

MONTHLY REPORT

October 2022



EUROPEAN
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEES



EU
Office

MONTHLY REPORT

OCTOBER 2022

FACTS AND FIGURES

Organised sport under the umbrella of the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) is the largest civic movement in the country:

More than **27** million of memberships



+ 0,17%

increase compared to 2021



+ 5,36%

increase in children up to 6 years old in the regional sports federations and associations (LSB/LSV)



The decline in 2021: -792,119 memberships (-2.85%) caused by the Corona pandemic could be stopped for the time being.



The number of registered sports clubs has been decreasing annually since 2014 and has now reached its new low of 86,895 clubs.

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

Dagmara Gerasimuk, International Biathlon (IBU) Development Director



"We need greater gender equality to ensure that women, just like men, have the opportunities to fill decision-making positions. That is why it is crucial to create pathways for female leadership and encourage women to take the next steps in their career development."

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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

The sporting headlines in the coming weeks will be dominated by the Football World Cup in Qatar. However, the media and the public will not limit themselves to discussing the sporting aspects of the tournament but will also shed light on all other facets of the event. A prolonged discussion about the observance of human rights or the situation of foreign workers is neither in the interest of the hosts nor of FIFA.

Nevertheless, this debate will be conducted, at least in the Western media. After the event, it will be necessary to assess whether the "sportswashing" often described by critics has actually worked. However, it is already reasonable to assume that the media coverage and the criticism of the human rights situation articulated by media and partly by politicians will not entirely fail to have an effect.

Against this background, it is to be welcomed that the IOC has now published its human rights strategy and wants to give this issue even more importance in all its activities, including the awarding of Olympic Games. All sports federations are well advised to address this issue before awarding sporting events. However, sports federations should recognise their own limitations in terms of their ability to influence political change and adjust overly high expectations to the realities in their dealings with the public.

The environmental legislation of the European Union will have an even greater impact on sport in the future. While the use of microplastics infill on artificial turf pitches and the restriction of lead in sports shooting had dominated the discussions in recent months, the tightening of the Pesticides Directive could have an impact on the operation of grass pitches.

The EU Commission's proposals to increase the energy efficiency of buildings will also have an impact on existing and future sports infrastructures. The role of the sports federations should not be to reject necessary adjustments but to present the affectedness for sport and to become beneficiaries of the corresponding funding instruments. In particular, the renewal of sports infrastructures throughout Europe, which is necessary anyway, should benefit from investments in energy renovation. This would not require waiting for new funding schemes; the European Structural Funds programmes running until 2027 already offer all possibilities to renew sports infrastructures. However, domestic lobbying by the sports associations would have to be intensified.

With kind regards,



Folker Hellmund
Director EOC EU Office



Introduction to the EOC EU Office New Policy Officer: Noémie Letellier



The EOC EU Office would like to congratulate Heidi Pekkola, Deputy Director of the EOC EU Office, for giving birth on 27 October. The EOC EU Office and all her colleagues wish her all the best with her newborn!

Currently on maternity leave, Heidi Pekkola's Deputy Director position is filled by Eva Rebmann.

We are happy to introduce Noémie Letellier who joined the EOC EU Office team as Policy Officer on 3 October. As a former trainee of the EOC EU Office, Noémie gained experience in the field of European sports policies and European-funded sports projects.

She is familiar with the Olympic and Paralympic family since she worked for a year for the Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games of Paris 2024 and was in charge of the Olympic and Paralympic family services.

Bringing together the experiences and competencies she acquired, Noémie will fit very well to the staff of the EOC EU Office. We wish her all the best for her stay at the office!



INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH



As former President of the Polish Biathlon Federation, Dagmara Gerasimuk dedicated her career to biathlon. She currently works as Development Director at the IBU and is in charge of all IBU's development activities, including the IBU's Gender Equality strategy. In September, she honoured the GAMES Project partners (coordinated by the EOC EU Office) by sharing them her expertise on IBU's Gender Equality strategy and her experience as a female leader creating pathways for female leadership in an international federation. Dagmara is Doctor of Sport Science at the University of Katowice, where she completed a PhD in Physical Education Teaching and Coaching in 2005.

1. The last week of October will be the European Gender Equality Week. On this occasion, we would like to ask you how advanced is biathlon in the field of Gender Equality?

We are good when it comes to the field of sport, which is worthy of underlining. Biathlon is one of a few Olympic Sport where men and women compete at the same time in the same venue. We have equal places for men and women at major events, equal prize money, and an equal number of medal events for women and men throughout the WCs and significant events like the WChs, and OGs.

And mixed relays and single mixed relays formats have become a core part of biathlon. We are very gender-equal on the field of play, but there remains a lot to be done in other areas. You only have to look in the Executive Boards of the IBU and our National Federations or in our coaching staff to see that women are significantly under-represented.

2. Biathlon always had a high participation of women, compared to other sports. How important are projects such as the GAMES project (coordinated by the EOC EU Office) that are trying to create pathways for female leadership in sport organisations?

We need greater gender equality to ensure that women, just like men, have the opportunities to fill decision-making positions. That is why it is crucial to create pathways for female leadership and encourage women to take the next steps in their career development.

I believe such projects generate a platform for discussion and best practice exchange possibilities. In addition, it grows a network of connections and builds international relations. We are our most powerful when we work together.

