

Tweets of the month



EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice Sep 24
On behalf of @EOCmedia & President Janez Kocijancic, @SalonenM from @Olympiakomitea and @h_pekkola thanked Commissioner @TNavracsicsEU for the excellent cooperation during the last 5 years. Thank you for your great work e.g. for EU sport policy, #EWoS & @EUErasmusPlus! #BeActive

EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice Sep 19
Full room in our funding seminar for European NOCs and our partner organisations! The 2nd day started with an introduction by @FolkerF and now @val_capelli is presenting the funding opportunities for sport in #EUSolidarityCorps and @EUErasmusPlus #youth.

EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice Sep 6
@EOCmedia EU Commission meeting is taking place today in Brussels. Discussions on different EU policy fields and potential activities towards the NOCs are on the agenda.

EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice Sep 4
With Finnish Olympic Committee @Olympiakomitea we met the Finnish Minister of Sport @KosonenHanna from current EU Presidency and Finnish MEPs to discuss the sports policy and EU. Thanks for good discussions! @ElsiKatainen @spietikainen @PekkarinenMauri @EeroHeinaluoma

The House of European Sport

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

At the end of September, the European Commission published the results of the last Erasmus+ Sport call. Out of the 766 projects submitted, 260 were funded, representing a success rate of around 33%. It was with great pleasure that the EOC EU Office received the news that the RINGS project submitted by the Office is one of the funded projects in the field of good governance. The project partners are 11 NOCs and the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz. In terms of content, the project will deal with questions of change management, stakeholder involvement, and in particular with challenges to which the NOCs are exposed in a rapidly changing political and economic environment.

Political Brussels looks with great interest at the ongoing hearings of the Commissioners-designate in the European Parliament (see a separate article). It is expected that the interviews will be very intensive and in-depth, as the EP is still rather worried about the task of the top candidate model. The decision on the Commissioners-designate from Hungary and Romania is also blocked, since the Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee expressed concerns about the candidates conflicts of interest.

From the EOC EU Office's point of view, it is to be criticised, in particular, that neither sport, nor culture or education are included in the title of the portfolio of sports Commissioner-designate, Mariya Gabriel from Bulgaria. The planned title "Innovation and Youth" may sound less bulky, but it says little about the Commissioner's actual responsibilities. As a reminder, even when the current Commission was constituted, sport was only included in the title of Commissioner Navracsics after the intervention of the European Parliament. It is to be wished that the Commission becomes aware that the exclusion of sport from the title of the portfolio could be understood as a disregarding of the societal role of sport.

Finally, a few remarks on changes of personnel in the EOC EU Office. On 1 October, Andy Bold will become the new Policy Officer of the DOSB and thus the successor of Felix Schäfer. Previously, he has worked in the international department of the DOSB in Frankfurt. We wish Andy, who has got to know the Office already as a trainee a good start. Also on 1 October, Ana Ramirez Fernandez will start the replacement for a maternity leave of our Office Manager, Laura Hardman. She, too, is a former trainee of the EOC EU Office and has already gained first work experience at the European Commission. We also wish her a good start!

Enjoy your read,



Folker Hellmund
Director

EUROPEAN UNION AND SPORT

Ursula von der Leyen has proposed the New European Commission

On Tuesday 10 September 2019, Ursula von der Leyen, new President of the European Commission, officially announced the distribution of portfolios to Commissioners-designate. In the new Commission structure, von der Leyen will be supported [by 27 Commissioners](#) including 3 Executive Vice-Presidents (EVPs) and 5 Vice-Presidents (VPs) responsible for the top priorities in the President's Political Guidelines. Frans Timmermans, Margrethe Vestager, and Valdis Dombroskis, as EVPs will have a double function as both VPs and Commissioners. Every Commissioner will be under the guidance of an EVP or a VP, depending on the topic, and will be supported by the relevant DG in the Commission. In addition, Commissioners and DGs of the European Commission will establish thematic groups to better coordinate their actions. (see the explanatory scheme below)

Changes for sport are quite significant as the topic is proposed to be in the portfolio of Commissioner-candidate Mariya Gabriel (BUL) with the role of Commissioner for "Innovation and Youth". Her portfolio would be much wider than the portfolio of current Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, as it is proposed to include not only education, culture youth and sport, but also research and innovation. Gabriel is the current European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society. On sport topics, Mariya Gabriel will work under the Guidance of the Vice-President for Protecting our European Way of Life, Margaritis Schinas (GRE) and will be supported by the DG EAC of the European Commission.

