

The House of European Sport

Tweets of the month



EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice

Feb 21

Opening of the 1st meeting of the [@EU_Commission](#) Expert Group on "Skills and Human Resources Development in Sport" in Bath. Important discussions on education of [#coaches](#) to come.

EUSport

@EuSport

Feb 20

[@EU_Commission](#) has just launched [#PublicConsultation](#) on the European Week of [#Sport](#) [#BeActive](#). Give us your feedback until 18 May at https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/open-public-consultation-european-week-sport_en [#EUHaveYourSay](#)

EOC EU Office

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Feb 6

European Sport policy is not only about EU Member States. EU willingness to "increase cooperation in education, youth and sport" with Western Balkans countries is a positive signal towards NOCs + national sport organisations outside the EU. [@EOCmedia](#) [@EuSport](#) [#sportdiplomacy](#)

The 2nd European Games

@EOCEuroGames

Feb 5

500 days till the Games!

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

While the Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang has just been closed, the preparations for the Paralympics are in full progress. It's worth to mention that the government of North Korea has taken the decision to send athletes to the Paralympics as well. By assessing the overall political development in the last month's, it's more than obvious that sport has been successfully contributed in building bridges and in stabilising the relationship between the two Korean states. In this regard, we should also ask ourselves if the full potential of sports diplomacy has always been tapped in the past.

Under this aspect, the recent activities conducted by Commissioner Navracsics to bring the topic of Sports Diplomacy on EU agenda deserve the full support of the Olympic Sport Movement as long as sport is not misused for unilateral political interests. We will see to which extent the EU is willing to regard sport as a cross-cutting policy field that could be more integrated in the EU foreign policy. A promising example is the new West Balkan initiative of the EU, that makes a clear reference to benefits of sport activities and acknowledges it's potential for stabilising societies in this part of Europe.

The implementation of the Work Plan of Sport Ministers continues. The first meeting of the Expert Group on "Skills and human resources development in sport" has been organised and the Expert Group on "Integrity" is scheduled for 21-22 April, in Bulgaria. The EU Sport Forum on 22-23 March in Sofia will take up the topic of Sport Diplomacy by organising a panel debate on the "Role of Sport in promoting international cooperation". Furthermore, topics such as transfers of players, sport and climate change or women in sport are on the agenda. One of the most interesting discussions will deal with the lessons learnt from the ISU decision of the EU Commission. The final decision on this dispute is not taken yet since ISU intends to appeal the Commission decision to the European Court of Justice.

Please allow me to take up a completely different topic that should not be forgotten. Two years ago, on 22 March 2016, our former colleague Karen Northshield was one of the victims of the terrorists' attacks in Brussels. Since then she is in hospital and it's still not predictable when and in which condition she will leave the hospital one day. All those who had the privilege to meet her in the last two years have been deeply impressed by her mental strengths, the outstanding willingness to return to "normal" life again and her way to speak openly about her incredibly challenging situation. In this regard Karen has become an inspiration for a lot of people.

In any case Karen would appreciate every kind of support in order to be better prepared for the upcoming obstacles that she only can overcome with our support. Please feel free to contact hellmund@euoffice.euolympic.org if you are willing to support Karen on her way,

Enjoy your read,



Folker Hellmund
Director EOC EU Office

EUROPEAN UNION AND SPORT

First meeting of the Expert Group on "Skills and Human Resources Development in Sport"

On 21 and 22 February 2018, the European Commission organised the first meeting of the new European Commission Expert Group on "*Skills and Human Resources Development in Sport*", hosted by the University of Bath, UK.

Adopted in May 2017, the Third EU Work Plan for Sport (2017-2020) invited the Commission to create two Expert Groups respectively on "*Skills and Human Resources Development in Sport*" and "*Integrity*". Regulated by the '*Horizontal rules for on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups*', adopted by the Commission in 2016, these Groups represent an opportunity for representatives of Member States to discuss potential added value of EU activities in the field of sport as well as to exchange experiences and good practices. The European Commission also has the opportunity to involve sport organisations by inviting them as observer to the meetings. In Bath, the Olympic Movement was represented by the EOC EU Office.

