

EOC

Liaison Office at the European Union



**Report on the impact of the activities
of the European Union
on sports**

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General Policy

1st Intergovernmental conference: EU initiates revision of Treaty

During the German Presidency of the European Council, it was possible to push ahead with the blocked EU constitutional process. Agreement was reached on the new so-called Reform Treaty at the EU summit held from 21 to 22 June 2007. This will now be revised by the intergovernmental conference under the central coordination of the Portuguese European Council Presidency.

The intergovernmental conference was officially opened on 23 July. Its task will be to put the summit's political agreement into a legal form and to prepare a text revising the current treaties (EU Treaty and EC Treaty). The aim is to strengthen the EU's efficiency and democratic legitimacy by restructuring its institutional framework and its distribution of power.

What is of significance for sport is that a provision on sport is also planned in the Reform Treaty.

Final revision is planned by the summit to be held in Lisbon in October 2007.

The text will then be subject to ratification in all 27 Member States. This process is to be completed by the European elections in 2009.



2nd European Commission: consultation on anti-discrimination measures

The European Commission has launched an online consultation on combating discrimination in the Member States and at EU level. The public consultation will help the Commission plan new measures to tackle discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in areas beyond the job market. It comes as the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All – which aims to raise people's awareness of their rights to equal treatment and promote a broad debate on the benefits of diversity to society – enters full swing.

The consultation is made up of a general online consultation, as well as a consultation targeted at business. It will run from July 4 to October 15 and will be accessible at the following address:



http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm



Sport

News from the Institutions

3rd European Commission adopts “White Paper on Sport”

The European Commission adopted the White Paper on Sport on 11 July. The White Paper is the Commission’s first comprehensive initiative on the subject of sport and it serves to provide it with guidance on sports-related measures in the years ahead. It contains numerous proposals for involving sport more than hitherto in implementing Community and EU funding policy.

The Action Plan “Pierre de Coubertin” sums up the areas of action proposed in the White Paper which deal in particular with the social and economic aspects of sport, public health, education, social inclusion, voluntary activities and the financing of sport.

With regard to the criticism that the White Paper could interfere with the autonomy of sports federations, the Commission underlines its respect for the principle of subsidiarity, the autonomy of sports organisations and of applicable EU law. A concept is to be developed that takes the special features of sport into account within the framework of existing powers.

The Commission will hold a conference in October 2007 in order to discuss the White Paper with actors in the field of sport.



4th Conclusions of the EU Sport Directors Meeting

Under the Portuguese EU Presidency an EU Sports Directors Meeting took place in Lisbon on the 12–14 July 2007.

The following topics were discussed among others:

White Paper on Sport

The White Paper on Sport was judged positively. The sport directors were of the opinion that it represents an historic opportunity in promoting sports and physical activity and in reinforcing cooperation between the sport sector and areas such as education and health. However further time was required for consultation at the national level before arriving at definitive position statements on the White Paper.

Financing of sport

□ The sport directors discussed the current situation and legal framework with regard to gambling and internet gaming, and proposed a concerted policy among Member States or a new directive on the issue. They were of the opinion that it is necessary to maintain state control over gambling in order to ensure funding for sports, and that Member States should identify alternate sources of funding for amateur sport given the uncertain future of the gambling market.



Slovenian Presidency

The upcoming Slovenian Presidency plans to continue with the rolling agenda, dealing with the items of Sport and Health, the Economic Impact of Sport, Violence in Sport, Doping in Sport and Vocational Qualification and Training. These items are to be complemented by issues raised by the new White Paper on Sport and the specific items of Sport and Games of Chance, the Common Sports Information Network of the EU and Integration through Sport.

The informal Meeting of Sports Directors is planned to take place on 4–5 February 2008 and the Informal Meeting of Sports Ministers to take place on the 14–15 March 2008.

Legal Questions

5th Draft report on EU alcohol strategy

Announcing an “EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm”, the European Commission has initiated a process to draw up measures on the subject of alcohol consumption in Europe.

The ensuing draft report presented by the European Parliament (Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety) on 2 April 2007 welcomed the Commission’s initiative. The vote on the amendments filed was taken at the Committee’s meeting on 17 July 2007. The report will be submitted for a vote



at the plenary session in early September 2007.

The draft report contains three sections of relevance to sport relating to the subject of alcohol advertising bans. Various submissions for amendments tended towards introducing total bans on advertising alcohol. Some proposals also aimed to prohibit sponsoring sporting and cultural events with cross-border effects using alcohol brands. Finally, the sale and consumption of alcohol at sporting events were to be banned. However, these proposed amendments have not been passed yet. There was general agreement that alcohol advertising and marketing should not be targeted at young people. With regard to the call for fixed broadcasting times for alcohol advertising on television, the draft document has now limited itself to calling upon the Member States to draw up guidelines for alcohol advertising on television. A vote on introducing a binding warning on alcoholic drinks has been taken for the first time. This could lead to similar developments as those relating to the warnings already in place on tobacco products.

It is probable that the Commission will take the final parliamentary report as a working basis and that it may take legislative initiatives.

For sport, this vote is a success overall, as it did not impose a total ban on alcohol advertising or prohibit the alcohol industry from sponsoring sporting and cultural events.



6th EU institutions address issue of visas for sportsmen and sportswomen

As criticised by international sporting organisations, it will become more and more difficult to organise international sporting events within the EU that are not connected to the Olympics or football. It is indeed very difficult to obtain visas for sportsmen and sportswomen on due time. Thus, a trend may be observed that there is a preference for holding major sporting events in non-EU countries, as the visa issue is less complicated to obtain there.

In order to draw attention to this issue, a parliamentary enquiry was made to the European Commission by the MEP Christa Prets in cooperation with the EU-Office of German Sport.

In his reply, the EU Commissioner in charge, Franco Frattini, states that it is important to deliver fast visas and immigration procedures, particularly for top-level sportsmen and sportswomen coming from third countries, in order to increase the EU's international attractiveness. The Commission believes that the EU should also develop other (time-limited) entry rules for sportsmen and sportswomen from third countries in addition to the existing procedures. In addition, Frattini points out that the recently-published White Paper on sport takes up this issue.



info@eu-sports-office.org



Aid Programms

7th Continuation of the EU's health programme starts in early 2008

At its second reading on July 10, the European Parliament voted to continue the EU Public Health Action Programme for the period 2007–2013.

In principle, the EU Member States have the main responsibility for health issues. However, the EU attempts to support their measures in order to meet the challenges in the field of health and to make a contribution by ensuring citizens' health and safety. The prevention of diseases and health disorders, a high level of mental and physical health, more equality on health issues throughout the whole Community as well as the removal of the causes of health threats are central aspects here.

Concerning sport, the annual request for the submission of project proposals is interesting because physical activity is a top priority of this funding programme.



Miscellaneous

8th Tilo Friedmann leaves the EU–Office of German Sport

As of 3 August, Tilo Friedmann will be leaving the German Olympic Sports Confederation and the EU–Office of German Sport. His work in the “European capital” began 9 years ago and he took over the management of the EU–Office in 2001.

Please note: the next edition of the monthly report (August/September 2007) will appear in early October.