



## ***Transparency and Credibility in Sports Organisations ENGSO Proposal for Guidelines and Recommendations***

### **I. Why is this an issue for ENGSO and its member organisations?**

#### **Background:**

1. In recent years, the public eye has focused increasingly on the ethics of sport, and not only within the sports themselves, but also very much on the organising bodies. We have to accept that sport is a part of society and that the media have a commitment to analyse and mediate all aspects of sport. The recent discussion has focused on critical aspects of the world of sport. In order to safeguard the credibility of sport it is important that sports organisations discuss these matters in a sincere and open way.
2. Within various sports there are discussions and initiatives to regulate and control the behaviour of athletes. If the international sports organisations wish to play a role in the process of strengthening sport as a trustworthy partner, it is important that sports leaders and administrators take a look at their own work and credibility, in the light of often adverse realities in society.
3. The world of sport is considered to be based upon idealism, honesty and fairness. The development with an increasing commercialisation of sport and the economical aspects of elite sport have widened the gap between grass-root sport and the elite sport exposed by the media. This development is a threat to the coherence and unity of sport.
4. The world of sport is organised in to a wide variety of structures, with a great many meetings, conferences etc., and representatives are sent from national organisations with different purposes. It is very difficult to establish a singular code of behaviour with people coming from so many different countries and representing so many differences in culture, tradition etc. The recognition of this problem is a pre-position for finding ways and guidelines for international co-operation.
5. The base of sport organising is the self-organising club or association. The importance and value of sport has to be seen in connection with motivation for involvement in an active civil society. A democratic structure is a condition for the acceptance and support from local and national authorities.
6. With the purpose of safeguarding the interests of sport as a whole it is necessary that ENGSO as well as national and international sports organisations initiate open-minded discussions with the aim of ensuring that our work is in agreement with ethical and political ideas we wish to represent.
7. Most international sports organisations are said to be democratic, and this is correct as regards such things as regulations for voting. The right of members to vote gives the possibility to defend or promote ideas, to support trustworthy persons, and to defend the interests of the organisation. True democracy presupposes that important information is available, and that discussion and critical questioning are seen as indispensable to the decision-making process.

8. A democratic organisation requires well-prepared and engaged members, but it also requires a management intent on involving those members.
9. Openness and visibility are conditions for a fruitful co-operation between people who are willing to take responsibility. The opposite will lead to indifference and the organisation will lose its dynamism and diminish its powers to influence.
10. The sports world depends upon people working at the grass-roots level, and it is important for international sports organisations to recognise these people's idealism as a valuable quality and for the organisations themselves to seek to act in the spirit of idealism. Being a part of entertainment, with many commercial interests involved, this can at times be difficult. However, if sports leaders wish to appear as representatives of the sports movement, it is a precondition that they affiliate themselves with the basic ideals of sports.

## **II. What does this mean for ENGSO and its member organisations?**

### **Guidelines for demands and consequences:**

1. Ethical, moral and social values must be enforced in sports and in all sports organisations.
2. Every sports organisation must strive towards credibility and transparency.
3. Idealism and voluntary spirit must be the backbone of sport and sports organising.
4. Sports organisations must work to safeguard fundamental values of sports such as honesty, democracy, equality, solidarity, sense of community, voluntary engagement, diversity and joy.
5. Sports organisations must work towards proving and demonstrating to the public that sport is offering a multitude of possibilities for personal experience and life long development, and thus it means much more than striving for elite sport results only.
6. Doping in sports and corruption in sport organising bodies are in every way contradicting to the spirit of sport and must be met with the most serious sanctions and general condemnation.

## **III. What can ENGSO and its member organisations do?**

### **Practical Recommendations:**

ENGSO is ready to offer its advice and support, while recommending that member organisations, in their area of competence and responsibility, should work towards implementing some of the most important aims and activities, which generally contribute to achieve or maintain transparency and credibility in sport organisations, such as:



(examples):

- to establish internal regulations based on democratic rules
- to set up rules for rotation (e.g.: limitation of duration and number of offices)
- to make rules for representation (e.g.: both sexes, all age and target groups, all fields and levels of sports)
- to involve athletes and coaches in decision-making processes, in particular young people,
- to introduce control and auditing mechanisms for financial issues
- to offer further training for sport officials and managers regarding personal, social and intercultural competencies in co-operation with their member organisations
- to develop criteria and systematic recruitment for future leaders (job description, monitoring, mentorship programmes), and involve young people
- to set clear frame works for internal/external communication of elected bodies
- to open discussions and decisions to the public
- to support activities and projects which serve for the general public welfare
- to look for co-operation among other groups of society (e.g.: parents organisations)
- to lay special emphasis on transparency and credibility
  - in the co-operation with State institutions (e.g.: co-operation schools/clubs, subsidiary funding, health promotion, social cohesion)
  - in the co-operation with economic enterprises (e.g.: sponsors)
  - in the co-operate with the media (e.g.: public relations)

**These guidelines and recommendations on transparency and credibility are intended to open a broad discussion within ENGSO and among its member organisations in view of achieving a common Europe-wide understanding of what are the role and functions of sports organisations. They are not an end in itself, but sports organisations must serve to ensure the practice of sports as a civil right of the individual, to increase participation in life-long sports and to foster the organisation of the sports movement in a responsible and transparent way, following democratic rules and regulations.**

*Developed and submitted on behalf of the ENGSO Executive Committee  
by Jens Brinch, Elert Schramm, Dr. Gerhard Trosien,  
supported by Marlis Rydzy-Götz*

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