. EU-funding opportunities were mentioned as ways to ensure a legacy for the Games: use of DiscoverEU to develop 'Olympic routes', promotion of school-sport thanks to Erasmus+, improvement of the accessibility of sport infrastructure with the European Bauhaus. In general, the French delegation hopes for a new European model for sports events, that is more sustainable and responsible.

Taking the floor next, Vice-President of the European Commission, Margaritis Schinas, congratulated France for their commitment to use the Paris 2024 Games to spread messages regarding European values and presented the European Commission's intentions. First, the EU Sport Forum will be a celebration of exactly 100 days before the opening ceremony (16-17 April), after which Europe Day (9 May) will be the conclusion of a series of events along the route of the Olympic flame.



The annual #BeActive campaign and European Week of Sport will involve athletes and coaches, celebrating the Olympic Games in Europe. To conclude, the Commissioner announced that a letter will be sent to all EU 27 Member States, asking them to nominate an “Olympic Ambassador”.

The German delegation applauded the intentions to use the Games as convectors of European values and announced similar measures for the EURO 2024 taking place in the country.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

[Press Release - Meeting](#)

[Press Release - Council Conclusions](#)

## Spanish Council Presidency: Gender Equality in Sports Conference



On 14-15 November, the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU invited Member States, sport stakeholders and interested public to their Presidency Conference on Gender Equality in Sport. As one of their priority topics, this two-day conference tackled a variety of dimensions connected to women and gender equality in sport.

Early in the conference, the rallying cry “We Want More” emerged as a self-discovered motto, resonating with many of the speakers. “We want more” encapsulated the acknowledgement of ongoing change while underscoring an unfulfilled satisfaction, urging for increased action, representation, support, and equality.

The conference spotlighted the strides made so far by referencing the recommendations of the High-Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport, published in March 2022 and hinted to the Spanish Council Presidency’s Council Conclusions on Women and Equality in the Field of Sport that were about to be adopted soon after the conference (see separate article).

Dimensions that have been addressed were:

- the general context of gender equality and sport in Europe

- gender-based violence and harassment against women in sport
- women and equality in sport: current situation in Europe
- awareness and visibility of women in sport
- women’s leadership in sport
- equality policies in International Organisations

On the visibility front, experts emphasized a dual responsibility for broadcasters to enhance the screen time dedicated to female sports and for sport governing bodies, like the International Olympic Committee (IOC), to better disseminate and enforce portrayal guidelines.

The women’s leadership panel featured insights from Annamarie Phelps, Chair of the EOC GEDI Commission, who underscored the necessity for systemic change rather than placing the burden on women. Changing cultural norms, language, resource allocation, schedules, and priorities, she argued, are crucial for achieving tangible change. The [GAMES project](#) (coordinated by the EOC EU Office) aligns seamlessly with these ambitions, providing concrete outputs and tools for National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and European Federations (EFs) to translate intentions into action.

The discussion on equality policies emphasized the importance of collecting comprehensive data and making it accessible and comprehensible for policymakers and decision-makers. The Council of Europe representative flagged the concept of gender mainstreaming while acknowledging the prevalent issue of gender fatigue – a fatigue stemming from the extended duration of the gender equality discourse. The challenge ahead is to motivate and engage individuals who may no longer perceive the transformative impact.

Looking ahead to 2024 and two major sporting events, the conference acknowledged the potential for these events to instigate initiatives and momentum, transcending from top-level sports to grassroots levels. The aim is to enhance infrastructures, attract more women and girls to participate in sports, and foster the creation of role models.

Closing the conference, Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner responsible for sport, emphasized that female leaders have the power to achieve tangible progress. Their unique perspectives can enhance sports' ability to provide a safe environment, bringing innovative approaches to training, competition, and ultimately fortifying Europe's position as a leader in sports while disseminating the values of the European Union.



### FURTHER INFORMATION

[Spanish Council Presidency](#)

## 2024 Erasmus+ Programme Guide published & #BeActive Awards 2023



On 28 November, the European Commission published the [Erasmus+ Guide 2024](#) whilst the related Calls for Proposals are foreseen to be launched on 10 January 2024. In the Erasmus+ Programme 2024, the Mobility in Sport (Key Action 1) and the Partnerships for Cooperation, Not-for-profit European Sports Events and Capacity Building in the field of Sport (Key Action 2) continue to be financeable activities. The big novelty is the expansion of Capacity Building in the field of Sport to the Neighbourhood East (Region 2) including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The Erasmus+ Programme 2024 has an allocated budget for sport of approx. €63 million.

