

EOC

Liaison Office at the European Union



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

February 2008

MONTHLY REPORT FEBRUARY 2008

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General Policy

1st Treaty of Lisbon – Ratification in France

On 7 February, the French parliament adopted a law enabling the Treaty of Lisbon and the resulting amendments to the existing EU Treaty to be ratified. This step was possible after the French constitution had been amended to this effect on 4 February.

We recall (see also our monthly report of December 2007) that the Treaty of Lisbon was signed by Heads of State and Government on 13 December. For the first time, sport is mentioned in the Treaty as an area in its own right, and it thus falls under the scope of the EU. In order to come into force, the Treaty has to be ratified by all 27 EU Member States. It has already been ratified in Hungary, Malta, Slovenia and Romania.

2nd Commission presents policy priorities for 2009

The European Commission (EC) has today presented its Annual Policy Strategy setting out its political priorities for 2009 in five priority areas: growth and jobs, climate change and sustainable Europe, making a reality of the common immigration policy, putting the citizen first, and Europe as a world partner. The EC wants to seek to gain approval for its legislative initiatives and also look forward by stimulating debate on the internal market, social agenda and

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budget reviews.

On the basis of this Annual Policy Strategy, the EC will initiate an exchange of views with the European Parliament and Council on where the policy priorities should lie in 2009.

2009 will be an important year for the European Union, marked by the possible entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, a new European Parliament and a new European Commission.



http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/synthesis/index_en.htm

Sport

News from the Institutions

3rd Update on the “White Paper on Sport”

On 26 February, a vote was taken by the European Parliament’s Economic and Social Committee, which was involved in the consultations, on an opinion on the report on the “White Paper on Sport” by the Committee on Culture and Education.

In its opinion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

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- to create an inter-institutional dialogue to draw up guidelines on the applicability of EU legislation
- to prepare a Commission study on the application of EU legislation to sport taking player transfer into special account
- to prevent and combat doping
- to strengthen solidarity between amateur and professional sport
- to make a feasible agreement to improve the training of young athletes
- to balance interests with regard to the need for national teams to have native players

In the discussion on 25 February, rapporteur Emine Bozkurt (SPE, Netherlands) agreed with the Committee members on the main statements in the submissions for amendments.

The statements in the opinion are to influence the consultations and draft report by the Committee on Culture and Education. The EP's Committee on Culture and Education, which is responsible for the White Paper, is expected to vote on its draft report on 31 March 2008. The vote by the EP's plenary session is planned for 21 to 23 April.

4th EU Directors General are responsible for sport

On the occasion of a meeting during Slovenia's current Presidency of the European Council, Slovenian Minister of Sport and Education Dr. Milan Zver declared to the EU Directors General responsible for sport that "sport plays an important role in the social sphere, which is why it should be given due weight within the European institutions". The White Paper on Sport and its "Pierre de Coubertin" action plan are already the first fundamental step towards being able to realise this project. The meeting's chairman Simon Starček and Pierre Mairesse, EU Director for Youth, Sport and Relations with the Citizen, underlined the importance of the White Paper on Sport for the planned EU sports programme.

Another focal area was the problem of doping in sport. As well as a report on WADA Europe's meeting, the view was expressed that a rigorous approach should be taken to doping's negative influence on the sports sector.

This conference – which took place before the meeting of Sports Ministers on 17 March 2008 – was intended to pave the way for the long-term implementation of the basic ideas of the White Paper on Sport. Its results and insights are the basis for further discussions on the specific nature of sport, the limits of its autonomy and its priorities.

5th European Parliament: Consultations on obesity report

A discussion was held by the competent European Parliament Environment Committee on 25 February on the White Paper “A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity”.

The rapporteur Adriana Poli Bortone (VEN, Italy) advocated selling “healthy food” more cheaply in future because obesity is mainly due to social inequality.

