

Tweets of the month



EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice Nov 27

The @EOCmedia General Assembly takes place today as an online meeting. @iocmedia PT Bach highlights the importance of cooperation with European institutions to safeguard the European Sport Model based on solidarity and values. He thanks @GabrielMariya for her strong commitment.

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Our @POINTS_EU Project recently published tools to support #integrity activities available for all sport organisations:

Guidelines for Single Points of contact for integrity <http://points-project.com/documents-and-publications/>...

SIGGS self-evaluation tool for Good Governance: <http://siggs.nova-gov.com>

EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice Nov 18

Thank you #RINGSproject partners for interesting discussions on strategic management of the NOCs & public affairs! Special thanks to the speakers prof Preuss @uni_mainz, @yaksoy2014 & Nese @TOC_Olympic, @olympic_li, @MikkelJLarsen & @LouiseBiede @DIFidraet and @nocnsf

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Today we are in a roundtable discussion on future EU Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030. Thank you Commissioners @helenadalli & @GabrielMariya for taking into account the role of sport & physical activity in the Strategy & for organising the discussion.

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

It is not yet clear under which conditions the Olympic Games will ultimately take place. However, given the rapid progress in the development of a vaccine, it seems certain that the Olympic Games in Tokyo will take place in 2021. In view of the immense uncertainties that had to be and still have to be overcome, the organisation of the Games would be a very positive news for the organisers, sports federations, athletes and fans. Without them some federations would lose the most important showcase of their sport, with massive economic and sport development consequences.

The German Presidency of the Council of the European Union is coming to an end and major decisions are still pending. In particular, the vetoes of Hungary and Poland in connection with the link between a rule-of-law mechanism and the EU budget appear to be almost impossible to solve at present. The fronts are so hardened that this conflict could damage the EU as a whole.

The Brexit issue also has the potential to further worsen the uncertain economic situation of the EU and Great Britain. However, Brussels does consider good chances that domestic political pressure on the British Prime Minister will ultimately lead to a regulated withdrawal at the last minute.

The original hope that the Multi-Annual Financial Framework would be adopted and all funding programmes negotiated in time prior to the upcoming Portuguese Presidency will not be fulfilled. This deadlock will lead to considerable delays in the implementation of the new structural funds' programmes and in the tendering of programmes such as Erasmus+ Sport.

The European Commission's priorities in terms of content and in particular its announced strategies in various policy areas such as the environment, equality or people with disabilities should be seen by organised sport as an invitation to become even more involved and visible at European level. Experiences and expertise, which are abundant at national level, should be more strongly integrated into the discussions at European level.

The discussion organised by the German Presidency on the Work Plan of the EU Ministers for Sport 2021-2024 has finally led to a good result. The issues relevant to sport were included. However, the success of this Work Plan will depend essentially on the extent to which the Member States and the European Commission will be prepared to involve organised sport in its concrete implementation. It should be less about producing new papers and more about jointly addressing concrete challenges of the non-profit-making, value-based European Sport Model.

Enjoy your read!

Kind regards.



Folker Hellmund

Director EOC EU Office

EUROPEAN UNION AND SPORT

EU Commission organises high-level conference on the recovery of the sport sector after the Covid-19 crisis

On 17 November the European Commission organised a high-level conference entitled "The recovery of the sport sector after the Covid-19 crisis: the way ahead". More than 600 participants from 54 countries followed the virtual conference. The conference aimed at discussing the tremendous challenges sports actors are currently facing as well as to debate on how to recover from the pandemic's impact.

In her opening remarks EU Commissioner responsible for sport, Mariya Gabriel, stressed the potential of sport to respond to the crisis: "Even more than before we need the power and the values of sport to cope with the situation, to come together, and more importantly **to use sport as an integral part to the solutions of this crisis**"

Thereafter, IOC President Thomas Bach provided the keynote speech, stressing that solidarity and a value-based approach are more important than ever to face the crisis. Bach therefore called for the strengthening of the European sport model: "**We need to strengthen the European Sport Model**, its values and its robust funding mechanism. It is something that we Europeans can really be proud of. **It reflects the values of solidarity, inclusion and peace.** It reflects the specific organisation of sport in Europe and its fundamental social and educational function". As central principles of the European Sport Model, Bach mentioned financial solidarity and the openness of sporting competitions. Furthermore, Bach presented sport as a cost-effective and highly efficient instrument to strengthen social cohesion as well as physical and mental health. He therefore called on all governments to integrate sport into their post-Corona recovery plans. Following his reflections, two video messages were projected, one showing

the impact of Covid-19 on major sporting events and the other illustrating the situation of the athletes.