3. After the leadership change in IBU, the organisation successfully changed its way of governance in general, including with regards to Gender Equality. Which risks do you see when the leadership of a sport organisation is not fully supporting Gender Equality?

The main risk is uneven development of the discipline, a sense of discrimination and injustice in sport, which not only reduces the number of women and fans and may also lead to the reluctance of partners and sponsors that have to cooperate with sports taking care of gender equality and diversity. Gender equality topic requires a broader perspective and understanding of its impact on sports development in general, health in society, and social inclusion.

I am delighted to say that we have the privilege of being supported by IBU President Olle Dahlin and the Executive Board in gender equality strategy implementation. And it is clear that the 'tone from the top' is fundamental while talking about cultural change because gender equality is exactly a cultural change in the organisation.

4. What are the main elements of IBU's Gender Equality Strategy?

The main elements of our strategy are clear goals and objectives, scope and focus areas, not to mention an action plan and allocated budget. The strategy sets out the framework for how gender equality will be promoted at all levels of biathlon:

- from within the IBU
- to IBU events
- and through to our National Federations.

Within each of these three core stakeholder groups, there are three focus areas: governance, sport, and portrayal.

Such an approach is essential as we want to affect real change...in a long-term, sustainable way.

5. What are the main challenges that IBU has encountered for the implementation of its Gender Equality Strategy?

The biggest challenge is bringing all stakeholders on the same boat and creating commitment. We need to take into account different National Federations' challenges and cultures. What will work for one won't necessarily work for another. But we can still learn from each other's ideas and tailor initiatives as necessary to our specific situations.

It requires much raising awareness and communication. To be sustainable and change long-term, we must address perceptions and behaviours. We need to break down barriers and challenge stereotypes and gender roles.

6. Does IBU have structured monitoring and evaluation protocols to measure the impact of its Gender Equality Strategy yet? Do you see already first positive results from your activities?

When it comes to achieving gender equality, there must be practical measures in place, research and evaluation to ensure progress is being made and targets are being met. For example, IBU includes a gender equality questionnaire in NF's survey distributed each second year. The first data were collected in 2020; we can make the first comparisons this year. In addition, we evaluate the achievement of our objectives, and in collaboration with the Gender equality working group, annually, we assess the action plan.

And yes, we achieved the first positive results during the last IBU Election Congress having 30 % of female NFs delegates, reaching 20% of elected females as EB members and TC members; in addition to including athletes representatives in those two decision-making bodies, we can say that we achieved 30% of female representation, we grow the number of Technical Delegates significantly, we keep 50% of female coaches during the IBU Academy coach courses and place the gender equality on top of each policy and regulations.

The EOC EU Office is thanking Dagmara Gerasimuk for her interview and contribution to the monthly report.



EU SPORT POLICY AND FUNDING NEWS

EOC EU Office presents EU funding opportunities to support gender equality at EOC Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Commission meeting

On 10 October, Eva Rebmann, Acting Deputy Director of the EOC EU Office, attended the meeting of the EOC Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) commission in the headquarters of the French Olympic Committee (CNOSF) in Paris.

The meeting, attended by representatives of several National Olympic Committees and the International Olympic Committee (IOC), was chaired by Annamarie Phelps (Chair of the GEDI commission), accompanied by Marie-Françoise Potereau (Vice-President for Gender Equality at CNOSF).

European Olympic Movement's vision for gender equality

Annamarie Phelps set the objective of the meeting in her opening words:

to agree on a vision for gender equality, diversity and inclusion in the European Olympic Committees (EOC) and the European Olympic movement at large, in the framework of the EOC Strategy 2030. Annamarie Phelps called all European National Olympic Committees (NOCs) to sign the [Brighton plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration](#) of the [International Working Group on Women and Sport](#), and opened discussions about new targets for the Olympic Movement to set within the EOC Strategy 2030.

French initiatives and Paris 2024 ambitions regarding diversity and inclusion

A focus on measures initiated within the sport movement in France and around the Paris 2024 Games was made, with Brigitte Henriques (President of CNOSF) setting the tone: gender equality is a main priority for her mandate at CNOSF.



Marie-Françoise Potereau then mentioned the “[Club des 300](#)”, a programme aiming to support women to reach leadership positions in national bodies, with online support and in-person meetings, which will support 150 laureates every year, will start this month.

Iris Bazin (Inclusion, Solidarity & Equality Manager at the Paris 2024 OCOG) then presented some of the main measures taken by the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (OCOG). These include an Inclusion and Equality Strategy (e.g., the “Impact 2024” endowment fund supporting 700 projects, an expert committee, a “grounds of equality label given to sports events respecting equality criteria) and a concrete legacy programme for gender equality and anti-discrimination (e.g., Paris 2024 Pride House, athlete entrepreneur programmes, projects to support girls' participation in sport).

GAMES project: making use of EU funding opportunities for gender equality in sport

These discussions on how to support gender equality in sport were the perfect opportunity for Eva Rebmann to promote the EOC EU Office’s GAMES project (GAMES website: www.games-project.com).

European Commission presents its priorities for 2023

On 18 October 2022, the European Commission adopted its [2023 Commission Work Programme](#). This document sets out the priorities of the European Commission (EC) for the year ahead. The European Commission directly mentions sports as part of its priorities (in the third priority, called 'Delivery on the six headline ambitions'), while sport will be affected by several other priorities, notably in the fields of energy and environment or EU-funding.