The 2024 Erasmus+ Programme Guide – available in 23 EU languages – consists of four parts:

- PART A. General information about the programme: Overview of the horizontal priorities of the Erasmus+ programme: inclusion and diversity; environment and fight against climate change; digital transformation, as well as values, civic engagement and participation. The key features of the Programme deserving special attention (e.g. respect for EU values, multilingualism, international dimension, communication and dissemination), the managing authorities and eligible countries, among other information.
- PART B. Specific information about the Actions of the programme: Information on the available actions within the Programme. Notably, the most relevant actions for sports are available under Key Action 1 and Key Action 2: Mobility Project in the field of Sport, Cooperation Partnerships; Small-scale Partnerships, Non-For-Profit European Sport Events and Capacity-building in the field of sport.
- PART C. Information for Applicants: Detailed information on procedures for grant application and submission, contractual and financial conditions as well as the Programme criteria (i.e. eligibility, admissibility, exclusion, selection...).



- PART D. Glossary: Definitions of key notions and commonly used terms related to the Erasmus+ Programme and/or concepts (i.e. associated partners, consortium, job shadowing, work package, sports staff...).

### Key Action 1 – Mobility Project in the Field of Sport (p. 206 - 215).

Mobility project in the field of sport aspires to provide the staff of sport organisations, primarily in grassroots sport, with the opportunity to improve their competencies, and qualifications and to acquire new skills through learning mobility by spending a period abroad, thus contributing to the capacity building and development of sport organisations.

In this context, sports staff refers to a person involved in the instruction, training and management of a sports team or individual sports people either on a paid basis or on a voluntary basis (i.e. administrators, coaches, officials). The project foresees a maximum of 10 participants and is expected to have an overall timeframe ranging between 3 and 18 months.

Within this timeframe, two set of activities can be organised:

- Job shadowing/observation, i.e. activities in which participants spend 2-14 consecutive days at a hosting organisation to learn through observation and peer-to-peer interactions.
- Coaching/Training Assignments in which participants spend 15-60 consecutive days coaching or providing training at a hosting organisation abroad, as a way to learn through completing tasks and exchanging with peers.

The available budget for the Mobility in the Field of Sport in 2024 is €10 million.

### Key Action 2 – Partnerships for Cooperation (p.228 – 237).

The specific priorities pursued by the Partnerships for Cooperation in the field of sport apply to both cooperation partnerships and small-scale partnerships.

In this context, Partnerships for Cooperation are expected to contribute to key policy documents including the Work Plan for Sport (2021-2024) or the Council recommendation for health-enhancing physical activity. Accordingly, the sport-specific priorities are:

- Encouraging healthy lifestyles for all
- Promoting integrity and values in sport
- Promoting education in and through sport
- Promoting equality and European values in and through sport

### Cooperation Partnerships (p.238 – 247).

Cooperation Partnerships provide an opportunity to develop, transfer and implement innovative practices in different areas relating to sport and physical activity between various organisations and actors in and outside sport. At least three organisations from three different programme countries must be involved in these partnerships whilst there is no maximum number of participating organisations in the partnership. Notably, third countries not associated to the Programme can only participate as partners, in duly justified cases. There are three possible grants in the form of a “lump sum” (Type I) equivalent to €120.000, €250.000 or €400.000 while projects can have a timeframe between 12 and 36 months. The available budget for the Cooperation Partnerships in the Field of Sport in 2024 is €34.17 million.

### Small Scale Partnerships (p.248 – 255).

Small-scale Partnerships are designed for less experienced organisations and newcomers to the programme as it has simpler administrative requirements. These partnerships support activities at transnational and national levels whilst ensuring the European dimension. Activities may include organisations increasing their capacity to operate at a transnational level and exchange good practices relating to sport and physical activity. At least two organisations from two programme countries are required as partners in these projects whilst there is no maximum number of participating organisations in the partnership. And yet, it is recommended to include one local or regional sports club in the consortium, at least. There are two possible grants in the form of a “lump sum” (Type I) equivalent to €30.000 or €60.000 and projects can have a timeframe between 6 and 24 months.



The available budget for the Small-scale Partnerships in the Field of Sport in 2024 is €10 million.