Jean Gracia, President of the European Athletics Championships Paris 2020, shared a testimonial on how Covid-19 impacted their plans and forced to cancel the Championships. Gracia stressed that the decision was not easy to take but making the best out of it, e.g. lead to the organisation of an E-Forum.

EOC Athletes Commission Chair, Gerd Kanter, gave a testimony on the impact of the crisis on athletes. In his contribution, he explained that the main source of income for most athletes is their participation in competitions. The crisis has therefore led to numerous revenue losses. Postponed and cancelled events had also led to premature career endings for some athletes. Furthermore, many athletes found it difficult to maintain their motivation, especially in view of the unclear calendar of events. Finally, Kanter was also concerned about the weakening of doping controls due to the crisis.

The individual statements were followed by two panel discussions. The first panel discussion was entitled "Key challenges and lessons learnt from the crisis for grassroots sport organisations".

Stephan Mayer, Parliamentary Secretary of the State, Germany's Presidency of the Council of the EU underlined that Covid-19 is a huge challenge for the structures of sport. Therefore, in his opinion, support for the sports sector is very important. Referring to the social and health potentials of sport, he said: "**The benefit of investing in sport is tremendously high and still underestimated**".

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Julien Zylberstein, Chief of Governance & Stakeholder Affairs of UEFA pointed out the importance of modern sports infrastructure to provide access to sport for as many people as possible. To this end, he called for better access for sport to the funding from the European Structural and Investment Funds. Furthermore, he saw the European Sport Model as a good framework to manoeuvre together through the crisis.

The second panel of the conference discussed "The impact of the crisis on growth and jobs in the sport sector and possible ways to recover".

Tiago Brandão, Minister of Education, Portugal confirmed that the upcoming Portuguese Presidency will also address the recovery of the sport sector, in particular in economic terms and with regard to jobs in sport. He pleaded in favour of strengthening cooperation with other thematic areas: "Sport will not be able to recover on its own but together with other sectors".

Kirstie Simpson (Secretary General from EOSE) presented the latest figures on employment in the sports sector. In the first quarter of 2020 alone, there was a **3.3% decline in the number of people employed in sport** compared to 2019. This is particularly alarming as the effects of the corona pandemic were only slowly becoming apparent in the first quarter, so that a further increase in job losses in sport is to be feared. Over the same

period, the job losses across sectors in the EU as a whole were 1.9%. This shows that sport has been much harder hit by the impact of the pandemic than other sectors.

Finally, Commissioner Gabriel gave some concluding remarks: "As Thomas Bach said, the values of sport are needed more than ever to have a human centred and inclusive society. **Our European Model of Sport is unique in this regard because it promotes values and solidarity. This Model needs to be preserved and promoted.**"

Gabriel also presented some key elements of a study on the impact of the corona crisis on sport in Europe (see a separate article of this Monthly Report). The study estimates that the **share of sports-related GDP will decrease by about 10% in 2020**. Against this background, Mrs Gabriel pointed the Commission's horizontal corona measures and called on sport stakeholders to contact their respective Member States and make greater use of the funds such as CRII and CRII+ or the temporary framework for State Aids.

[FURTHER INFORMATION](#)

[Re-Watch the conference](#)

[Keynote Speech by IOC President Bach](#)

[Concluding remarks by Commissioner Gabriel](#)

Council of Europe 16th Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport kicks off

While the event was initially planned to take place in Athens, the opening of the [16th Conference of Sport Ministers](#) of Council of Europe took place virtually on 5 November.

The event was opened by Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, and Miltiadis Varvitsiotis, Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece. Both emphasised the importance of human rights in sport and through

sport, referring to the existing conventions on different issues linked directly or indirectly to sport (Convention of Human Rights, Macolin Convention, Istanbul Convention, etc.).

Several speakers then joined the Conference, starting first with French Minister of Sport Roxana Maracineanu who stressed the importance of physical activity in a period of lock-

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downs and restrictions, as well as the role of physical health in the fight against the virus. Furthermore, she talked about the French strategy during the two lockdowns regarding sport, highlighting that individual amateur sport, at least, was always permitted. On the topic of Covid-19 and sport, Christophe de Kepper, Director General of the IOC, also stressed that the sport movement was undergoing several challenges, but that one should not forget that "Sport is a low-cost tool to tackle social issues". He directly mentioned the European Sport Model as a key concept, wishing it to be included in the new version of the Sports Charter.

Going more into the details of human rights and sport, Lefteris Avgenakis, Greek Deputy Minister of Sport, reminded of some crucial issues still to be solved, such as safety, integrity, doping, match-fixing and protection of children, - the latter also been highlighted by French Minister Roxana Maracineanu, - all topics which should be discussed deeper during the next conference in December. He also described some of the measures taken by Greece in the field, including the ratification of the Macolin Convention.