Illegal streaming of live sports events

First, the Commission will propose a non-binding recommendation on the piracy of live content, offering a toolbox to fight the illegal streaming of live (incl. sports-) events. However, even though the sport movement welcomes the initiative, it falls short from the main demand of having a legal instrument at EU level as "recommendations" are not legally binding and sport stakeholders have long been asking for a legal framework (see dedicated article).

Sports and healthy lifestyles

The EC will also continue to promote sport and the mental and physical benefits of a healthy lifestyle across society and across generations, building on the [HealthyLifestyle4All initiative](#) and the ideas brought by its [Youth Ideas Labs](#) during the EU Sport Forum in June 2022.

As part of the European Health Union, the EC will create the [European Health Data Space](#) to answer the major societal issue of mental health that became more challenging during the pandemic and data collection can help protect it. The European Health Data Space will be part of a broader project foreseen by the EC: creating a common European mobility data space to boost the digitalisation of the mobility sector and encourage innovative solutions. Considered by the EC as a tool to protect mental health, sports practices could be subject to data collection on behalf of the European Health Data Space, and these data would be shared to the public through the common European mobility data space.

Integrity

To protect and reinforce our democratic system from outside interests, the Commission will update the [anti-corruption legislative framework](#). The institution also plans to revise the "[Combating child sexual abuse](#)" Directive while the online dimension of child abuse represents a particular challenge.

Green Deal

The EC aspires to restore EU soil and adopted a proposal to halve pesticides use by 2030, which includes the use of microplastics. Moreover, a targeted revision of the legislation on the registration, evaluation, and authorisation of chemicals (REACH) that promotes sustainable chemicals will be proposed. Microplastic and chemical pollution concern sports synthetic fields and will impact sports practices.

To finish with, the EC plans to implement measures to reduce the waste of food and textiles.

These measures might impact the way sporting events are organised, especially regarding their use of resources, but also the activities of sport organisations at large (maintenance of sports grounds, purchases of gears and textiles). These add up to the already ongoing files regarding energy efficiency and renewable energy, circular economy, pesticides, etc., which will continue being on the agenda on 2023.

Finances

To finish with, the EOC EU Office will monitor the upcoming mid-term review of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027 and inform its partners if sport is impacted and how sport can be further supported in the MFF as of 2023.

Conference on the Future of Europe

The 2023 EC Work Programme makes several references to proposals and measures formulated last year by citizens through the [Conference on the Future of Europe platform](#).

In 2021, the EOC EU Office invited its partners to use the Conference on the Future of Europe platform to make sports institutions' voices heard, which was completed by a consultation process of European athletes, the results of which were presented to Vice-President of the European Commission Margaritis Schinas. Unfortunately, the athletes' claims are not directly addressed by the European Commission. If any other opportunities for sports institutions to influence European legislation were to show up in the upcoming year, the EOC EU Office will inform its partners.

Next steps

Based on the European Commission Work Programme, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council will establish a Joint Declaration on the EU's legislative priorities in the upcoming weeks to take swift actions.

The EOC EU Office will monitor the implementation of the said initiatives.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Commission work programme 2023](#)

[Explaining the Commission Work Programme](#)

[HealthyLifestyle4All initiative](#)

[Youth Ideas Labs](#)

[European Health Data Space](#)

[Anti-corruption legislative framework](#)

[Combating child sexual abuse Directive](#)

[Multiannual financial framework 2021- 2027](#)

European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) approves report on esports and videogames



On 3 October, the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) approved its report on esports and video games.

The report's overarching goal is to support the gaming industry's explosive growth and economic potential by helping European SMEs in the sector and by establishing an appropriate legislative framework. It also aims to address the challenges that this rapid development presents in terms of education and values.

Considerations regarding esports

The report considers that esports and sports are distinct sectors, since esports are played in a digital environment and belong to private companies with complete legal control that own all exclusive and unrestricted rights over the video games. The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) believe, however, that both sectors may complement each other, learn from one another, and promote similar positive values and abilities, such as fair play, non-discrimination, teamwork, leadership, solidarity, integrity, antiracism, social inclusion and gender equality.

Furthermore, MEPs recognise the potential of virtual sports to involve fans and to boost the proportion of young people participating in physical activity. The European Parliament also encourages collaboration between all pertinent parties in the video game and sports sectors to develop new projects that will benefit players and audiences.

The need to create guidelines regarding the status of professional esports players and a visa for esports personnel based on Schengen cultural and sports visas is highlighted, similarly to what exists for sport athletes and staff.

The report also deals with new needs related to the development of esports and the defence of the integrity of competitions, considering the negatives that may emerge such as addiction and toxic behaviour, match fixing, doping and illegal gambling. The CULT Committee furthermore highlights the importance of women's representation in videogames and in all positions in the value chain.

The approved text emphasises the environmental dimension, spurring the video game industry to become greener and to raise players' awareness of climate and environmental issues.

CULT MEPs call on the Commission and the Council to acknowledge the value, the strong growth and innovation potential of the EU videogame industry and to develop a European long-term strategy. They demand, for example, exemptions from state aid rules for national investments and more support for SMEs in the sector through programmes such as Horizon Europe and Creative Europe.