The absence of sport in the title of the new Commissioner is a negative message regarding the importance of sport topics in her priorities. Nevertheless, there is still a small chance that sport would be added to the title following the

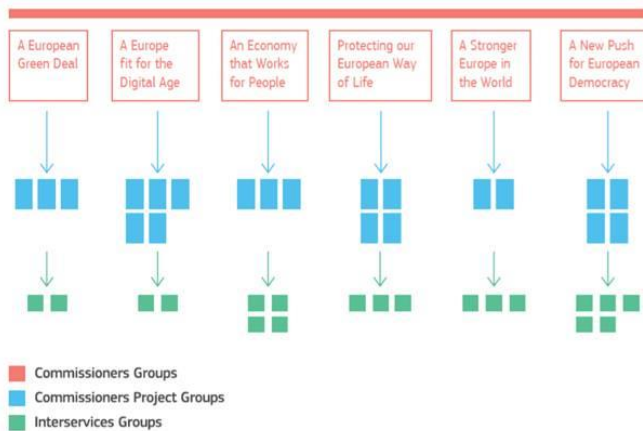
audition by the European Parliament. In addition, the mission letter from von der Leyen referring to "Innovation and Youth" creates uncertainties about the new EU Sport policy as the only reference to sport is "*sport as a tool for inclusion and wellbeing, expansion of the #BeInclusive EU Sports Awards and further grow the European Week of Sport to get more people active*". The focus seems to be on societal role of sport. As a positive message, Von der Leyen reiterates her wish to see Erasmus tripled for the next funding period in the mission letter.

Another important announce concerned Margrethe Vestager (DEN) - which is proposed to act as EVP for "Europe fit for the Digital Age" and to continue as the Commissioner responsible for competition. DG Comp was involved in several sport related cases in her previous mandate and she would strengthen her position if this new Commission is approved.

However, there is still a long road to confirm the new college of Commissioners. Indeed, from 30 September to 8 October the parliamentary committee(s) dealing with the candidate's proposed portfolio will conduct hearings of all Commissioners-designate. For the Commissioner in charge of the topic of sport the CULT Committee proceeded the audition on 30 September 2019. (see the relevant article of our monthly report)

Following the hearings, the Parliament will vote, in a plenary session, to decide whether to support the new College of Commissioners. The Parliament must support or reject the proposed Commission as a whole as they cannot reject a single Commissioner. If approved, the new EU Commission should most likely officially start its five-year term at the beginning of November 2019.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

[European Commission - Press Release \(10/09/2019\): "The von der Leyen Commission: for a Union that strives for more"](#)

[Commissioners-designated](#)

EP Hearing of Commissioner-designate Mariya Gabriel

On Monday 30 September 2019, the hearing of Mariya Gabriel, the Commissioner-designate of "Innovation and Youth" and to be in charge of sport, took place. Taking into account that Gabriel will have a wider portfolio than current Commissioner Navracscics, since research and innovation are also included, it was not a huge surprise that sport was not the biggest topic of conversation during the hearing. The discussion focused on research and innovation and the MEPs barely addressed the topic of sports.