Gender equality in sport was not forgotten in the list of burning issues, and was illustrated by the testimony of Olympic Polish-American fencer Aleksandra Shelton, who called for more awareness campaigns and legal action in the field.

Last but not least, the importance of good governance in sport was reiterated, and linked with all previous issues mentioned. On the same afternoon, a session on the resolution on the European Sports Charter was organised. The Conference of Ministers is planned to adopt this resolution, together with another resolution on the human rights in sport, in the beginning of next year. Several speakers raised the importance to include a clear reference to the European Sport Model in the European Sports Charter. EOC EU Office has been actively raising this point throughout the whole process of the renewal of the Charter.

The next session of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Sport will be organised on 7 December focusing on the resolution on human rights in sport. The Ministerial Round Table is scheduled to take place on 15 January 2021 to discuss both resolutions whereas the closing session is foreseen on 11 February 2021.

Agreement on new Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027

On 10 November, the negotiators of the German Council Presidency and the European Parliament [reached an agreement](#) on the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2021-2027. The deal which was brokered during the 12th round of negotiations will still have to be approved by all Member States in the EU Council and by the Plenary of the European Parliament.

Parliament has already signaled that it is [pleased with the outcome](#) of the negotiations. The Commission also [welcomed the agreement](#).

On the side of the Member States, Poland and Hungary have voiced their concerns as the next EU

Budget should be tied to a [new rule of law conditionality](#) that was agreed on by Parliament and Council negotiators on 5 November. Both states have not given their consent so far on the agreement, after the [Council met on 19 November](#) to vote on the package, meaning that the negotiations are ongoing.

Especially the [European Parliament](#) has urged the concerned parties to move forward quickly, without, however, making concessions on the new conditionality agreement. Generally speaking, it is in everyone's interest to find an agreement soon, so that the funding programmes can be implemented. However, Poland

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and Hungary are at the moment sticking to their positions strictly and do not want to give their consent for the conditionality. It remains to be seen how and when this deadlock can be solved.

If passed, the new MFF would see an [increase of €16 bn](#) for flagship EU programmes, as compared to the deal that was [reached by EU leaders in July](#). The most relevant for sport include the following:

- + €2.2 bn for Erasmus (final amount: €23.4 bn)
- + €4 bn for Horizon Europe (final amount: €84.9 bn)
- + €3.4 bn for EU4Health (final amount: €5.1 bn)

[This timeline](#) provides a good overview about the whole process. Additionally, the final numbers can be found [here](#) under *Political Compromise Nov 2020* plus the *EP top-up* as well as in [this infographic](#).

Furthermore, negotiations are currently ongoing for the €650 bn [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#) (RRF), which makes up almost 90% of the NextGenerationEU instrument that was specifically set up to assist Member States with their recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. Sport is mentioned in the [Parliament's report](#) on the RRF, which was used as basis to enter into the ongoing interinstitutional negotiations.

It is important to keep in mind that while the budget is set now, the negotiations about the content of the different programmes are still ongoing. The EOC EU Office is working diligently to have sport included in as many programmes as possible, including for the first time in the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the new EU4Health programme. Furthermore, the Office is working to ensure that 2% of the Erasmus budget would be earmarked for sport, which would amount to €468 Mio. This would constitute an increase of more than €200 Mio. compared to the previous MFF 2014-2020.

Study on the Economic Impact of Covid-19 on the Sport Sector in the EU

On 27 November, the European Commission released the long-awaited [study](#), conducted by Ecorys together with SportsEconAustria (SpEA), on the ***Economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the sport sector in the EU***. The study was commissioned by the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) in June. The key aims of the study were to support evidence-based policy making at both national and EU level.

The first part of the study focuses on the economic impact of the crisis, while the second part deals with developing initiatives and measures to mitigate the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic on the sport industry.

The overall assessment is that the sport sector has been significantly impacted by the current crisis and by the lockdown measures in many different Member States, which may lead to a drop of sport-related GDP of up to 10%. The economic analysis also takes into account the difficult financial situations of sport clubs due to low financial reserves and reliance on membership fees and support from volunteers. However, it is important to notice that the study was mainly done prior to the second wave of restrictions and thus we will only see later how drastic the losses e.g. in the number of memberships and ticket revenues will be.

Focusing on the recommendations that the study provides, it is well appreciated that most of them were strongly supported and advocated for by the

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EOC EU Office and the organised sport sector. The EOC EU Office was invited to the expert panel, which was consulted on the recommendations of the study.