This meeting was the occasion for the Commission to inaugurate the new working methods for Expert Groups. Contrary to the previous period, these Groups are not bound to deliverables already established in the Work Plan for Sport. The EOC EU Office welcomes the higher flexibility of the work of these groups – one of its key recommendation following the previous period-, which could better meet expectations of the sport movement.

Four key topics have been discussed: 1. Role of Coaches 2. Dual Careers, 3. Qualifications in sport and 4. Key Competences.

On each topic, following general updates of the Commission and presentations of relevant projects or initiatives, a discussion on the upcoming activities of the group took place. The following decisions have been taken:

- Education of Coaches, as well as their role and competences, will be at the heart of the work of the Group. As suggested by the Estonian presidency in their [Council Conclusions](#), the Group will produce Guidelines regarding "*the basic requirements in skills and competences for coaches*". As a first step, an overview of the different national coaching systems will be provided with a focus on 1. *Qualification* 2. *Education* 3. *Statute*.
- Regarding Dual Careers and Qualifications, participants agreed that existing documents were still valid and that activities of the group will be limited to information regarding new EU activities, exchange of good practices and presentation of relevant initiatives/ projects.
- On Key Competences, the Commission wanted to inform participants on the opportunity offered by the revised Council Recommendations on Key Competences for lifelong learning. Therein grassroots sport has been directly mentioned as example of non-formal learning to be recognised.

The Commission announced that future meetings should be combined with visits of sport infrastructure in Europe related to the topic. Indeed, participants enjoyed the impressive sport infrastructures of Bath University.

The next meeting of the group will be held in July 2018.

Eurobarometer on “European Youth” exposes stable participation in the activities of a sport club

The European Commission has published its 4th Flash Eurobarometer on “European Youth”. The report aims to analyse the answers given by 10 927 respondents aged 15-30. The survey is designed to collect information on young EU citizens regarding their social involvement. Among other questions, their participation in voluntary activities was addressed.

More than half of the respondents (53%) are involved in at least one organisation and the most popular activities is being involved in sports clubs (29%). Despite an overall increase of youth participation in organisations, the Eurobarometer revealed a stable rate of participation in sports club compared to the previous survey (December 2014) after an important decrease between April 2013 and December 2014.

Some key trends appear in this report, including differences between gender. Men are more participating in sports club activities than women (36% vs 23%). Differences also appear between states since participation in sports clubs is more likely for EU citizens in Ireland (42%), Germany (40%) and the Netherlands (39%) compared to 10% in Hungary. An important increase of participation can be noticed in Italy (+14pp) and in Bulgaria (+11pp), for 15-30 year-olds compared to December 2014, whereas those in Malta (-17 pp) and the United Kingdom (-13 pp) are less participating.

In addition, the report points out differences concerning the participation in sports clubs activities, according to the level of education: only 19% of those who ended education at the age of 15 or under compared to 29% of those who ended education at the age of 20 or over. Also, respondents who are still studying are the most likely to get involved in sports clubs, particularly compared to those who are not working (35% vs 14%).

Looking at voluntary activities, it is positive to notice that 31% of young people in the EU said that they have been involved in an organised voluntary activity in the past 12 months (+6pp compared to 2014). Here again, a socio-demographic analysis shows that education is a relevant factor (29% of people who finished their education at the age of 20 or over compared to 25% of those who ended education at the age of 16-19 and 12% ending at the age of 15 or under).

Regarding recognition of voluntary activities the following figure came out: 28% of voluntarily active young people receive formal recognition through diplomas or certificates.

FURTHER INFORMATION :

[Eurobarometer](#)

EU Parliament called for assessment of Daylight Saving Time

The European Parliament has called for thorough assessment of current bi-annual time changes marking the beginning and end of summertime (as the standard time is wintertime). Originally, Member States had the competence of fixing the standard time, however since the 1980's several

directives have been adopted by the European Parliament and the MS, harmonising the varying summertimes. The current reference text serving as a basis for the EU-wide clock-change harmonisation is the [Directive 2000/84/EC](#). A

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revision of the directive could end *daylight saving time* or extend it to the entire year. An abrogation of the EU legislation - which is quite unlikely considering the major impact it would have on the Single Market - would give back to each Member State the competence to decide on the summertime.