### **Key Action 2 - Capacity-building in the field of sport (p.361 - 367).**

The project must be directly linked to the general and specific objectives of the action focusing on supporting grassroots sports activities and policies in these countries, as well as promoting social inclusion, positive values and cooperation across different regions through joint initiatives in Western Balkans (Region 1 - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro) and Neighbourhood East (Region 2 - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). The consortium requires a minimum of four organisations from a minimum of three countries established in Programme countries or third countries associated with the Programme or in third countries not associated with the Programme from Region 1 or Region 2. The number of organisations from EU Member States and third countries associated with the Programme cannot be higher than the number of organisations from Region 1 and Region 2. Yet, organisations from Region 1 and Region 2 cannot participate in the same project proposal and organisations from Armenia and Azerbaijan cannot be coordinators. The project is foreseen to have a timeframe of 12, 24 or 36 months with the available EU grant varying between €100.000 and €200.000 based on a lump sum (Type II) model. The available budget for the Capacity Building in the Field of Sport in 2024 is €1.95 million.

### **Key Action 2 - Not-For-Profit European Sport Events (p. 368 – 373).**

Not-for-profit European Sport Events aim to support volunteering in sport, social inclusion through sport, fight against discrimination in sport, including gender equality and encouraging healthy lifestyles for all. And yet, sport competitions organised by international, European or national sport federations/leagues on a regular basis or professional sport competitions are not eligible for funding. The available budget for the Not-for-profit European sports events in 2024 is €7 million.

Not-for-profit European sports events include two different types of Europe-wide events (single event in a country) and European local events Type I and II (multiple events in multiple EU countries). The eligible period for projects remains 12 or 18 months across the different types of events. And yet, these events differ on the number of requested partners for the consortium and allocated budget.

- European local event Type I requires the consortium to have between three and five organisations with each organisation coming from a different EU Member States and Programme countries with a maximum budget of €200.000.
- European local event Type II requires a minimum of six organisations coming from six different EU Member States and Programme countries whilst the maximum budget is €300.000.
- European-wide event requires a minimum of ten organisations (a single applicant and nine participating organisations) coming from ten different EU Member States and Programme countries whilst the maximum budget is €450.000.

### **Management and Deadlines**

The management of Mobility in the Field of Sport is decentralised; accordingly, applications must be submitted via the [Erasmus+ National Agencies](#) in respective countries by 20 February 2024 at 12:00 (CET). In addition, National Agencies may decide to open an additional round, an additional round is organised; if so, applicants have to submit their applications by 1 October 2024.

The Partnerships for Cooperation, Not-for-profit European Sports Events and Capacity Building in the field of Sport are all centrally managed by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency; accordingly, applications must be submitted via the [Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal](#) by 5 March 2024 at 17:00 (CET).

### Next steps

The EOC EU Office warmly encourages the organised sport and its partners to actively reach out to the EOC EU Office ([gjussani@euoffice.eurolympic.org](mailto:gjussani@euoffice.eurolympic.org) and [carnio@euoffice.eurolympic.org](mailto:carnio@euoffice.eurolympic.org)) to receive support and/or clarifications and to attend the:

- EOC EU Office's webinar dedicated to the Erasmus+ Programme 2024 scheduled on 6 December 2023 between 10.00h and 12.30h (CET).
- EACEA Info-day on the Erasmus+ Programme 2024 scheduled on 30 January 2024.

For further relevant information, please refer to the [Erasmus+ Guide 2024](#).

### European Commission celebrates the #BeActive Awards 2023



Photo: [#BeActive Awards | Sport](#)

On 23 November, the European Commission has organised the 8th edition of the #BeActive Awards 2023 in Brussels. #BeActive Awards continued to recognise and celebrate outstanding sport-related projects which have been successfully implemented to promote participation in sport and physical activity in the EU Member States and countries associated to the Erasmus+ Programme.

In 2023, the #BeActive Awards has featured four categories:

- #BeActive Across Generation Award aspired to reward projects promoting inter-generational sport, celebrating the fact that everyone can benefit from activities that improve health and well-being.
- #BeActive Education Award aimed to demonstrate how education can encourage kids to be more active in sports and physical activity outside the typical school curriculum dedicated to those activities.
- #BeActive Workplace Award celebrated exemplary activities in the workplace that encourage an active work environment for all employees.
- #BeActive Local Hero Award recognised those individuals who work consistently to motivate others to participate in sport and physical activity in their local community.