The 9 key recommendations are:

1. Continue to publicise and make available funding streams

This includes the relevant recovery measures under the [NextGenerationEU](#) instrument, such as the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) and Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII+). Furthermore, the study recommends including sport in the regional and cohesion funds, specifically referencing the [SHARE Initiative](#).

2. Investigate development of a coordinated EU plan, including for the recovery phase

An EU Action Plan for Sport should, among other things, help with the harmonisation of travel, testing and events as well as the access to financial support for the sport sector.

3. Promote macro-economic data on the importance of the sport sector

Such data should be used to highlight not only the economic importance of the sport sector but also its contribution to other sectors, such as health, tourism, retail and construction.

4. Embed sport in economic and social development strategies, and leverage broader cross-sectoral links, especially with public health, green agenda and other relevant areas

Mainstreaming sport has long been one of the key objectives of the EOC EU Office and the organised sport sector. The invaluable contribution of sport to public health, social cohesion, education and sustainability should be especially highlighted during this pandemic.

5. Ensure that funding opportunities from the Sport Chapter in the Erasmus+ Programme are sufficiently flexible.

Flexibility in order to support partners of Erasmus+ projects e.g. by allowing delivery to change to meet the new pandemic situation rather than adhering to initial plans, extending deadlines for existing and new programmes, clarifying whether funding is still available when Erasmus+ programmes or events have been postponed, reducing administrative requirements, and providing information on upcoming funding sufficiently in advance.

6. Supporting the coordination of sport events across Member States.

This point has been strongly supported by the EOC EU Office as coordination between Member States regarding travel harmonisation measures, including common rules on testing and quarantine, are needed for sport events' organisers to be able to develop responsible plans.

7. Support the development of information sharing and dissemination across stakeholders.

In this regard, the EOC EU Office is working diligently in order to keep its partners updated on all relevant developments at EU level and to ensure the best possible support to help them through the crisis.

8. Use and develop digital options as an integral element of existing sport offerings.

While this depends on the type of sport, it is recommended to use digital options to complement, not replace, existing offers and to keep members engaged, a process that the pandemic has already accelerated.

9. Develop broader emergency preparedness plans.

As a lesson from the crisis, longer-term emergency planning for future crises needs to be prioritised.

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Council of Europe and EPAS activities

Several public conferences and meetings were organised by the Council of Europe and its Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) took place this month.

On 19 November, EPAS Consultative Committee hosted a webinar titled '*Raising awareness on Human Rights in Youth Sports: The Role of Sport Organisations and Educational Institutions*'. The webinar focused on finding a common definition of human rights that are at stake in youth sport; good practices in human rights in youth sport; and education on human rights in sport. The conference was opened by Kole Gjelošhaj, Chair of the EPAS Consultative Committee (CC) who stressed the crucial role of education to protect young athletes and children from violence.

The strategy of the Council of Europe in the field of violence towards young people was presented and announced that the [Tbilisi Declaration on Human Rights in Sport](#) from 2018, will be discussed during the Council of Europe Ministerial Meetings (see a *separate article of this Monthly Report*).

All panellists including, Peter Brüll, Sport Director at the EOC presented their views and their actions in the field, such as the [UEFA Child Safeguarding Toolkit](#), the [SCORE Project of ENGSO](#), or the use of sport events such as the European Youth Olympic Festivals (EYOF) to spread awareness and the positive values of sport. These examples of good practices illustrated the actions taken in the field and could inspire further initiatives.

Leadership dialogue on the Macolin Convention

Moreover, on 24 November, the Council of Europe organised a [public online leadership dialogue](#) on the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (the [Macolin Convention](#)). Deputy Secretary General of the CoE, Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni and the Greek Minister of Sport, Leftérís Avgenákis underlined the importance of fighting the manipulation of sports competitions as part of the larger efforts aimed

at strengthening the integrity of the sector. The Macolin Convention is a good example of how the sports movement and public authorities work hand in hand to tackle a common issue and Mr. Avgenákis expressed his hope that the [dead-lock within the EU](#) would be solved swiftly so that more countries could ratify the Convention. Pâquerette Girard Zapelli (Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer, IOC) recalled the full support of the IOC for the Convention and thanked all actors for their efforts. As non-state party the IOC cannot directly ratify the Convention but, after having been involved in the drafting process, the IOC has already undertaken numerous actions aiming at strengthening the fight against manipulation in sport. This includes the [Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions](#) as a binding instrument for all organisations within the Olympic Movement and several co-operation initiatives with INTERPOL and the UNODC.

National Olympic Committees must also strengthen their actions in this regard and the EOC EU Office is happy to be contributing to these efforts through the ongoing Erasmus+ co-financed [POINTS project](#).

