



## European Union and Sport

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## European Union and Sport

### EOC President Hickey meets Commissioner Navracsics

On 1 December 2014, Patrick Hickey, President of the European Olympic Committees (EOC) met Commissioner Tibor Navracsics in order to exchange views on the future European Sport Policy. The meeting took place in Milan on the occasion of the EU Sport Forum 2014.

President Hickey expressed his wish to deepen the relationship with the EU Commission and invited the Commissioner to the opening of the first European Games in Baku in June 2015 and to the European Evening of Sports organised by the EOC EU Office in Brussels on 6 May 2015. In the meeting President Hickey explained the concept of the European Games and stressed that these Games are not intended to copy the Olympic Games. In Baku, more than 6000 Athletes will compete in 20 different sports. 11 sports will use the European Games as a qualification event for the Olympic Games in Rio 2016. In May 2015, the EOC will decide on the host city of the second edition of the European Games in

2019. Six cities have already expressed their interest.

Regarding European Sport Policy, EOC President Hickey raised his concerns about the new data protection reform and its potential impact on sport. He underlined the necessity that the new frame still allows sport federations to receive and exchange sensitive data linked to the fight against doping and match fixing. The European Institutions will start the Trilogue negotiations most likely in late spring 2015. With regard to the Erasmus+ Sports chapter, Mr. Hickey stressed the need for simplified procedures in order to boost the participation of regional and local sport actors. In this context, he referred to the number of participants, the pre-financing modalities and the acceptance of voluntary work. The Commissioner took note of the concrete proposals and expressed his interest to hold meetings with the Olympic Movement, including the IOC, on a regular basis.

### Sports Ministers Council Meeting

On 25 November 2014, the European Sports Ministers came together in Brussels for the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting. During this formal meeting, the Ministers discussed two main issues: "The Council conclusions on sport as a driver of innovation and economic growth" and "Sport and physical activity at school age".

As an introduction the Italian Presidency presented some of the main findings of the dialogue with sport stakeholders which show the importance of sport for the economy.

The Council adopted the conclusions highlighting "the importance of research and innovation in sport and its positive effects on other sectors of the economy, as well as its potential to create jobs". Furthermore, the conclusions emphasise the need for a cross-sectoral and cross-border approach and underline that the environment for sports-based research and product development should be improved. In this regard, the Council also asks the Member States to make more use of the EU Funding Programmes in the field of sport.



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Regarding the debate on sport and physical activity of school-aged children, the Ministers discussed concrete measures to improve children's level of activity both inside and outside of school. Within the majority of the Member States, there is a decrease of physical activity in school-aged children. The most vulnerable groups are teenagers and girls who spend more time doing other activities or who do not have the necessary resources at their disposal. Another reason, with view to organized sport, is that many do not want to compete in their sport, so they are looking for less competitive activities. The Ministers agreed that physical activity plays an important societal and

educative role. They came up with proposals on how to stop the negative trend, including e.g. an increase of cooperation between schools and sport associations or the development of new methods for physical education classes.

In addition to the two main topics discussed, the Ministers received information from the EU representative at the WADA Foundation Board, and were asked by the French delegation to sign the Convention on match-fixing.

**Further information:** [Press release](#)

## European Olympic Committees sign partnership agreement on European Week of Sport

On 1 December 2014, the European Olympic Committees, represented by President Patrick Hickey, signed a partnership agreement with the European Commission on the European Week of Sport (EWoS). The Commission was represented by the new European Commissioner for Sport, Mr. Tibor Navracsics. A signature ceremony was organised in the framework of the EU Sport Forum in Milan to formalise this agreement.

With this partnership agreement, the EOC commits to encourage its members to contribute to the objectives of the European Week of Sport. In this regard, the EOC recommends to link existing national sport events organised by the Olympic Movement, such as events in the framework of the Olympic Day (on 23 June) to the European Week of Sport. Many National Olympic Committees have already established successful events at national level. The implementation of the Week should therefore be in close cooperation with the NOCs. Furthermore, the EOC agrees to use



its communicational tools to inform its members and to actively promote the European Week. The EOC EU Office will play an important role in this regard and has already contributed to the discussions on the future EWoS during the Advisory Board, which recently met on 14 October and 12 November.