Relevance of the report and next steps

This report marks the first stance taken on esports and video games by an EU institution. Although there will not be any legislative repercussions, it is nonetheless important to note that EU institutions are beginning to consider the topic, which could lead to additional efforts, such as an EU strategy on videogames.

With its approval in the CULT Committee, the report reaches the final steps. It will now proceed to the European Parliament's plenary for its adoption on 10 November. The EOC EU Office has been closely monitoring the file to make sure the interests of the sports movement are preserved.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[European Parliament's press release](#)

[Report adopted by the CULT Committee](#)

Fight against online piracy: sports federations are disappointed with EU Commission's announcements

On 18 October 2022, the European Commission published its [2023 Work Programme](#). This document sets out the European Commission's priorities for the year ahead. In this, the Commission announces that it will present a legally non-binding recommendation for the fight against online piracy of live events in the second quarter of 2023.

In doing so, the Commission is responding to the resolution adopted by the European Parliament in May 2021 on the "[Challenges of sports event organisers in the digital environment](#)".



In this resolution, the European Parliament called on the Commission to introduce legally binding measures to ensure that illegal sports livestreams can be blocked within 30 minutes at the latest. Accordingly, the Commission does not follow the calls of the MEPs, as instead of legal instruments, only non-binding recommendations have been proposed.

The Commission's announcement is specifically disappointing from the perspective of sport. In addition to EU parliamentarians, the commercial media institutions and cultural stakeholders, numerous sports organisations had advocated for the development of concrete and binding measures.

Finally, the substantial scale of illegal piracy of live sporting events results in significant financial losses for the rights holders involved.

The Sports Rights Owners Coalition, together with the Live Content Coalition, has published a [statement](#) criticising the Commission's lack of effective action and measures in the fight against illegal live content:

“As the Live Content Coalition, representing the organisers and distributors of live events across Europe, we welcome the reference to our concerns, but we are disappointed that those legitimate concerns are addressed through an inadequate non-legally binding recommendation. We strongly believe this will not create the necessary legal incentive for online intermediaries to respond immediately when illegal live content is notified.”

It remains to be seen how the recommendations will be formulated and subsequently implemented by the Member States in the future. Nevertheless, the Commission's proposal can be seen as a missed opportunity to effectively support the live content sector and to develop effective measures in the fight against increasing online piracy.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Statement by the Sports Rights Holders Coalition and the Live Content Coalition](#)

EU-Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs adopt recommendations on the use of pyrotechnics and better cooperation between police and fans



During their meeting on 13-14 October the EU-ministers for Justice and Home Affairs approved two non-legislative items with regard to sport.

1. Conclusions concerning the need to prevent and counter the use of pyrotechnics in spectator areas of football stadia and other sports venues

The conclusions highlight the dangers of pyrotechnic by referring to a study that concludes that no safe use of pyrotechnic devices is possible in spectator areas within football stadia and other sports arenas. Against the background that there is currently no European legal basis to address the problem, EU Ministers for home affairs are calling on Member States to do develop national comprehensive strategies to prevent and combat the possession and use of pyrotechnics in football stadia.

The Ministers also encourage the Member States to adopt and implement a national, integrated, multi-agency strategy. In the annex of their conclusions, components of such a strategy can be found.

2. Council Resolution concerning good practice guidance in respect of police liaison with Supporter Liaison Officers (SLOs) appointed by football clubs and national federations

The second file that was adopted by the Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs during their meeting in Luxembourg proposes measures to prevent and manage violence and disorder in connection with international football matches. The Council urges the Member States to enhance police liaison with designated Supporter Liaison Officers (SLOs) in connection with preventing and minimising the risk of significant football-related incidents in private and public places.

In the annex to its resolution, the Council lists good practice examples of successful cooperation between police and fan liaison offices. The Council further states that its recommendations relate in particular to international football matches, but can also be used for other international sporting events.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Council Resolution on Supporter Liaison Officer](#)

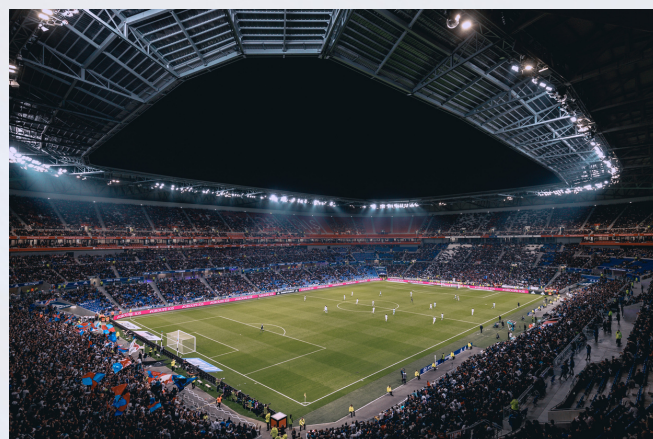
Regulation to prevent money laundering: EU parliamentarians seek stronger regulation of professional football

In July 2021, the European Commission had presented its proposal for a regulation “on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing”.

Now, in the European Parliament, the two leading committees on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) are discussing the compromise amendments for their report on the regulation.