Last but not least, Ilana de Wild from INTERPOL echoed what many other participants had brought up. She commended the good work that is being done by the IOC and the successful cooperation between the Olympic Movement and INTERPOL. While respecting the autonomy of sport organisations in regulating their competitions, she was pleased with the increased collaboration that has been brought about through the setting up of National Platforms.

Closing remarks were left for Nuno Gomes, who reiterated the importance of fighting match-fixing and the manipulation of competitions. In his view, important aspects are the education of athletes and preventative efforts. Furthermore, athletes and their entourage must be encouraged to keep coming forward with credible cases and to

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speak up when they become aware of illegal activities.

The public conference was followed by the [first meeting of the Macolin Committee](#) on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions. The Committee will

monitor the implementation of the Convention and has granted the IOC, INTERPOL and Global Lotteries Monitoring System (GLMS) observer status. The second meeting of the Committee will take place in spring 2021.

Expert Seminar on the 3rd European Week of Sport Beyond Borders

On 11 November, the Sport Unit of the European Commission organised an Expert Seminar on the 3rd European Week of Sport Beyond Borders to exchange on the activities organised during the Week in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries. For the third time, the European Week of Sport (EWoS) was expanded outside the EU countries, and indeed the countries of Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership have become very active to celebrate the Week.

The Seminar was opened by Guglielmo di Cola, Member of the Cabinet of Commissioner Mariya Gabriel, who is responsible for sport. He welcomed the participants and thanked the non-EU countries for their active commitment to the initiative. EOC EU Office Deputy Director Heidi Pekkola reminded the participants that the national weeks of France and the Netherlands, coordinated by the respective NOCs, were an original inspiration to the establishment of the Week at the European level. Furthermore, she also underlined that for the organised sport in Europe it is important that the EWoS is not only an activity for the EU countries, but an initiative for the whole continent as is also indicated in the name of the Week. In addition, she reiterated the wish that the EOC EU Office has been highlighting in several occasions, that it would be important to find financial resources also for the non-Erasmus+

programme countries to implement the Week. In this regard, she thanked DG EAC and Sport Unit for the new initiative to finance the activities of the Week in the Western Balkans by EU4Youth multi-country initiative under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II.

In his keynote IOC member and President of the NOC Ukraine, Sergey Bubka gave an update on the impact of the COVID-19 on the Olympic movement and sport activities at different levels. In addition, he highlighted the commitment of NOC Ukraine to the EWoS and thanked the European Commission for the great cooperation with the Olympic movement in this regard.

The event continued with a Tour de table of the representatives from Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans on their activities and good practices, including contributions by the NOCs Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ukraine. Furthermore, the NOC*NSF of the Netherlands shared experiences and practices from their long experience to inspire the further development of the Week.

The European Week of Sport is an annual event, organised by the European Commission on 23-30 September, to encourage Europeans to #BeActive and to embrace healthy lifestyle.

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EOC EU Office attends a roundtable on Sport and the future EU Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities

On 18 November, an informal roundtable on sport and disability was organised by the cabinet of the European Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli, in cooperation with the cabinet of Commissioner Mariya Gabriel responsible for sport. The event intended to consult sports stakeholders on priorities for the upcoming Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030. Among other sport organisations the EOC EU Office attended the discussion.

This year marks 10 years since the EU ratified the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD). Its Article 30 establishes the right of persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in sporting activities. The future EU Strategy will focus on implementing the UN Convention, and thus the right of persons with disabilities to participate in sport and physical activity will be part of the Strategy.

Participants shared ongoing initiatives and reflections on the current situation and made proposals for action at EU level. A number of key areas, such as participation, training and resources, accessibility, visibility and lack of awareness and knowledge on the needs for inclusion were identified.

In his contribution, EOC EU Office Director Folker Hellmund highlighted that sport should without a doubt be proactively integrated into the upcoming

EU Strategy. As a principle, he highlighted that people with disabilities should always be involved in the discussions and planning of programmes and no discussion should happen without them. Furthermore, he mentioned the importance to constantly work on improving the accessibility of people with disabilities both regarding the sport facilities, but also in other areas such as transportation to the sport venues. In addition, he mentioned the need for further training for coaches and instructors on how to ensure sports activities to be inclusive to persons with disabilities. As concrete EU level activities, Folker Hellmund proposed to conduct a study to evaluate the implementation of UNCRPD Article 30 as well as to work on mainstreaming the support for projects and activities on disabilities and sport from all relevant EU funding programmes, such as the structural funds, EU4Health and Horizon Europe.