The European Commission also took the occasion of the EU Sport Forum to provide



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more details on the EWoS. This Week will take place between Monday 7 and Sunday 13 September 2015. At European level, there will be a number of focus days with a particular emphasis on the "location" to practice sports and be physically active. Saturday and Sunday will be specifically dedicated to sport clubs. These focus days will be combined with one flagship event related to a specific topic (e.g. gender equality in sport). For the coordination of the national week, the countries have been asked to appoint national coordinators. It is likely that a number of NOCs will take up this role. With a specific call for proposals within the Erasmus+ Sports Programme with a deadline on 22 January 2015, the European Commission intends to finance

not-for-profit European sport events and collaborative partnerships specifically related to the EWoS. Specific criteria, such as on the amount of partners or the average grant, have been drawn up. More information can be found on the website of the Sport Unit of the European Commission.

Together with the EOC, 13 other organisations (ACES Europe, EFCS, ENGSO, EPFL, EuropeActive, European Golf, FESI, FIFPRO, ISCA, ICSS Europe, Special Olympics, TAFISA and UEFA) signed a similar partnership on the EWoS.

**Further information:**

[Website Sport Unit - European Commission](#)

## EU Sport Forum in Milan

On 1-2 December, the EU Sport Forum 2014 took place in Milan. Organised by the European Commission, the Forum is the biggest annual gathering of and platform for European sports policy stakeholders. It attracts around 300 participants from the most important sport organisations and institutions in Europe. The Forum was followed by a meeting of EU sport directors.

The Sport Forum was the first opportunity for the new Commissioner for sport, **Tibor Navracsics**, to address the sport sector, to reveal and discuss his priorities. He outlined three main priorities for the European Commission: (1) the promotion of the grassroots dimension of sport; (2) tackling big threats to sport such as doping, match-fixing and violence; and (3) growth, innovation and job creation as a potential of sport. To succeed in the implementation of these priorities, Commissioner Navracsics has committed himself to work very closely with all sport sector stakeholders as well as with other Commissioners and to mainstream sport-related aspects of other

policy fields such as data protection within the newly created cluster-based organisation of the Commissioners' College. In this regard, he stated that he intends to be "*the voice of sport within the European Commission*".

During the Forum, EOC President **Patrick Hickey** participated in a high-level discussion on the future European sport policy. Recalling that Europe is the only continent without a large scale multi-sport event, he summarised the process leading up to the inaugural 2015 European Games, which he hopes "*will turn into a sustainable model*", and spoke briefly about the Olympic Agenda 2020 and the recommendations linked to the bidding process for the organisation of the Games. "*An indication that things have to change is that there is no European candidate for the Winter Olympic Games 2022*" he concluded. Referring to EU priorities, he called upon the European Commission to make European funding and especially the Erasmus+ Sport Programme



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more accessible for real grassroots sport organisations.

The agenda also featured sessions on multi-sport clubs, the European Week of Sport (see article on this in this Monthly Report), presentations of recent studies and a summary of the first year of Erasmus+ Sports. The Forum also offered the opportunity to projects financed under the Preparatory Actions 2012 and 2013 to showcase their project activities and results.

During the second day, a panel debate was organised on the economic and social impact of major sport events. The discussion focused on three topics: legacy aspects, the economic impact and the social impact of events. **Simon Clegg**, Chief Operating Officer of the Baku European Games 2015, took part in the discussion. He stressed that a clear vision and mission, especially during the bidding procedure, are key aspects to create legacy, stating that both legacy and sustainability of major sport events need to be the key components of any bid and of any host country contract. He also highlighted the Olympic Agenda 20+20 recommendations and the foreseen changes

to the bidding process proposed by the Olympic Agenda 2020 in this regard.