However, Commissioner-designate Gabriel mentioned in the hearing that inclusivity is to be a "key word" within the area and she stressed the importance of sport as a tool for integration of disabled, migrants and refugees. Some of these values were first expressed in the written questions and answers where Gabriel emphasized four policy priorities in the field of sports. These main priorities for her in sport are:

- integrity
- physical activity
- economy
- developing grassroots sports

In addition, in the written questions and answers, she mentioned the importance of cooperation and

action in full respect of the autonomy of sport organisations. Moreover, Gabriel focused on sport as a tool to reach common goals referred to social inclusion, gender equality, health and employment.

As a positive message, Gabriel clearly confirmed in the hearing her strong support for tripling the budget of the Erasmus for the next funding period, which was already mentioned in the mission letter of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen regarding the portfolio of Gabriel.

Bulgarian Mariya Gabriel with a background in languages and political science was a member of the European Parliament in 2009-2017. She was the Vice-President of the EPP Group for three years before she took her current role as the "European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society" in 2017.

Gabriel is now the proposed Commissioner for the wide "Innovation and Youth" portfolio and focus seems to be on societal role of sport. It also remains to be seen how much time she will have for sport related activities with the new wide portfolio.

The European Parliament will now evaluate the hearing of Mariya Gabriel and other Commissioners-designate, and vote on the

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approval of the College of Commissioners in the coming weeks.

[FURTHER INFORMATION](#)

[Commissioner-designate Mariya Gabriel](#)

[Written questions and answers](#)

5th Edition of the European Week of Sport – Official Opening taking place in Finland



The European Week of Sport takes place every year on 23-30 September – this year already for the fifth time and bigger than ever! The 2019 edition involves 47 partner organisations in 42 countries, reaching also outside the EU borders. European Olympic Committees is one of the official partners of the Week since the very beginning.

School Action Day

This year the official opening took place in Espoo, Finland, following the tradition to organise the opening in the country holding the EU Presidency. The day started with a visit to the sport village, where a School Action Day was organised involving more than 8 000 schoolchildren aged 9–16 in the Greater Helsinki area to #BeActive.

School Action Day is one of the biggest school sport events in Europe and it provides different sports federations, organisations and clubs with the opportunity to present their sport to the schoolchildren. As part of the visit, Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, who is responsible for sport, participated in a pannafootball tournament together with Finnish Commissioner, Jyrki Katainen, who is currently Vice-President for the Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness.

Opening seminar “How to make young people more active?”

As part of the opening ceremony, a seminar “How to make young people more active?” was organised to raise discussion on the declining physical activity levels among young people. The seminar had three panels looking to the topic from three different angles: the role of education, the role of municipalities and the role of sport organisations. The big cities of Helsinki metropolitan area, Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, all presented their impressive and inspiring ways to promote the physical activities among young people. The panel on the role of sport organisations was moderated by the EOC EU Office Deputy Director Heidi Pekkola with the participation of Hanno Pevkur, Vice-President of the European Volleyball Confederation, Ilva Biedre from the Latvian Sports Federation’s Council and Timo Huttunen from the Finnish Football Association. All panellists shared examples from local, national and European level on how sport organisations make young people more active and stressed the importance of sport to work together with schools and public

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authorities, as well as the importance for cross-sectoral work. The seminar was concluded by State Secretaries of Finland Tuomo Puumala and Slovenia Martina Vuk as well as by Commissioner Navracsics. In his closing words, Navracsics highlighted the importance of early positive experiences: "If young people get to know sport and enjoy it, they are more likely to play it throughout their lives."

The event was one of the last events of Commissioner Navracsics' mandate, during which he has driven the development of the European dimension of sport in a very positive way. He will be remembered as the Commissioner who upscaled the European Week of Sport, pushed for

doubling the Erasmus+ budget and launched the #BeInclusive EU Sport Awards. On behalf of the European Olympic Committees and EOC President Janez Kocijancic, the EOC plaque was given to Mr. Navracsics by Mikko Salonen, CEO of the Finnish Olympic Committee and Heidi Pekkola to thank him for the excellent cooperation during the past five years.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[EWOs Website](#)

[School Action Day](#)

EU Presidency conference on safeguarding children in sport



In conjunction with the opening celebrations of the European Week of Sport, the Finnish EU Presidency organised a conference on the topic of Safeguarding Children in Sport on 24 September 2019 in Espoo, Finland.