Both cabinets were very pleased on the exchanges with the sport organisations and thanked for the contributions, which will feed into the future EU Strategy. The new EU Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030 is supposed to be adopted during the first quarter of 2021.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities](#)

PACE Webinar on violence against women in sport

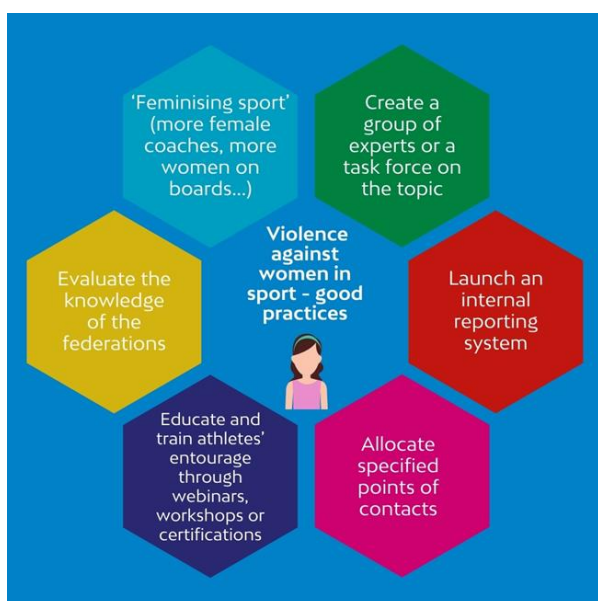
On 10 November, the Parliamentary Network Free from Violence, a group associated to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), organised a [webinar on the topic of “preventing and combating violence against women in sport”](#). This webinar aimed at raising awareness on

the importance of preventing and combating violence against women and girls in sport, as well as exchanging recommendations and good practices on the way forward.

Several panellists with extensive experience were invited. First, Sarah Abitbol was invited as a former

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athlete and herself victim of sexual violence. She mainly addressed the importance of education, dialogue and prevention. Joyce Cook from FIFA, and Beatrice Barbusse from the French Handball Federation then both gave further examples of potential tools and strategies to tackle sexism and violence, while Nadezda Knorre added to this by presenting the vision of Women's Sport International. Good practices were identified such as:



Dagmar Schumacher from UNIFEM welcomed such initiatives and recommended to act also at a global level, by adjusting policies and raising awareness through the mobilisation of role models and by using big sport events.

Last but not least, the creation of an independent body to deal with violence and sexism in sport was discussed by several panellists which also implies the allocation of more resources to create a safe environment in sport. As the journalist who investigated on several scandals, Pierre-Emmanuel Luneau-Daurignac, said, sport is at a cornerstone, regarding violence and abuse with a strong need for more actions from sport organisations on the issue.

INTERNAL AND VISITS

RINGS Webinar: Fruitful discussions on the process of developing Strategic Plans and Key Outputs

With the coronavirus crisis still ongoing, the RINGS team and its partners met for another virtual seminar on 18 November. This webinar was the 5th meeting, after the kick-off meeting in February and three webinars that were conducted in June.

As underlined by Folker Hellmund, Director of the EOC EU Office, the crisis has further shown the critical importance of strategic management and it should be evident that the Erasmus+ co-financed RINGS project could not be timelier and more needed at the moment. The EOC EU Office is happy that the project has been granted a 6-month extension until 31 December 2022 due to the coronavirus crisis.

The November webinar included updates on the general state of play as well as on the Handbook on Strategic Management of NOCs, the process of developing a strategic plan and on the Public Affairs Guidelines. The online meeting was facilitated by the RINGS project manager and Deputy Director of the EOC EU Office, Heidi Pekkola.

Partner Presentations on the Process of Developing Strategic Plans

Three project partners, the NOCs from Liechtenstein, Turkey and the Netherlands, took the time to present their already existing strategic plans and how they had developed these plans.

Interesting and highly relevant insights were given into the years long process that an organisation has to undergo and partly with external assistance in order to develop a long-term strategic plan that is the right fit for the NOC.

Especially highlighted were the importance of involving relevant stakeholders from start to finish

and the need to remain adaptable in a constantly changing environment.

Update on the Handbook on Strategic Management and the Public Affairs Guidelines

Furthermore, an update on two of the main outputs of the RINGS project - a Handbook on Strategic Management and Public Affairs Guidelines - was given by the partner organisation in charge of the respective work packages. Prof. Dr. Holger Preuss from the Gutenberg University Mainz presented an update of the planned content of the Strategic Management Handbook and asked for feedback from the partners.

Mikkel Larsen, from the NOC and Sport Confederation of Denmark, gave an introduction to the first draft outline of the Public Affairs Guidelines, which was used as a good starting point for a fruitful discussion on the importance of public affairs management and how this links into the larger strategic management debate.

Overall, project manager, Heidi Pekkola, was very pleased with the course of the webinar and the valuable contributions by partners. Regarding the next steps of the RINGS project, the aim is to have at least one physical meeting before the start of the National Training Workshops in June 2021 if the pandemic allows.