A lack of physical exercise should also be taken into account in regional and urban planning. In future, more public spaces should be created that enable physical activities to be carried out, thereby preventing obesity (e.g. more parks, sports halls and cycle tracks). In addition, the broadcasting of misleading advertising that mainly targets children should be reduced through regular coordination and consultations between the authorities concerned. The current schedule, which plans the implementation of such a regulation by 2015, is taking too long. Faster implementation is required.

Frédérique Ries (Liberals, Belgium) opposed limiting the advertising of certain foods targeted at children since a compromise on this has already been reached in consultations on the ‘TV without frontiers’ directive. The EU should concentrate on preventing and fighting obesity. Sport is one important element in this strategy. In contrast, Magor Imre Csibi (Liberals, Romania) favoured a

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far-reaching ban on advertising targeted at children of foods with a high sugar, salt and fat content from 2010 onwards. The provisions of the ‘TV without frontiers’ directive do not sufficiently protect children.

Riitta Myller (EVP, Finland) was of the opinion that voluntary work in sport should receive additional support. Sports lessons at school should be further intensified and developed.

Edite Estrela (SPE, Portugal) suggested that there should be a reduction in value added tax for sports facilities.

The deadline for the submission of amendments was 28 February. The Committee will vote on 5/6 May 2008. The plenary session is expected to vote on the report from 16 to 18 June 2008.

6th Committee of the Regions: Fight against obesity

In February, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) adopted an opinion on “A strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues”.

The CoR advocates the involvement of the regions and the establishment of health education to reduce the health problems.

In response to the European Commission’s White Paper and with a view to combating the problem of obesity, which affects the whole of Europe, the regions are called upon to take part in the fight against obesity.

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With this opinion, the CoR underlines the need for international cooperation. In addition, the rapporteur recommends the organisation of an annual meeting of the regions for an exchange of opinions and to establish effective measures in the fight against obesity.

Since children and young people are increasingly affected by overweight, the opinion recommends food education for children, so that they learn to eat a balanced diet. In addition, it is hoped that cooperation between public and private players will help to ensure exemplary conduct and to enhance collaboration with the food industry and the media.

7th Committee of Regions: promote the benefits of volunteering

The Committee of Regions adopted a report by Irish politician Declan McDonnell, calling on European decision makers to promote the economic and social benefits of volunteering.

According to the report the gained insights and experiences cause an easier access to future employability, particularly concerning deprived people.

However volunteering should not replace the employed staff at any time.

Volunteering is seen as a tool to contribute to the social and economic cohesion. A local and regional infrastructure is necessary to enable the participation to the voluntary sector. Not only the young people, but also the

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adults should be encouraged to engage in volunteering. In view of the aging population, the combination of life skills and new challenges results in best benefits for all participants.

The report recommends a “European Year of Active Citizenship through Volunteering” in which the 27 Member States are involved promoting the voluntary sector. It also notes an EU awards system for voluntary and business sector organisations to highlight examples of best practice.

Legal Questions

8th Vocational qualifications: infringement proceedings against France

The Commission has decided to start legal proceedings against France before the Court of Justice of the European Communities for breaches of Articles 39, 43 and 49 of the EC Treaty and of Directive 92/51/EEC on the general recognition of diplomas (consolidated in Directive 2005/36/EC) on account of its refusal to allow snowboard instructors from other Member States, especially Germany, to teach this discipline on its own in France on the grounds that it may only be taught by ski instructors.

As a result, snowboard instructors from other Member States who have not been trained as ski instructors are currently unable to engage in their occupation in France. The Commission believes this ban might be justified on

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consumer protection grounds in that the presence of ski instructors teaching different disciplines at French ski resorts might mislead consumers with regard to the extent of the snowboard instructors' abilities. However, the Commission considers that consumers would be better protected by less restrictive measures such as requiring snowboard instructors to display the vocational or training qualification of their Member State of origin.

9th Gambling: infringement procedures against Greece and Netherlands

The European Commission has addressed in April 2006 and in June 2007 two waves of infringement procedures against Netherlands and Greece, concerning gambling services issues. The European Commission asked these Member States to further justify their restrictions to EU principles governing free movement of services.