Regarding infrastructure, he referred to the need of a more flexible approach regarding the requirements. For the European Games in Baku, a clear assessment was made taking into account the needs of the population. The venues will therefore consist of a number of permanent stadia (e.g. national stadium and aquatics centre) and temporary venues.

Mr. Clegg also noted that: "*People should be able to enjoy the event even if they are not big sport fans or cannot take part in sport activities,*" stressing the importance of cultural and educational programmes and citizens' involvement. This goes also for the inaugural European Games, which Mr. Clegg hopes, will be "*the big bang moment*" for Europe.

All presentations and recordings of panel discussions and debates will be available on the Sport Unit's website.

**Further information:**

[Website Sport Unit - European Commission](#)

## Programme of the Latvian EU Presidency on Sport

As of 1 January 2015, Latvia will take over the EU Presidency. In the last meeting of the Council Working Party on Sport, Latvia presented the first concrete dates:

- 8 January: First meeting of the Council Working Party
- 16 February: Conference on physical activity and development of skills, Riga
- 17 February: Sport Directors meeting, Riga
- 19 May: Sport Minister Council

The Presidency will mainly focus on the implementation of the Sport Ministers Work Plan (2014-17). More concretely, Latvia intends to adopt the Council conclusions on "Sport and development of skills".

Furthermore the Council of Europe's Convention against the manipulation of sport competitions, HEPA and a better coordinated fight against doping also will be on the agenda.



## Ceremony of the European Capital of Sport

Over two hundred participants including mayors, representatives of NOCs, Olympic winners (e.g. Fabien Gilot, French Olympic Champion and two-times World Champion in swimming), MEPs, and other sport stakeholders took part in an award ceremony on the European Capital of Sport organised by the European Capitals and Cities of Sport Federation (ACES) in the European Parliament on 19 November 2014. The Ceremony kicked off with a panel discussion with the Members of the European Parliament and the Deputy Director General of DG Education and Culture, Jens Nymand-Christensen. The speakers' interventions revolved mainly around societal aspects of sport and its positive contribution to social inclusion and integration on a general level and in particular in the municipal environment.

Together with a number of MEPs, Mr. Nymand-Christensen mentioned the

upcoming inaugural edition of the European Week of Sport and Mr. Tarabella expressed the likelihood of the EP Sport Intergroup being approved by the Parliament in the upcoming weeks.

The highlight of the ceremony was the award of the European Capital of Sport flag which was handed over from the city of Cardiff to the Italian sport Mecca, Torino. Reflecting on the development of the past year, the Mayor of Cardiff concluded "Sport changes lives. We have seen it in Cardiff" and added that driven by this European recognition, the city has "transformed its communities" invested in new infrastructures, supported sport in schools and improved the accessibility of sport to the disabled.

European Capitals of Sport for 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively will be Prague, Marseille, and Sofia.

## Internal and visits

### Change of staff at EOC EU Office

As of 15 November 2014, there has been a change of staff at the EOC EU Office.



Former colleague and Policy Officer Charlotte Boetticher, who represented the DOSB for two-and-a-half years at our office, has left to join the Regional Sport Confederation of Berlin.

The EOC Office would like to thank Charlotte for her competent and committed work for the EOC EU Office and partner organisations

and wishes her all the best in her future career. The EOC EU Office is losing a highly appreciated colleague and friend!



Replacing Charlotte, the EOC EU Office welcomes Felix Schäfer as policy officer detached from the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB). Felix is an active football player and has previously gained experience in EU lobbying and acquired an inside view on the European



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Commission by a 6 months traineeship. He can be contacted at

schaefer@euoffice.eurolympic.org or at +32 2 738 03 26.