[RINGS project](#), led by the EOC EU Office, is running from January 2020 to the end of December 2022. It focuses on strategic management of the NOCs, including topics such as change management, work with stakeholders and public affairs, to develop the governance of the NOCs as well as to better equip them with concrete management tools. Altogether 11 NOCs (Denmark, Slovakia,

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Lithuania, Turkey, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Netherlands) and Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz are partners in the project.

European Sport Model, Gender equality and Strategic agenda discussed during the 49th EOC General Assembly

On 27 November the European Olympic Committees' (EOC) organised its 49th General Assembly. The meeting was for the first time held online as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The meeting started with a tribute for former EOC President Janez Kocijančič, who passed away on 1 June this year.

Chaired by EOC Acting President Niels Nygaard, the meeting was opened by IOC President Dr. Thomas Bach who stressed that the Olympic Movement should continue its efforts to demonstrate that the societal role of sport is more relevant than ever in this dramatic situation. In this regard, he stressed the importance of cooperation with European institutions to safeguard the European Sport Model based on solidarity and values. President Bach, later on joined by Acting President Nygaard, thanked the EU Commissioner for Sport, Mariya Gabriel, for her strong commitment to support the sport sector.

The meeting also saw important announcements from the IOC and ANOC regarding the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on their activities. In this regard, IOC Director of NOC Relations Department & Olympic Solidarity James McLeod informed the 50 NOCs of Europe that the budget for NOC projects through Olympic Solidarity has been increased for the 2021-2024 period.

Representatives of the 50 NOCs were invited to vote on two changes to the EOC Articles of Association which were **adopted with a large majority**. Amendments were respectively on:

- Make compulsory that elections are held at the next scheduled General Assembly at the latest "should the President or any Officer(s), or other elected member(s) of the Executive Committee" cease for any reason to hold office during their term of office. The result of such amendment is that elections for the entire EOC Executive Committee will be held at next year's General Assembly in Greece on 16 April.
- An article ensuring a minimum gender balance in the EOC Executive Board with at least 30% of each gender meanings five of the elected 16 members. This amendment is applicable for the next EOC elections onward and aligned the EOC Executive Committee with Olympic Agenda 2020 proposals for better gender parity in sport organisations leading bodies.

Another key topic on the agenda was the presentation from the EOC ExCo Member Djordje Višacki on the initiative to adopt an EOC's Strategic Agenda 2030 before the end of 2021. An ambitious roadmap, prepared by a small working group of NOC representatives, was approved by the GA with the aim to provide the EOC leadership a clear road sign for the future while fostering closer cooperation between the EOC and the 50 ENOCs.

Finally, the General Assembly awarded biathlete Linda Zingerle (ITA) as the winner of the 5th Winter Piotr Nurowski Prize and confirmed Borjomi and Bakuriani (GEO) for summer and Brno (CZE) for winter, as hosts of the 2025 European Youth Olympic Festivals (EYOF).

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At the end of the meeting, both the EOC Acting President Niels Nygaard and EOC Executive Committee member Spyros Capralos announced their candidacies for EOC President, which will be elected, according to the changes in the Articles of the Association, at the General Assembly on 16 April 2021.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[EOC press release](#)



PARTNERS' CORNER

The NOC of Croatia tackling sporting-related match-fixing

On the 6th of November 2020, the EPOSM project (Evidence-based prevention of sporting-related match-fixing) successfully ended its data collection. During a period of approximately six months, an online questionnaire on match-fixing has been conducted in seven European countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and United Kingdom).

Unlike other research projects on match-fixing, which mainly focus on betting-related match-fixing, the EPOSM project particularly examines sporting-related (i.e. non-betting-related) match-fixing. Examples of this type of match-fixing involve circumventing relegation by making agreements with the opposite team or athlete, losing a match to avoid meeting certain competitors or teammates in the next round of a tournament, or enabling another team to win the championship. Although often neglected, sporting-related match-fixing heavily endangers the attractiveness and popularity of sport, while also jeopardizing sport's key value of fair play.

Despite issues caused by Covid-19, more than 14.000 people found their way to the questionnaire, and 5014 of them completed the questionnaire. Moreover, as the EPOSM project focuses on three sports per country, the questionnaire reached respondents from various sports (58,9% football; 14,9% tennis; 5,2% basketball; 10,9% hockey; 3,4% handball; 2,5% cricket; 4,2% other sport disciplines). As such, this is one of the largest questionnaires ever conducted on this topic simultaneously in multiple European countries.