While the EU Commission's proposal did not mention football, the two rapporteurs in the EU Parliament Damien Carême (Greens, France) and Eero Heinäluoma (Socialists, Finland) proposed in their draft report to include professional football in the scope of the regulation.

Given the high risks associated with the sector, high-level professional football clubs, player advisors and football federations in Member States that are members of UEFA should be considered as 'obliged entities' for the purposes of the proposed regulation. What does it mean? Under the proposed regulation, obliged entities are subject to certain requirements such as extensive reporting and notification obligations.



The Parliamentarians' call to extend the scope to professional football is partly based on a study by the Subcommittee on Fiscal Affairs (FISC) of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee (ECON) entitled "[Taxation of Professional Football in the EU](#)". The study recommended that sports organisations improve their licensing systems, especially with regard to combating money laundering.

In the compromise amendments currently being negotiated by the LIBE and ECON committees, some MEPs call for the application of thresholds so that only clubs with a turnover of more than €200 million would fall within the scope. Other amendments propose an extension of the scope to all professional sport.

The report is expected to be adopted in the two responsible committees, ECON and LIBE, on 5 December. On 12 December, the report could be submitted to the plenary of the Parliament for a first reading.

Meanwhile, the other co-legislator, the EU Council of Ministers, is set to adopt its position on the regulation on 6 December.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Proposal for a Regulation of the EU Commission](#)

[Draft Report by LIBE und ECON](#)

[Compromise Amedments in LIBE und ECON](#)

EOC President Capralos addresses Council of Europe Conference of Ministers on healthy lifestyles, inclusion and sustainability



From 25 to 27 October, Antalya, Turkey, welcomed the 17th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport. The Conference gathered representatives from 54 countries.

The first panel discussion, “Sport for all: uniting us for stronger societies”, tackled the topic of gender equality and the need for equal participation by women and girls in sport. Alongside the importance of maintaining a safe and healthy sport environment for children through education, safeguarding, and development, sport was also emphasised as a key tool for achieving inclusion and diversity through support for disadvantaged groups.

The President of the European Olympic Committees (EOC) Spyros Capralos delivered a speech on the theme of “Rethinking Sport:

Leading the Way for a Healthy and Sustainable Future”. He addressed the current challenges faced by Europe, namely the impact of war as well as the global energy, cost-of-living and climate crises - which can all affect sport to various extents.

The importance of sport for health was reaffirmed, reiterating the findings of the 2022 Eurobarometer - which found that 45% of Europeans never engage in any form of physical activity, and half reduced or ceased their activity during the Covid-19 pandemic. He stressed the role of sports in creating positive social impact and improving well-being in order to ensure healthier societies, and acknowledged the EU and EOC’s efforts to encourage healthier lifestyles across Europe - citing the European Week of Sport (EWoS) and the #BeActive campaign as examples.

Furthermore, President Capralos reaffirmed the IOC and EOC’s commitment to further consolidating gender equality in sport to ensure that women and girls have equal access to sport - as well as the ambition to make Paris 2024 the first-ever gender-balanced Olympic Games, with an equal participation of male and female athletes. Additionally, he [mentioned](#) the upcoming European Games and declared: “I am delighted that the third edition of the European Games next year in Krakow, which will feature many Olympians seeking to secure their place for Paris 2024, will be gender equal for the first time”.

As well as expressing commitment to climate action, President Capralos also emphasised the Olympic movement's engagement to make all future Olympic Games climate-positive from 2030 onwards. He further underlined the EOC's commitment to strengthening the sustainability imperative across the continent, in particular through a variety of policies at EOC events and by setting an example in the EOC's daily activities. Capralos notably stated that the EOC aimed to become a signatory of the [UN Sport and Climate Action framework](#) – which would require the organisation to comply with a set of principles that would form the foundation of its future operations.

In addition, Turkey and North Macedonia have signed the [Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions](#) – also known as the Macolin Convention. The Convention has now been signed by 41 countries.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Council of Europe Website](#)

[Themes of the Conference](#)

[Resolutions adopted](#)

EU Week of Regions and Cities addresses topics of greener sport and promotion of gender equality at local level through sport

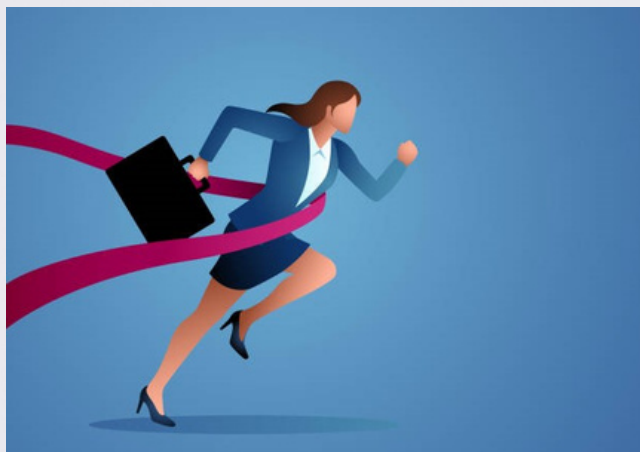
In the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities, on 11 October the platform of the SHARE (SportHub Alliance for Regional development in Europe) initiative of the European Commission (EC) organised a practical workshop on “how sport and physical activity can be made more sustainable and contribute to community efforts to create a greener Europe”. The speakers brought concrete examples and guidelines on how to develop one's own green strategy and what EU tools and funds can help in this regard.