The conference was opened by Hanna Kosonen, Minister for Science, Culture and Sport of Finland, and Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

The first half of the conference, concentrating on safeguarding as a wider topic, was moderated by Kaisa Larjomaa, ENGSO Secretary General. The programme consisted of keynotes by researchers Tine Vertommen (European Commission Study on Safeguarding Children in Sport), Sami Kokko

(health promotion in sports clubs), David Schultz (injury prevention) and Aurelie van Hoyer (a psychological perspective to supporting youth positive sport experience). Coach Jani Westerlund highlighted the current trends that impact the training of children, and para-athlete Miika Honkanen shared his experiences as athlete and coach. A panel consisting of keynote speakers discussed e.g. the role of parents and coaches for safe and positive sports, and gave their recommendations for policy makers.

The second half of the conference tackled the sensitive topic of abuse, harassment and bullying. Susan Greinig from the IOC, Iris Hugo-Bouvier from UEFA and Kathryn Leslie from FIFA presented initiatives within the sports movement with the objective of enhancing the protection of young athletes and safeguarding children's rights in sport. Youth and Community Counsellor Fatima Sefrioui gave her insights to the topic of harassment from a migrant woman's perspective. A panel discussion on the session topic was moderated by Kimmo Lipponen, CEO for Finnish Association of Social Enterprises. Two successful Erasmus+ projects that address the session topic were presented: iProtect by Gloria Vicerias and icoachkids by Sergio Lara-Bercial. The project

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leaders also engaged in a panel discussion, moderated by Alexandre Husting, Sport Attaché at Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the EU. The conclusions were delivered by Heidi Sulander, Chair of the Council Working Party on Sport, and Counsellor at the Permanent Representation of Finland to the EU.

The conference and its discussions contribute to the preparation of the Council conclusion on safeguarding children in sports, which are to be adopted by the EU Sport Ministers in the Council under the Finnish Presidency in November.

Photo credit: Alina Ainola

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Finnish EU presidency](#)

EPAS workshop: European Sports Charter has to be updated

Members of the Governing Board and the Consultative Committee of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) of the Council of Europe gathered in Brussels on 11 September 2019 for a workshop on the possible revision of the [European Sports Charter](#) (ESC).

The process was initiated by the 15th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers, which invited EPAS to consider reviewing the ESC.

Throughout the day, the participants took part in two sets of break-up sessions to discuss the scope, stakeholders, topics, structure, character and promotion of the possible revised ESC.

The discussion was lively in the different interactive workshops. The general opinion was that the ESC already includes the relevant topics, and only needs to be slightly updated.

The discussions on the topics of a possible revised ESC were of constructive nature, underlining the positive impact of sport in society, and everyone's right to sport and physical activity. Updating the vocabulary of the ESC and regrouping the different topics would be the key steps in a possible revision process. The discussions on the scope and character concluded that the possible revised ESC should remain its formal character as a recommendation.

Organised sport was seen as a key stakeholder in the possible revision process. The participants of the lively promotion workshop proposed different means to create more awareness around the ESC, revised or not.

After a full day of discussions, EPAS Executive Secretary Stanislas Frossard concluded the workshop with an accurate summary of the discussions, including:

- ESC should not be completely reformed but updated, and it should remain as a recommendation
- A human rights aspect could be more prominent, and a reference to local authorities is needed
- A reference of the European Model of Sport or the specificity of sport should be included
- The sports movement as well as other stakeholders shall be involved in a possible revision process, which could include working with partners and stakeholder representatives, thematic debates, and a structured dialogue at a national level

The EOC EU Office was represented at the workshop by Director Folker Hellmund and

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Deputy Director Heidi Pekkola. Some partners of the EOC EU Office also took part in the workshop, represented by Jean Gracia (European Athletics Vice-President), Kaisa Larjoomaa (ENGSO Secretary General) and Carlos Cardoso (ENGSO Honorary President).