Some [citizens' initiatives](#) have shown that people are concerned about the time change and MEPs have submitted various parliamentary questions to ask Commission's opinion on abandoning summer-time.

A [report](#) on the impact of the European Directive explained that summer time "*provides greater*

opportunities for a wide range of evening leisure activities". Other studies have shown that longer evenings played a causal role in slightly increasing physical activity. Outdoor sports relying on a clear visibility also argue for extended (or even permanent) summer time.

The potential impact on sport makes the requirement for a common position of the different sport actors across Europe quite evident.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Press Release](#)

[Parliamentary Research Service Blog](#)

European Commission publishes a consultation on the European Week of Sport

The European Commission has released a public consultation on the European Week of Sport (EWoS). The [questionnaire](#) is available in all EU languages and will remain online until the 18th of May 2018.

Sport organisations (and citizens interested in the project) can provide their opinion regarding EWoS' target groups, its main objective, the equivalent projects at the national level, etc.

The European Week of Sport is an initiative led by the European Commission. The week takes place across Europe, in September, every year since

2015. This awareness-raising campaign promotes the benefits of sport and physical activity.

It targets all European citizens, regardless of age, background, or fitness level. The EOC, which is one of the partner of the EWoS, will contribute to the consultation in the upcoming weeks.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[European Week of Sport](#)

[EWoS Consultation page](#)

[Questionnaire](#)

New enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans countries

In his 2017 State of the Union address, President of the European Commission Juncker declared: *“If we want more stability in our neighbourhood, then we must also maintain a credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans”*. Even though, he also announced that any further enlargement of the EU will not be feasible before 2025, this statement confirmed the European future of the Balkan region, remaining a geostrategic investment for a stable Europe.

On the 6 of February 2018, the European Commission adopted a [new strategy for the Western Balkans countries](#). On the one hand, it identifies priorities and areas to enhance joint cooperation, on the other hand, it addresses the main challenges the Western Balkans still face, such as the need to significantly strengthen the rule of law. Sustained efforts must be done by each individual country to get full integrated to the EU.

In order to support the transformation process of the Western Balkans, the European Commission initiated a number of specific actions gathered in [six flagship initiatives](#) targeting the following areas:

- Strengthening the rule of law
- Enhancing support for socio-economic development
- Establishing a Digital agenda for the Western Balkans
- Reinforcing engagement on security and migration
- Increasing transport and energy connectivity
- Supporting reconciliation and good neighbourly relations

Even though sport is not a priority area in the accession and pre-accession negotiations, sport has a clear role to play. *“Supporting reconciliation and good neighbourly relations”* explicitly refers to sport.

The document stresses that supporting education and potential of your people in the region *“is crucial for the region’s further development and a prerequisite for peaceful coexistence and reconciliation.”* Subsequently, the European Commission has pledged that, in addition to education, **cooperation will be increased in the field of culture, youth and sport**. The exact form of this flagship initiative is yet to be determined, nevertheless it promises an important development.

To support the implementation of these initiatives, the Commission has decided to, **gradually increase until 2020 the funding available under the Instrument for Pre-Accession**. The Commission commits as well to double the Erasmus + funding dedicated to the Western Balkan countries. Even though the increased financial envelope will be dedicated mainly *“to helping even more young citizens of the Western Balkans to study and gain experience in the EU”*, sport organisations could benefit from the youth- and education-related mobility programmes and other initiatives.

Finally, the EU Roadmap states that: *“the EU door is open to further accessions when, and only when, the individual countries have met the criteria”*. All Western Balkans Countries have the chance to move forward and achieve progress on their respective European paths.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Strategy for the Western Balkans](#)

[Communication from the commission “A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans”](#)

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European Commission appoints new senior managers in DG EAC

The European Commission has appointed new Directors-General and Deputy Directors.