Serena Pontoglio from the EC's Directorate General for Energy, presented the EU policies in place and gave an insight on potential funding opportunities for sustainable sport infrastructure. The Commission's goal is to gradually transform EU building stocks through the Renovation Wave strategy and action plan and the revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive in the framework of the EU Green Deal (zero-emission, more energy efficiency and less consumption). Focusing on funding possibilities, she mentioned existing EU tools, including the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), Cohesion Policy Funds (ERDF/CF), Horizon Europe and LIFE.

Mike Mc Clure, representing the European Network of Outdoor Sports (ENOS), highlighted the role of grassroots organisations and outdoor sport clubs in mitigating the biodiversity crisis: leaving “no trace”, taking positive actions (i.e., removing trash, cleaning rivers), collaborating with local environmental organisations and advocating at local level. Isabella Burczack, representing the International Cycling Union (UCI), emphasised how biking is a catalyst for a greener future and presented UCI's sustainability vision. In conclusion, Dirk Van de Wiele from the Vrije Universiteit Brussels, presented the practical example of the sustainable infrastructural renovation of a swimming pool as a case study in the field of green sport infrastructure and the use of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Promotion of gender equality at local level through sport

Another workshop presented different sports-related activities organised to promote gender equality at local level. The session welcomed speakers from Pedreguer (Spain), Šibenik (Croatia) and Malatya (Turkey), who shared their experiences in developing sports-related youth projects through a gender perspective. The municipalities sought to promote gender equality in local and non-local youth by engaging them in sports projects.



European Commission Policy Officer Violeta Birzniece emphasised gender equality as a high priority in the EU agenda, with the aim to enable women to access equal opportunities in society. She briefly presented the High Level Group on Gender equality report towards more gender equality in sport, which formulates recommendations on multiple thematic areas such as participation, leadership or media coverage. In the spirit of the European Year of Youth, the importance of considering sports, youth and gender equality all together as transversal topics as well as the role of sports as a tool to help young people recover from the pandemic were also highlighted.

Sergi Ferrus Peris, Mayor of Pedreguer presented the Action Plans enacted for his city around guiding principles of social justice, intersectionality and citizen involvement as a way to increase the percentage of women who practice sports and provide more opportunities for girls to play sports.

Former Croatian basketball player Andja Jelavic shared her experience with the gendered discrimination she encountered as an athlete, and the best practices carried out in her basketball academy to promote the game among young girls. The academy notably took part in an Erasmus+ sport programme project called 'empowering women in basketball'.

Finally, Sports Ambassadors Association of Malatya member Rahmiye Nur Ates presented the association's current project for the establishment of mixed-gender football teams to defeat the stigmatisation of football as a men's sport, which discourages young girls due to stereotypes and reduced media attention. The mixed football team project aims thereby at establishing mixed football teams in schools, increasing participation of young girls in football and erasing male dominance in football from public memory.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Greening local sport facilities: EU's policies & support](#)

[Outdoor sports and the biodiversity crisis](#)

[Cycling towards a sustainable future](#)

[How ERDF supported renovation of a swimming pool impacts the local community](#)

[High Level Group on Gender equality report towards more gender equality in sport](#)



PARTNERS' CORNER

RINGS Project on Strategic Management of NOCs continues with National Training Workshops in Cyprus and Denmark

The National Olympic Committees of Cyprus and Denmark hosted the two National Training Workshops of the RINGS project on strategic management of NOCs held in October. Based on the demands of each country's sport movement, each workshop had a distinct focus.



Workshop in Cyprus

The national workshop organised by the Cyprus Olympic Committee was held on 10 October in Nicosia at the NOC Cyprus headquarters.

The RINGS project manager, Heidi Pekkola, outlined the project's objectives and key deliverables, including the Public Affairs Guidelines, the Handbook on Strategic Management of NOCs, the Stakeholders' Tool and the online platform.

The sessions were then introduced by Professor Dr. Holger Preuss of the University of Mainz, who is also the co-author of another deliverable of the project, the Handbook on Strategic Management of NOCs and NFs. He spoke about strategic planning and its significance in sports management. Participants were asked to consider challenges that sport organizations may face in the future, such as sportswashing, the economic crisis or Covid-19, in order to analyse the risks associated with them, their possible influence on their organisation and how to respond.

Georgios Chrysostomou, President of the Cyprus National Olympic Committee, and Georgios Panayides, the NOC's sports administrative officer, contributed to the seminar's opening and closing remarks.

Workshop in Denmark

The national workshop for the RINGS project organised by the Danish National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation was held on October 13 at the Fredericia Idrætscenter in Denmark (DIF).

Thomas Bach, DIF Deputy Chairman, and Eva Krarup Hatt, DIF Public Affairs Consultant, introduced the workshop by providing background data and news from the Danish Olympic Committee. Following that, Poul Broberg, Director of Public Affairs at DIF, gave a presentation on the Public Affairs Guidelines that DIF had created as part of the RINGS project. He then focused on goal-setting, public relations, setting key messaging, and communications.

The training continued with a group activity in which the participants discussed how local issues could be addressed politically in the municipality using the RINGS Public Affairs Guidelines as a guide.