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### GAMES Project: 4th Transnational Project Meeting held in Prague



The 4th Transnational Project Meeting (TPM) of the [GAMES project](#) (Guidance to Achieve More Equal Leadership in Sport) was hosted by the Czech Olympic Committee in Prague on 14-15 November 2023.

The GAMES consortium gathers representatives from the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) of Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, North Macedonia, and Türkiye, experts on gender equality and sports governance, such as Professor Kari Fasting (Equal Rights in Sports) and Rowland Jack (I Trust Sport). Besides, the GAMES consortium welcomed the Croatian Olympic Committee and French Olympic Committee who shared their experience, activities, and achievements in promoting gender equality in leadership positions within their NOC and beyond. Hence, by combining academic knowledge, practical experiences, and peer-to-peer exchanges the Transnational Project Meeting aimed to support NOCs in creating concrete strategies to promote gender equality in leadership and decision-making positions.

#### DAY 1

The EOC EU Office and the Czech Olympic Committee opened the two-day meeting by thanking all participants for their attendance and reiterating the scope of the meeting to review the progress of NOCs in the implementation of their National Action Plans (NAPs) and National Launching Events (NLEs), as well as to initiate the discussion on the legacy of the GAMES project beyond March 2024.

After which, a brief overview of the status of the project was provided; accordingly, the consortium was thanked for the timely and valuable contributions in ensuring that the activities and deliverables were duly and timely carried out and submitted, so far.

The consortium engaged in an inspiring discussion and peer-to-peer with each NOC showcasing the implementation of their NLE and the crucial aspects addressed (e.g. objective, target groups, impact, and, legacies). Accordingly, partners engaged in an open discussion in relation to the implementation of their NAPs in 2023 and 2024, addressing the good practices and common challenges, as well as the foreseen next steps and necessary resources.

#### DAY 2

On the second day, the consortium welcomed guest speakers who shared their experiences, activities, and achievements in promoting gender equality in leadership positions within the NOC and beyond. The Croatian Olympic Committee was represented by Maja Poljak (Project Officer) who showcased the activities and initiatives of the NOC's Gender Equality Commission while highlighting the importance of supporting local programmes aiming at increasing the visibility of sportswomen on the pitch and at the workplace. The French Olympic Committee was represented by Amélie Fabre (Gender and Diversity Officer) - who provided a detailed overview of the ["Club des 300"](#) initiative launched by the Gender and Diversity Commission of the NOC. This two-year training programme consists in supporting 300 women to acquire skills in various areas related to sport; and thus, create opportunities for them to be onboarded across national, regional, and local sports governing bodies.

An open-group discussion was then held among the consortium regarding the legacies and sustainability of the project.

In merit, the consortium expressed the value of cooperation partnerships among European NOCs – and the role of the Erasmus+ program as a catalyst for fostering cross-border cooperation.

Accordingly, the consortium discussed opportunities and procedures to sustain the GAMES network beyond 2024. Therefore, the meeting represented a valuable opportunity for partners to exchange ideas and good practices whilst laying the foundation for the establishment of a lasting network committed to tackling gender equality in sport in Europe.

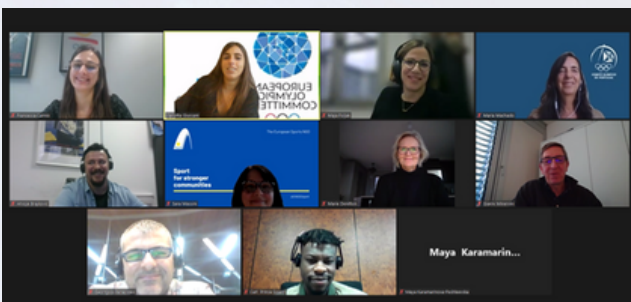
The EOC EU Office and the Czech Olympic Committee concluded the meeting by reiterating the importance of cooperation between NOCs to advance the project; accordingly, the Czech Olympic Committee was warmly thanked for their hospitality and outstanding organisation whilst the entire consortium was thanked for their contributions to boosting gender equality in sports leadership. The GAMES Final Conference is scheduled in Brussels (Belgium) on 8 March 2024.

### Background Information

The GAMES project is a 24-month project co-funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Sport Programme 2021 and coordinated by the EOC EU Office. It promotes integrity and good governance in sports by advocating for structural and cultural changes regarding gender equality in leadership and decision-making positions among NOCs and their member federations. The EOC EU Office is implementing GAMES together with 8 NOCs, renowned experts in the field of gender equality and good governance whilst being supported by the International Olympic Committee and EOC GEDI Commission.