At the DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Themis Christophidou was nominated as the new Director-General. Ms. Christophidou is a Cypriot national who has served 17 years in the European Commission and since November 2014 she has been the Head of Cabinet of the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides. She also performed as the Deputy Head of Cabinet of the former Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou who was in charge of Education, Culture, Multilingualism, Youth and Sport.

Furthermore, Viviane Hoffmann has been granted the post of Deputy Director-General for the DG

Education, Youth, Sports and Culture. Ms. Hoffman is Luxembourgish and has an experience of 30 years in the European Commission. She has served for three consecutive mandates as Deputy Head of Cabinet of former Vice-President and Commissioner Viviane Reding, who was in charge of education and culture during her first mandate. Having most recently been in charge of the Citizens' Dialogues and the Debate on the Future of Europe, Ms Hoffmann will mainly deal with the Commission's policy on youth and education which is on top of the EU's agenda.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Press Release](#)

FUNDING PROGRAMMES AND STUDIES

EU Sport Diplomacy – sport for development projects and EU funding

At the end of January 2018, the European Commission published a fact-finding study on [Sport Diplomacy: Identifying Good Practices](#), which was commissioned in the framework of the recent EU activities in the field of sport diplomacy.

The aim of the study was twofold: to identify good practice **sport for development projects**, and to **map possible EU funding sources for such projects**. Other elements of sport diplomacy such as the role of sport in public diplomacy relations between countries and regions were covered only to a small extent.

The researchers identified around 50 sport for development projects, of which 10 were classified

as good practice examples. Studying these more in depth, they assessed, that:

- Sport is used as a tool in projects focused on the following sustainable development goals: helping disadvantaged young people to develop new skills and to access support networks, improving social inclusion of disabled people, improving gender equality and fighting gender-based violence, promoting health awareness and supporting health education, and strengthening social structures and the sense of community in refugee camps.
- The skills, knowledge and expertise of Member State's sport federations and NGOs has been

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successfully applied in the majority of the projects.

- Some projects have a strong focus on the engagement with high-level local stakeholders (e.g. ministries) which enables the projects to support the development of sustainable structures and, in certain cases, to instigate policy changes.
- The most successful projects have a strong focus on capacity building and upskilling of organisations in third countries.

The researchers conclude this part of their work by stressing that “it is evident that there is potential for EU funding programmes to support sport for development projects that involve partnerships between EU Member States and third countries.”

Regrettably, though, none of the selected case study projects have been co-financed by the EU. The findings can, indeed, be very useful as an inspiration for the future funding programmes and titles, and can serve as a proof that sport has the potential to be a very effective tool in reaching sustainable development goals, however they do not provide any evidence on how such project could be effectively linked to current EU priorities in the third countries.

The overview of the EU funding sources that have the potential to be used to support international

sport for development projects is somewhat useful as it focuses on thematic and global programmes, such as Health, Creative Europe, or Erasmus +, which have an external dimension. However, the overview omits two very important geographical financial instruments – [Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance](#) (IPA II) covering the EU Accession countries, and the [European Neighbourhood Instrument](#) (ENI) which targets countries to the East and to the South of the EU (the study mentions only one part – the various Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes). The [European Development Fund](#), even though it is directly financed by EU Member States, and implemented according to its own financial and implementation regulation along with the MFF, is not mentioned either.

Despite the lack of information on these programmes, we fully support the main recommendations of the study, in particular, the following: **“It should be ensured that sport for development is identified as an explicit priority in relevant EU funding instruments.”**

In our view, however, we would add that the EU should support not only sport for development, but also the development of sport in third countries.

PARTNERS' CORNER

Olympic Festivals PyeongChang

In July 2017, the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee adopted a new Olympic asset to promote the Olympic Games through the organization of local festivals by NOCs with the objective of binding the Olympic Games to the local population of a country and introduction sports to a wider audience and younger generation: the **Olympic Festival**. The OFs are to be organised during Games time,

promote Olympism and the Olympic Games to the national population, ensure, in partnership with the local Rights Holding Broadcaster, a live broadcast of the Games, and last but not least, offer visitors with a number of sports initiations and Olympic themed educational activities.