The presentation of the group work findings and a Q&A session marked the seminar's conclusion.

About the RINGS project

The main purpose of the RINGS project is to develop and modernise the strategic management of National Olympic Committees (NOCs) in Europe. In addition, the tools and outputs developed during the project equip and support the NOCs in their daily operational management and thus improve their governance.

Co-funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Sport Programme, the RINGS project gathers an important consortium with 13 organisations including 11 NOCs (Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Slovakia and Turkey), the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, and the EOC EU Office as project leader. Project is in its final phase and will finish by the end of this year.



FURTHER INFORMATION

[RINGS Project website](#)

GAMES consortium's reveals women's representation at leadership level in surveyed NOCs and pre-selected NFs



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The [GAMES project](#), organised by the EOC EU Office, is moving forward! In October, the fourth deliverable 'Report of Arts' was successfully submitted on the European Commission's platform.

The Report provided a multi-layered analysis of the baseline questionnaire designed to assess the current situation in terms of gender equality at the leadership level among partner National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and a set of major National Federations (NFs) representing both winter and summer sports, as well as individual and team sports.

Hence, the GAMES Report provides an analysis of women's representation at the leadership level, some structural elements, and the current policies and procedures for gender equality among partner NOCs and NFs.

Main findings

Voting rights: Women accounted for no more than 1/3 of General Assembly voters. Overall, there is a correlation between sports that have historically been very male dominated in terms of participation and visibility and larger male majorities in decision-making roles/lack of representation of women in decision-making positions.

Staffing: Many NFs and NOCs in the study have no more than a handful of employees. And yet, two consistent patterns were analyzed across all 8 countries:

1. NOCs had similar numbers of male and female staff but men were prevalent in senior management and executive roles.
2. NFs in all sports - except gymnastics - have more male than female employees and more men in senior management positions;

Gender equality policy/strategy: 25% of NOCs and 42% of NFs surveyed had a gender equality or diversity and inclusion policy/strategy. Notably, quite a number were currently seeking to develop one.

Gender initiatives: The most widely adopted initiatives to help women reach decision-making positions among both NOCs and NFs included networks, mentoring and education programmes, as well as workshops/seminars for women in decision-making positions.

Among the other less widely implemented initiatives stand gender budgeting to consider the impact of budgeting decisions on gender equality, flexible remote and part-time working to support maternity and paternity situations, and terms limits to ensure regular turnover at decision-making levels.

Limitations

Overall, the questionnaire has gathered responses from 110 NFs with a productive response rate of 89%. Nevertheless, considerable caution is needed before attempting to extrapolate numbers and trends more widely. The participating NOCs are not a representative sample of European NOCs, nor are the 8 core sports involved in the Report representative of sports overall.

Next steps

The GAMES Report provided valuable insights for partners NOCs and their member federations to better comprehend their “stage of readiness” to promote structural changes in governance, enhancing the understanding of existing barriers to create sustainable change in terms of gender equality in leadership positions.

Hence, the GAMES Report is expected to inform the development of the Pool of Actions, as well as the NOCs’ National Action Plans to define concrete strategies to further progress gender equality in leadership positions in sport.

About the GAMES project

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.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[GAMES website](#)

[GAMES Twitter](#)

ENGSO: SPIRIT project to nurture mental well-being successfully concluded

The SPIRIT project, which ENGSO coordinated, held its final conference on 13 October in Arnhem, the Netherlands. Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, it focused on sport coaching for mental well-being and thereby tackled a timely issue.

Sport and physical activity have proven to have positive effects on mental health. Particularly, as outlined in the [Parliament Report on the impact of COVID-19 closures](#), the pandemic has led to declined states of mental health, and sports as a protective means could not be upheld as usual. Nonetheless, sports and sport coaching undoubtedly influence mental well-being.

Studies as well as practical examples from sports clubs underline the strong connection between sport and mental well-being. Even the recent publication of the [Commission Work Programme 2023](#) mentions the promotion of sport and the mental and physical benefits of a healthy lifestyle within its six headline ambitions following the announcement of an initiative on mental health in the [State of the Union](#) address of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

The aim of the project was to develop a framework for humane, inclusive, and empowering coaching and sport clubs that nurture well-being. By implementing a concept of positively humane coaching, dropout levels can be decreased, thus increasing physical activity and improving public health.



Moreover, vibrant and welcoming sports clubs result in more cohesive communities and societies, enhancing social inclusion. However, to unlock the benefits associated with sports participation, mental health must be included in coach education programs.

Besides the recommendations for coach education and club management that provide strategic guidance for nurturing the mental well-being of grassroots athletes and a coaching toolkit that offers coaches a collection of resources with the aim of protecting and enhancing the mental well-being skills of sports participants, the project designed a free online course that can be accessed via the [ENGSO education platform](#).

The course targets sports coaches and sport clubs who wish to improve their knowledge on the topic of mental wellbeing and inclusion of athletes is currently only available in English but will soon also be available in the languages of the project partners from Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Finland, German, Greece and Spain. The course is composed of 6 individual modules. The course then leads the learner through an introduction of sport for mental wellbeing, self-reflective content on coaching styles, and the coach-athlete relationship. It then proceeds with managing threats to well-being, coaching refugees and other vulnerable groups, and how to foster a nurturing culture in sports organisations.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[SPiRiT Online Course](#)

[SPiRiT project website](#)

DOSB presents current figures on memberships in German sport

Organised sport under the umbrella of the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) remains the largest civic movement in the country with around 27 million memberships. This is the result of the current membership survey.