## EOC EU Office hosts EU Funding webinar on the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme



On 23 November, the EOC EU Office continued its series of webinars dedicated to the topic of EU funding. The eighth webinar was dedicated to the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme and brought together 20 attendees from 10 National Olympic Committees, as well as 3 sport federations. The webinar provided attendees with valuable insights into the CERV Programme, its structure and priorities, as well as the practicalities of the application/submission procedures.

It was complemented by the testimonial from the NOC of Croatia and opportunities for questions and answers to further reinforce awareness of potential opportunities for sport stakeholders under the CERV Programme.

The webinar was opened by the EOC EU Office which warmly invited partners and European NOCs to engage with the financial support available through the CERV Programme. The presentation touched upon the key objectives, priorities, and eligibility criteria in terms of activities, stakeholders, and countries, as well as managing authorities, funding mechanisms and available financial resources.

Following this general presentation, the EOC EU Office provided a more in-depth overview of the four strands of the CERV Programme, underlining their interconnectedness and relevance for sport.



In addition, an overview of the foreseen calls for proposals and a series of project examples in the field of sport were presented under each strand. Notably, it was reiterated that the CERV Programme is not sport-specific: there are no sport-specific priorities and sports organisations are not the primary beneficiaries. However, in some cases sport is explicitly mentioned in the call for proposals, or sport-related projects might be eligible to contribute to the scope/objectives of specific calls, even if not explicitly mentioned in the Call documents.

Furthermore, the webinar was enriched by the testimonial of the Croatian Olympic Committee – represented by Maja Poljak (Project Officer) – who gave an example of how to approach non-sport-specific EU Funding Programmes, as well as sharing valuable insights and advice on the application and evaluation procedure for the CERV Programme.

Following up on the testimonial, the EOC EU Office presented the technical aspects of the application and submission procedure for the CERV Programme, including insights and useful tips/recommendations on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal, the procedure for acquiring the PIC, identifying relevant calls for proposals, and submitting a project proposal under the CERV Programme.

The EOC EU Office also provided an overview of the available calls for proposals under the CERV Programme, including open and forthcoming calls in 2024, highlighting the main opportunities relevant to sports stakeholders – whether sport is explicitly mentioned in the call for proposals or not.

Finally, participants had opportunities for questions and answers, as well as to share remarks, feedback, and common challenges in accessing the CERV Programme.

The EOC EU Office would like to thank once again all participants for their interest and is ready to support its partners and European NOCs on their way to applying for the CERV Programme. FURTHER INFORMATION Spanish Council Presidency

### EOC EU Office hosts EU Funding webinar on the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme

On 22 November, during the plenary session in Strasbourg, the European Parliament rejected the European Commission's [proposal for a regulation](#) (June 2022) titled "Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products," or "Pesticides Regulation".

By revising an already existing text, the European Commission aimed at minimizing the health and environmental hazards linked to the use of pesticides, ultimately reducing the use of pesticides by 50% by 2030.

While not being the main target of the Regulation, sport was directly affected by the new text, which aimed at banning the use of all

pesticides in so-called "sensitive areas" which included "an area used by the general public, such as a public park or garden, recreation or sports grounds, or a public path". Discussions within the European Parliament's Committees for the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and Agriculture (AGRI) had led to [reduced obligations](#) for the sport sector, with amendments proposing to keep sports grounds out of the zero-pesticides obligations, or to only keep "freely accessible" pitches in the scope.

After a year and a half of negotiations on this highly controversial file, a majority of Members of the European Parliament, mostly from the right (EPP) and far-right (ECR) groups, rejected the text as a whole.

With the European Parliament failing to adopt its position on the Regulation, negotiations with the Council of the EU (representing governments) and the European Commission will not go forward. In theory a “second reading” (ie. a second round of discussions on the text) is possible. In practice, this most likely represents the end of the road for the Pesticides Regulation which will not see the daylight during this parliamentary mandate (ending in May 2024).

The impossible agreement between Members of the European Parliament on this file is another example of a broader tendency of a scattered European Parliament, increasingly influenced by far-right groups, especially regarding environment-related files.