The IOC has been cooperating closely with the Czech Olympic Committee and the

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partners of the Sport Parks inspired by the Olympics projects on the development of this new asset. Indeed, the Czech NOC together with the NOCs of the Netherlands and Belgium have organised Olympic Festival-like events in the past, and the main aim of the Sport Parks project is to build on this experience and develop a handbook for organisers of such events, now, in particular, of the Olympic Festivals.

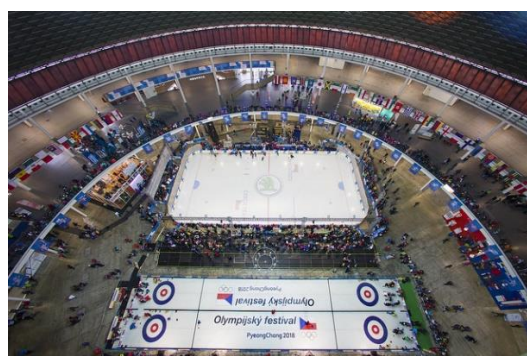
And what better way to test the draft recommendations of the handbook and the new Olympic asset, than to organise events under the umbrella of Olympic Festival already during the Winter Olympic Games Pyeongchang 2018. Four countries took up the challenge, among which three partner NOCs of the Sport Parks project – Czech Republic (Brno and Ostrava), France (Grenoble) and Slovenia (Rogla) – and staged Olympic Festivals in their countries. To be able to learn from the organisers' experience and try out sport activities or sponsors activation in person, the Czech NOC together with the IOC organised a study visit to these events.

The combined delegation was first welcomed by the NOC of Slovenia which organised a small-scale, family-friendly Olympic Festival in the ski resort “**Rogla**”, which is located 1.5 h drive from the Slovene capital, Ljubljana. The two-day long event targeted mainly primary school children and offered more than 10 sport activities on snow and ice. The event featured prominently Olympic Games elements such as the official opening. Olympic values education was also well incorporated in the activities.



Credit: NOC of Slovenia

Building on its experience from 2014 and 2016 editions of Olympic Parks, the Czech Olympic Committee organised 2 Olympic Festivals in 2018. While Rogla presents a good example of a small and short-term OF, the OFs in **Brno and Ostrava** can be placed on the other side of the scale: 17 days, 34 sports and more than 250 000 visitors.



Credit: NOC of Czech Republic

“The winter edition of the OF in Brno and Ostrava is one of the most successful “Olympic” events which we have ever organised. Visitors of the OFs demonstrated again, that the Czech Republic is not a country whose people can only come together to support and celebrate the successes of their sport heroes when they are in front of a TV screen. On the contrary, they can, and already do so, while being physically active and doing sport”, summarized the success of the OFs Ms Naďa Černá, project manager, Czech NOC.

Last event to visit was the Olympic Festival Pyeongchang 2018 in **Grenoble**. While

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being of a small-to-middle size and offering participants indoors activities in the *Palais des Sports*, its specificity was the link to the celebration of the 1968 Grenoble Olympics, which mobilised the whole city. A challenge on one hand, and an opportunity on the other, was seized by the organisers – NOC of France and the Departmental Olympic Committee of Isère – who were able to make a natural connection between the two events and brands which was to a great benefit of all the participants.



Credit: NOC of Czech Republic

The experience from the organisation of the OFs and from the study visit will feed directly into the development of the Handbook with the hope that the interactive guide will help future organisers of OFs to prepare and implement events of the same quality and appeal as the pilot OFs in 2018.

NEXT MONTH

12-15 March

15 March

19 March

22-23 March

Plenary session: European Parliament, Strasbourg

Council of the EU, Working Party on Sport, Brussels

European Parliament, CULT Committee meeting, Brussels

European Commission, EU Sport Forum, Sofia