These procedures have taken a new turn lately since the European Commission considers at this stage of the procedure (reasoned opinions sent end of February 2008) that "the measures taken by these Member States to restrict the free movement of gambling services have not been shown to be necessary, proportionate and non-discriminatory", criteria allowing eventually Member States to justify a gambling scheme based on monopoly.

The Dutch investigation relates only to provision and promotion of sports betting services.

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If there is no satisfactory reply within two months, showing that the obstacles have been removed from the national legislations, the European Commission may refer the matters to the European Court of Justice.

Aid Programmes

10th Call for proposals in the Youth in Action Programme

In February, the European Commission published a call for project proposals within the framework of action 3.2 of the "Youth in Action" programme.

The "Youth in the World" Programme aims to promote cooperation in the youth sector between YOUTH Programme Countries and partner countries other than the European Union's neighbouring countries.

The projects have to be in one of the following subject areas:

- strengthening of civil society, citizenship and democracy
- fight against racism and xenophobia
- inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue
- post-conflict resolution and reconstruction
- the active role of women in society
- minority rights

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The proposals are to be submitted by non-profit-making organisations, non-governmental organisations or by local and regional public bodies.

The Agency's financial assistance may not exceed 80 per cent of a project's total eligible expenses and the maximum grant may not exceed € 100,000 per project. Projects must start between 1 November 2008 and 31 December 2008. The project duration must be between 6 and 12 months.

Applications are to be sent to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Committee (EACEA) no later than 15 April 2008.



http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/calls2008/action32/index_en.htm

11th DAPHNE III Programme (2007–2013)

The general objective of the Daphne III Programme is to contribute to the protection of children, young people and women against all forms of violence and to attain a high level of health protection, well being and social cohesion.

The programme shall contribute to the development of the Community policies and more specifically to those related to public health, human rights and gender equality, as well as actions aimed at protection of children's rights, and the fight against trafficking of human beings and sexual exploitation.

The priority areas:

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- Treatment programmes for perpetrators of violence against children, young people and women
- National legislation in Europe relating to violence
- Targeted awareness raising, education and information
- Studies, mapping and research
- Indicators and related data collection
- Extraction of policy issues from work achieved by Daphne-funded projects
- Exchange, adaptation and use of existing good practices

The Daphne III Programme is open to participation by non-profit private organisations and public authorities and institutions (local authorities at the competent level, university departments and research centres). Public bodies at national/central level are not eligible for Daphne funding. Proposals must have a partnership of at least two eligible organisations from two different EU Member States. Organisations from the 27 Member States of the EU are eligible for action grant funding under the programme. Organisations from all other countries may participate as associate partners but will not be eligible for community funding.

The Community grant applied for must be lower or equal to 80% of the total eligible cost of the project and be between EUR 75,000 and 200,000 for any 12-month period. Applications have to be sent by 22 April 2008.



http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/daphne3/funding_daphne3_en.htm

12th Final conference on the EU project "Row the BoaT"

A conference concluding the project “Reinforcing the representativeness of the social partners in the sport sector: The Row the BoaT project” took place in Arnhem, the Netherlands, from 7 to 8 February. The participants included 50 representatives of various employees’ and employers’ organisations from 13 EU Member States who wanted to learn more about the results of the project. The objective of the “RBT“ project was to further develop social dialogue within the EU in the field of sport through strengthening the representative character of the social partners and the structure of employers’ and employees’ organisations.

EASE (the European Association of Sport Employers) and EURO-MEI closely cooperated from December 2006 to February 2008 in supporting the project.

The “RBT” in figures:

- Total budget: € 240,000 (mainly cofinanced by the European Commission)
- 11 project partners (3 European organisations, 8 national partner organisations from the social sphere, 6 other participating countries)
- 227 social partners
- 10 countries as its target group
- 15 meetings in 10 months
- 160 organisations acquired for the project
- 2 studies on the project’s implementation



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