The goal of the EPOSM study is to enable a very rich and nuanced view on (sporting-related) match-fixing in different sports and cultures. Next to the prevalence of sporting-related match-fixing, the project aims to gain insights into the characteristics of people who have been confronted with match-fixing, moral and social psychological variables which could explain the process and attitude towards match-fixing, and the current preventive approach against match-fixing in sport clubs. Additionally, the study results will be used to develop country specific action plans and prepare workshops against match-fixing. That way, the EPOSM project aims to raise awareness about the prevalence of sporting-related match-fixing, stimulate moral judgment regarding sporting-related match-fixing, and share and transfer the knowledge.

The EPOSM project is a Collaborative Partnership type of project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. It started in January 2020 and will run for two years. The project team consists of 10 full partners and one associated partner. Alma Papić represents the Croatian Olympic Committee and works on behalf of the Olympic movement in the project. Partners are: Ghent University (coordinator), Utrecht University, The French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs, Play Fair Code, Croatian Olympic Committee, Lausanne University, Loughborough University, Panathlon International, International Centre Ethics in Sport, Counter Sport Corruption Foundation for Sport Integrity, and the Council of Europe (associated partner). Results will be disseminated through various channels, and a final conference organised at the end of the project.

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Discussions on equality and safeguarding at ENGSO #ESP2020

The 3rd European Sport Platform was organised as an online meeting on 13 November 2020, addressing the topics of “Equality within sport – from policy to practice” and “Respect! Sport against violence and bullying”. The 2020 edition of the event, organised by ENGSO, the European Sports NGO, was hosted by the Lithuanian Sports University (LSU) and supported by the Lithuanian Federation of Sports Federations (LSFS) and the European Lotteries. #ESP2020 gathered more than 120 registered participants – sports leaders, volunteers, scholars and students – to stay informed on current sports topics and to discuss and exchange ideas. On behalf of the organisers, ENGSO President Stefan Bergh, LSU rector Prof Dr Diana Reklaitiene, and EL Secretary General Arjan van 't Veer welcomed the participants. During the opening, Guglielmo di Cola delivered welcome words on behalf of Mariya Gabriel, the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, reconfirming the Commissioner's commitment to cooperate and promote sport. The first session was moderated by Nina Toroi, Chair of the ENGSO Equality Within Sport (EWS) Committee, presenting EWS and inviting the participants to sign the Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport. Lisa Wainwright, CEO of the Sport and Recreation Alliance, gave an engaging keynote speech, sharing the latest updates on equality in the UK. She also presented the successful campaign to break down unconscious bias and increase the public support for basketball, a sport with more diversity than many other disciplines. Anja Veum and Hanne Sogn from the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports presented research shedding light on e.g. the institutionalised masculine practices that slow down equality development, even in a gender equality “champion” country such as Norway. Agne Vanagiene, ENGSO Ex-Com member and Project Manager of the Lithuanian NOC, presented the #HeForShe project that has been breaking down gender stereotypes in

sport in Lithuania with engaging and moving videos. The second session, focusing on safeguarding in sport, was moderated by Sara Masini, the newly elected ENGSO Secretary General. ENGSO Youth Chair Ugnė Chmeliauskaite gave an introduction to the topic, presenting e.g. ENGSO Youth's position paper on safeguarding children in sport. A rich keynote presentation was delivered by Tine Vertommen, Criminologist and Researcher at the University of Antwerp. A long-standing researcher in the topic and the author of the 2019 European Commission mapping study on safeguarding children in sport, she presented evidence-based interventions to safeguard children in sport and gave recommendations for sports organisations. Further research on bullying and violence in sport was presented by Prof. Antonino Bianco from the University of Palermo and Prof Dr Vilija Bite Fominiene from LSU. Finally, Tobias Staebler from Special Olympics presented the Unified Sports® concept, aimed at safeguarding young athletes with a disability.

The 4th European Sport Platform is planned to be organised in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2021, to make up for missing the beauty of the city in 2020 due to the global health crisis.

MORE INFORMATION

[Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport](#)

[NOC Lithuania #HeForShe project video](#)

[ENGSO Youth position paper on safeguarding children and youth in sport](#)

[European Commission mapping study on safeguarding children in sport](#)

[Unified Sports by Special Olympics](#)

[Article on the 3rd European Sport Platform](#)

[Article on ENGSO General Assembly 2020](#)

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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|-------------------------|---|
| 01 December 2020 | #BeInclusive EU Sport Awards (European Commission – online meeting) |
| 01 December 2020 | Council of Sport Ministers (Council of the European Union – online meeting) |
| 08 December 2020 | Special Competence Seminar (EOC EU Office – online meeting) |
| 16 December 2020 | Sport Unit Breakfast (European Commission – online meeting) |