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport \(EPAS\)](#)

The Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (the Macolin Convention) has entered into force

On 1 September 2019, the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions has officially entered into force, three months after its ratification by a fifth state.

Open for signature since September 2014, the Macolin Convention has been ratified by Italy, Moldova, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland and Ukraine, which are the first State Parties of the Convention. This first group of countries will work together on the proper implementation of the Convention as well as additional activities by being members of the “Convention’s Follow-up Committee”, which will be set up at the beginning of 2020. Another 32 countries, from Europe and beyond (e.g. Australia) have also signed the Convention, but not ratified it.

As a general reminder, the Convention is the only legally-binding international treaty promoting global cooperation to tackle the manipulation of sports competitions. It covers a wide range of issues, including match-fixing, illegal betting, poor governance, inside information, conflicts of interests and the use of sports clubs as shell companies.

While addressing in priority governments, the Convention aims at involving all relevant actors - the sport movement, law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, the betting movement and relevant ministries – in the fight against manipulation of competitions. In this regard, the

document provides common definition, commonly agreed standards and principles to be set in order to prevent, detect and sanction the manipulation of sports competitions.

Another innovative aspect part of the Convention is the concept of “*National platforms*” which are responsible for the co-ordination of the fight against the manipulation of sports competitions at national level and must co-operate with all organisations and relevant authorities. Several states started the implementation of some aspects of the Convention even without the ratification and National Platforms from 29 countries are already engaged in cooperation via the Group of Copenhagen.

The ratification of the Macolin Convention by the EU and Member States remains an unsolved legal and political question which weakened both the effectiveness of the Convention as well as the position of the Member States which are not able to ratify and to take part in the “Convention’s Follow-up Committee”. The topic will remain high on EU agenda as the new Commissioner-designate in charge of Sport, Mariya Gabriel (see the relevant article) stated that one of her first tasks “*will be to quickly take contact with the Presidency in order to consider how the Convention on Manipulation of Sports Competitions process could be unblocked*”.

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Sport Unit Breakfast discusses the role of Lotteries in sport

On Tuesday 17 September 2019, the Sport Unit within the European Commission organised a breakfast to discuss the following topic: “(How) Are Lotteries supporting or using sport?”. The discussion outlined different views on the contribution lotteries brings to the sport. The debate was conducted by Yves Le Lostecque, Head of Sport Unit at the European Commission, Hansjörg Höltkemeir, President of the European Lotteries, Gilles Maillet, Director at Française des Jeux (FDJ), and Laura Vilches, Head of European Affairs at the Spanish Football League LaLiga.

Hansjörg Höltkemeir stated during this meeting that European Lotteries, as an active partner of the Council of Europe, is supporting the initiative on the fight against match-fixing in sports such as the recently ratified [The Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions \(Macolin Convention\)](#). European Lotteries is the umbrella organisation of national lotteries operating games of chance for the public benefit and a trusted partner of the EU institutions, relevant stakeholders and sports federations.

FDJ is supporting sport and sport values, using sport always in a responsible way. FDJ has strict antidoping rules when it comes to the cycling teams in France and takes actively part in the fight against match-fixing. According to the Director, three people are arrested in France for a match-fixing related to a football game in Tunisia. In addition, FDJ is working with authorities in their aim to support legislation regarding legal betting and cooperates in this area worldwide.

LaLiga representative Laura Vilches stated that LaLiga attaches a lot of weight to integrity and sports. LaLiga organised last season nearly 200 workshops with 5000 participants. Moreover, the

Spanish national police and LaLiga work closely together when it comes to corruption in sport. Last season 21 operations and investigations by the Spanish national police took place. LaLiga welcomed the introduction of the Macolin Convention, and emphasised the need for the implementation of this agreement, despite the struggles it has at the EU level. Therefore, in Spain, they started a national platform (in the presence of e.g. high consul of sport and Spanish football federation) to meet these challenges.