## 43rd EOC General Assembly in Baku

On 21-22 November 2014, the delegates of the 49 NOCs gathered in Baku, Azerbaijan, for the annual General Assembly of the European Olympic Committees. The Assembly was also attended by IOC President Thomas Bach, who received the EOC Order of Merit, IOC Honorary President Jacques Rogge and the President of the state of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev. During the second day of the Assembly, the EOC also awarded the Olympic Laurels to Gudrun Doll-Tepfer (Germany), Guido De Bondt (Belgium), Zbigniew Pacelt (Poland) and Oleksandr Volkov (Ukraine).

In addition to the numerous reports on the various events and activities of the Commissions, one of the main elements on the agenda was the preparation of the first edition of the European Games. The Organising Committee provided an extensive update on the Games that will take place between 12 and 28 June 2015 in Baku. During this first edition, 6000 athletes will compete in 20 different sports.

### European Union

One part of the agenda was also dedicated to European Union affairs. Neinar Seli, President of the NOC of Estonia and Chair of the EOC EU Commission, presented the composition of the EOC EU Commission and the date of the first meeting. He explained that: *"As chair of the EOC EU Commission, my main goal is to maintain and improve the working relationship we have with the European Union. This year, we have a new EU Work Plan for Sport with three priorities: the integrity of sport, the economic dimension of sport and the link between sport and society. The work of our*

*Commission will be in line with these priorities."*



Folker Hellmund, Director of the EOC EU Office, highlighted the fact that 2014 was a year of change, both at the political level in Brussels and within the EOC EU Office. Furthermore, he outlined the main challenges of the Olympic Movement in 2015 e.g. the new data protection reform and the implementation of the Sport Ministers Work Plan (2014-17). EOC President Patrick Hickey thanked the EOC EU Office for its active work in Brussels and congratulated the team on the new brochure "Funding for sport in the European Union 2014-2020", which was highly appreciated by the various delegates. He also mentioned the good cooperation with ENGSO as a strategic partner.

Jean-Michel Saive, Chair of the EOC Athletes' Commission, presented the objectives of the Commission by stating for instance that: *"We want to make the voice of the athletes heard at EU level, and within the Olympic Movement of Europe. We are at the heart of the Olympic Movement and we want to make*



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*that heart pulse!*” Regarding the relations with the EU, he added that: *“the EOC Athletes’ Commission must be much more present in Brussels if it is to make the voice of Olympic athletes heard as it deserves.”*

During the entire event, a well frequented information desk of the EOC EU Office was also at the disposal of the delegates.

**Further information:**

[EOC General Assembly opens in Baku](#)  
[European NOCs award Thomas Bach EOC Order of Merit](#)  
[IOC Press release](#)

## EOC EU Office hosts its annual Special Competence Seminar

On 12-13 November the EOC EU Office organised its annual “Special Competence Seminar” for its partner organisations. Representatives from 17 partner organisations attended the two-day seminar.

The discussions revolved around recent changes within the EU institutions (i.e. the new Commission and Parliament, the Council’s EU Work Plan for sport 2014-2017), priorities identified by the EOC EU Office regarding the societal role and the economic dimension of sport, as well as the integrity of sport. A special session was also organised on EU funding for sport and the new call for Erasmus+ Sports was presented.

Various external speakers from the EU institutions took part in the discussion, including Yves Le Lostecque (Head of Sport Unit, European Commission), Alexandre Husting (Luxembourg, Council of the EU) and Ansgar Held (DG Competition, European Commission). During the Seminar, the EOC EU Office also presented its new website and brochure on “Funding for sports in the European Union 2014-2020”. The seminar concluded with an exchange on the activities of the EOC EU Office and on future project ideas. The EOC EU Office would like to thank all of its partner organisations for their active participation and contributions throughout the Seminar.

### Dates in December 2014

8-9	IOC 127th Extraordinary Session, Monaco
11	Italian EU Presidency event on “Specific nature of sport and young players training in European Union”, Rome
17	EOC EU Office Board Meeting, Brussels
22/12-	EOC EU Office closed
2/01/2015	

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