The central result of the survey is that the decline in 2021 caused by the Corona pandemic has been halted for the time being. Thus, the sports clubs recorded a slight increase in membership of 0.17% (+46,672 memberships). This clearly shows that many clubs managed to come through 2021 better than they did in the first Corona year. The losses in 2020 totalled -792,119 memberships (-2.85%). The final figure as of 1 January 2022 is now 27,059,091 memberships.

DOSB Director of Sports Development, Michaela Röhrbein, is therefore largely hopeful about the future: "The current figures are encouraging. In particular, the fact that the numbers of our youngest - the children up to 6 years of age - are consistently rising again is enormously valuable. However, if we want this trend to continue or, at best, even increase, and to transcend all age groups and genders, then we must now further strengthen the sports clubs. Our ReStart programme, funded by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, is an important step in this direction. Unfortunately, however, the energy crisis does not stop at sport. If people were to stand in front of closed sports facilities and swimming pools in winter, even the best programme would be of no help, and the positive trend would reverse very quickly. Sport and politics must therefore do everything they can to cushion the additional burden on the ground and get sport through the winter well."

Differing membership development in the regional sports associations

The development of membership in the regional sports federations and associations (LSB/LSV) for the year 2021 is differing. Across the federal states a slight increase of 0.16% was recorded - compared to an average loss of -3.53% from the year 2020. It is positive to emphasise that the increases were mainly achieved in the youngest age groups. For example, the increase in children up to 6 years of age was +5.36%. This partly compensated for the lack of new admissions in these age groups from the previous year.

Tennis, hockey and golf benefit

The development of membership figures in the sports federations also varies greatly and must be evaluated in a differentiated manner. Despite the two-year pandemic, the Olympic sports of tennis, hockey and golf, among others, recorded increases. Dancing, taekwondo and speed skating, on the other hand, suffered significant losses in both years. Football, rugby and basketball belong to the group of Olympic sports that were able to compensate for their losses from the first year of the pandemic in the second year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[DOSB press release; full news and figures](#)

ASAP Forum: Inspiring sustainability in sport

The [ASAP Forum](#) - flagship event of the [As Sustainable As Possible project](#) - closed the main part of the 3-year long initiative coordinated by the Czech Olympic Committee, cofounded by the European Union and supported by the International Olympic Committee.

Organised in Prague on 12 October 2022, the Forum provided a platform to National Olympic Committees (NOCs), national sport federations and other stakeholders to get inspired, motivate each other, cooperate and exchange to, ultimately, move from words to action and from ad-hoc initiatives to integrated sustainability across their operations and activities; in other words, to implement the vision of the ASAP project.

What potential does sport have to address global sustainability challenges? Why is a strategic approach important and how to implement it? And how can such approach look in practices?

All these questions and more were addressed by excellent speakers including Roman Kumpošt, Vice-President of the Czech Olympic Committee, Rikke Rønholt Albertsen, Board Member of the National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark and PhD Fellow in Sustainability, International Olympic Committee's senior sustainability manager, Julie Duffus or ASAP Team members (representatives of the partner NOCs).

As the title "Inspiring sustainability in sport" suggests, the exchange of good practices and ideas was one of the main objectives of the Forum; and one of the main working principles of the ASAP project as such.



To fulfil this objective and create an atmosphere conducive to such an exchange and cooperation, four “inspirational roundtables” accessible to onsite participants only were organised in the second part of the Forum. Each session featured two case studies and an interesting discussion on some of the main challenges sport organisations face in the area of sustainability:

- Carbon footprint: travel and transport as a major challenge for sport organisations
- Leveraging the power of communications to drive sustainability in and through sport
- Advancing sustainability together with commercial partners
- Athletes and sport organisations: working together on reaching sustainability objectives

The ASAP Forum fulfilled its main objectives. As Berit Kjøll, President of the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports and Chair of the European Olympic Committees Sustainability and Active Society Commission noted in her concluding remarks: “the ASAP project is a fantastic example of how cooperation and partnerships between sport organisations can become a true driving force in integrating sustainability into our movement. And today’s event has only confirmed it.

The honest exchange of experiences and best practices, the clear will to cooperate expressed by all of you, the fantastic project examples and ideas for the future, all this fills me with great hope for our movement and its role in society”.

Even though the ASAP project is nearing its end, every finishing line is the beginning of a new race. By initiating cooperation between NOCs, establishing a strong partnership, and creating 3 sustainability strategies, the ASAP project partners have gotten themselves prepared for the race towards sustainability! The ASAP team now hopes that many other sport organisation will join them in this race and will use the [ASAP guidance documents](#), which have been designed precisely with this end in mind.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[ASAP Forum](#)

[Presentations](#)

[Outcomes of Inspirational Roundtables](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

07 - 08 November 2022

Czech Presidency Anti-doping conference (Council of the EU - Prague)

16 November 2022

4th EU Funding Webinar: EU's Funding for International Cooperation (EOC EU Office - online)

29 - 30 November 2022

EOC EU & International Relations Commission (EOC - Brussels)



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