The EOC EU Office has actively followed this file and remains at your disposal, should you have any questions or comments.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

[European Parliament position’s summary](#)

[European Parliament press release](#)

## The EU General Budget for 2024 received final approval

Following long negotiations, the EU 2024 General Budget was [adopted](#) by the European Parliament after the Council of the EU’s approval. The total budget for 2024 is €189.4 billion in commitments, payments are set at €142.6 billion. As a key priority of the 2024 budget, EU funding programmes were raised, including increases of €60 million for Erasmus+, €85 million for Horizon Europe, €20 million to the LIFE.

### How is the EU annual budget adopted?

The goal of budgetary authorities is to establish the overall sum and distribution of the EU’s annual spending, along with the necessary funding and the supervision of budget implementation. The procedure for the 2024 EU general budget was conducted as explained below.

The first step was taken by the European Commission who submitted a [draft general budget](#) to the European Parliament and Council of the EU in June 2023. The Council adopted its position in July.

The Parliament amended the Council’s position in October 2023 in a [resolution](#) demanding increased funding for programmes and policies for the EU’s long-term budget – namely the 2021-2027 Multi Financial Framework ([MFF](#)) – that are crucial for addressing the consequences of the war in Ukraine and global challenges and supporting young people. As the Council failed to agree on the revision of the MFF, the Conciliation Committee – represented by the Presidents of the European Parliament and the Council – was convened and reached an agreement on 11 November. The Council [endorsed](#) the joint agreement on 20 November while the Parliament finally adopted the final version of the 2024 EU budget on 22 November 2023.

### EU Budget for 2024 and implications for the Erasmus+ programme

The EU budget for 2024 comprises a net increase of over €112 million above the draft budget. In comparison to the Commission’s draft budget, the Parliament received almost €660 million in reinforcements for its key political priority initiatives.



**Figure 1 – 2024 EU budget by MFF headings**

2024 budget, € million, current prices

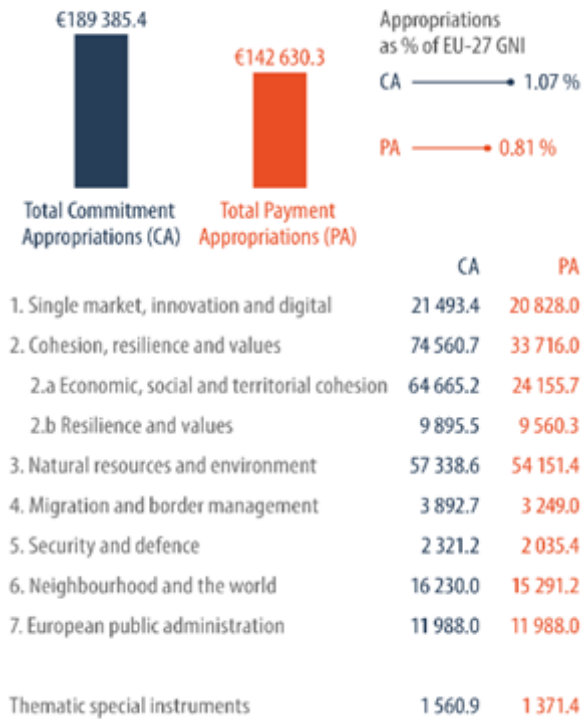


Fig1: [Council of the EU](#), 15 November 2023

Notably, there is a rise in funding for various areas, such as humanitarian aid (increased by €250 million), the EU's southern and eastern neighbourhood through the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI – Global Europe) with a boost of €150 million, the Horizon Europe research program (seeing an increase of €85 million, which includes €25 million for health research), Erasmus+ receiving €60 million, specifically for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the Connecting Europe Facility getting an additional €30 million, support for young farmers receiving €20 million, and the LIFE program being allocated an extra €20 million.

In a situation where the cost of living is on the rise, Erasmus+ receives an additional €60 million, which especially highlights the enhancing accessibility for individuals facing fewer opportunities. The increase in the budget is likely to positively impact funding opportunities for sports-related initiatives and projects.

Additionally, in comparison to the 2023 budget, the increased 2024 budget benefits other funding programmes related to sports such as the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme which received an increase of €4.5 million, rising to €219.5 million while the Pilot projects and Preparatory Actions (PPPAs) amounts to almost €107.4 million for a package of 46 PPPAs.

### Next steps

After reaching an agreement on the fourth annual budget, MEPs expect to obtain an agreement with the Council before the end of the year on the mid-term adjustment of the [EU's long-term budget](#). This will pave the path for significant increased allocations in early 2024 via the Commission's proposed amending budget. The anticipated MFF increase intends to give Ukraine with medium-term assistance, improve flexibility and crisis response capacities, reinforce the EU's strategic autonomy in 2024, and expand efforts in areas such as migration and foreign policy. The 2024 EU budget will officially enter into force on 1 January 2024.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

#### [The Budgetary Procedure](#)

[Joint text on the draft General Budget of the EU for the financial year 2024 approved by the Conciliation Committee under the budgetary procedure](#)



### PARTNERS' CORNER

## Fruitful discussions at the 2023 EOC EU Office Special Competence Seminar

The annual Special Competence Seminar organised by the EOC EU Office took place on 29-30 November in hybrid form. Partner NOCs and sport federations gathered to address, share and discuss the topics on the rich agenda, including policy topics and funding issues related to sport in Europe, but also upcoming activities and developments for the year 2024.

### DAY 1: EU policy and ongoing law cases related to sport

After the welcome of EOC EU Office Director and introduction of its new partner, the European Equestrian Federation, the team of the EOC EU Office, provided its partners with an update on current policies that impact sport.

Beginning with gender equality and the Spanish Council Presidency, continuing with files of the Green Deal, including the ban of microplastics and lead, while also addressing athletes' rights, money laundering and a proposal for cross-border associations, the partners of the EOC EU Office received a comprehensive overview on policies that either directly or indirectly and unintentionally affect sport. Additionally, The EOC EU Office showcased how policies are being translated into tangible actions through the EU-funded projects GAMES, OCEAN and SIGGS 3.0.

Moving closer towards the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris 2024, partners once more received an update on the current positions of International Sport Federations concerning the participation of individual neutral athletes from Russia.



Photo: Antoine Duval (Asser Institute), with Folker Hellmund (EOC EU Office)

Highlighting even more how EU-level actions impact sport, the EOC EU Office was honoured to welcome Antoine Duval from the Asser Institute during an engaging and informative session on current legal cases. Looking at the Semenya and RFC Seraing case, he shed light on the question on the future of CAS in the context of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice. Furthermore, setting the scene for the expected rulings of 21 December of the European Court of Justice, he introduced the context of the ISU and European Super League Case in light of EU competition law and transnational sports governance.

A lively discussion with partners followed up, facilitated by Katarzyna Gorgol-Maeder from the IOC to point out the extent to which these presumably landmark cases affect sport at large and not just the sports (football, ice skating) at hand.

Looking ahead to 2024, partners were invited to discuss activities of the EOC EU Office for a year that is dominated by the European Parliament elections, the renewal of the College of Commissioners but also the adoption of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2025-2028 during the Belgian Council Presidency. The EOC EU Office invites you all to stay posted for upcoming online roundtables, webinars, and further special activities.



### Day 2: EU funding, Esports and Council of Europe

In a timely fashion, an overview of the current evaluation of the Erasmus+ programme conducted by EU institutions was given together with a presentation of the results of an analysis of the past calls within the Erasmus+ programme provided by the EOC EU Office. As a key take-away, partners were told that Erasmus+ offers relevant funding opportunities for organised sport that are currently not exploited to their maximum. This message comes at a perfect time with the publication of the Erasmus+ 2024 programme guide (see dedicated article) and led to a first exchange of ideas for proposals.

Staying with the timely topics, participants got to exchange with Vincent Pereira, IOC Head of Esports on the recently held Olympic Esports Week in Singapore and the future ambitions of the IOC with regards to Esports.

These ambitions are still relatively new to the Olympic movement, but the interest of NOCs to know more about the future developments and their role in them was undeniable.

The Special Competence Seminar was closed by Alexandre Husting, Sport Attaché of Luxembourg to the EU and Chair of the Council of Europe EPAS and CAHAMA group. In his two-fold role, he provided honest insights into the scope and processes of the Council of Europe and its various tools and ways to address sport but also reflecting on the creation of the upcoming EU Work Plan for Sport.

The EOC EU Office thanks all its partners who participated in the Special Competence Seminar and shared perspectives from their national context, and feedback on the EOC EU Office's activities. Takeaways will nourish reflections and exchanges for the months to come.



### UPCOMING EVENTS

**07 - 08 December 2023**

EOC European Union and International Relations Commission (EOC EU Office, Brussels)

**13 December 2023**

Expert Group on Green Sport (European Commission, Brussels)

**21 December 2023**

EOC EU Office Board Meeting (online)



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