As a conclusion, and to answer the question of the Sport Breakfast’s topic “(How) Are Lotteries supporting or using sport?”, both FDJ and the European Lotteries underlined that they are supporting sports, especially by providing sustainable financing as well as supporting sport infrastructures, grassroots sports and high-level sport. However, a small part of professional sport is used by the lotteries. One example, among other things, is sponsorship. Despite this, Höltkemeir and Maillet agreed that the most important thing is that lotteries are sharing the same values as sport itself and expressed their willingness to keep working with sport to support it and not use it as its main objective.

A further challenge that was noticed during the seminar refers to the challenges of globalization and mainly for lotteries, sport manipulation and match-fixing. The Macolin Convention was stated as a step in the right direction of protecting sport but concerns were expressed that legislation is always one step behind. All participants agreed that cooperation between the states is needed within the area and that both national and international action must be taken to keep up with the challenges ahead of us.

FUNDING PROGRAMMES AND STUDIES

Results of the 2019 Erasmus+ Sport call for proposal unveiled

On 27 September, the European Commission's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) published the long-awaited [results of the 2019 Erasmus+ Sport Call for proposals](#). EACEA, which manages the Erasmus+ Sport programme, received 766 project and event applications, which is the highest number yet. Out of the 728 eligible applications, 260 have been selected for funding. In concrete terms, the European Commission will provide financial support to 104 Collaborative Partnerships (5 and more partners), 144 Small Collaborative Partnerships (3 and more partner organisations) and 12 Not-for-profit European sport events.

The EOC EU Office and the highest number of its partners since the launch of the Erasmus+ Programme have been successful, as coordinators, with their applications. The Office got a grant to implement a project called RINGS, which will focus on strategic management of the NOCs. Together with 11 NOCs and Johannes Gutenberg University as partners, the project will look into topics like stakeholder involvement and

change management to develop the governance of the NOCs as well as to better equip them with concrete management tools.

European Athletics (fight against doping), FIBA Europe (dual careers), and ENGSO (social inclusion) will coordinate collaborative partnership projects as will the NOCs of the Czech Republic (sustainability strategy) and of Croatia (economic dimension of volunteering). The NOC of Lithuania will lead a small collaborative partnership project focused on employability after a sports career.

The national and European Olympic movement organisations will be joined in their project coordination endeavours by more than 10 national federations representing a number of Olympic sports including athletics, volleyball, basketball, football and ice hockey.

The EOC EU Office congratulates all successful applicants and wishes them the best of luck in the implementation of their projects.

INTERNAL AND VISITS

Second meeting of the EOC EU Commission in Brussels



On 6 September 2019, the EOC EU Commission met at the EOC EU Office in Brussels, to discuss EU topics having an impact on sport as well as to exchange with the current Finnish Presidency of the EU. It was the second meeting of the current EOC EU Commission.

The meeting brought together representatives of nine National Olympic Committees who are members of the Commission (full list [here](#)) along with representatives of the EOC EU Office. Before an exchange of views with Heidi Sulander, Chair of the Sport Working Party from the current Finnish EU Presidency, the meeting focused on four key topics of relevance for the participants:

- Follow-up of EU elections
- Specific activities towards NOCs
- Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027
- The European Sport Model

Updates on EU policy fields

For all topics, the presentation started with a state of play regarding the situation at EU level before discussing the ongoing and future activities of the EOC EU Office and the EOC EU Commission.

The first topic that was addressed after the general introduction was the follow-up of the elections of the European Parliament in May 2019. After an analysis of the results and a presentation of the key actors, Folker Hellmund, Director of the EOC EU Office, explained the process, which will lead to the election of the new EU Commission. Then, participants discussed the activities needed with the MEPs having an interest for sport topics as well as with the new Commissioner in charge of Sport.

The next topic on the agenda was the follow-up of the questionnaire sent last year by the EOC EU Commission and the EOC EU Office to all NOCs regarding EU affairs. Some relevant outcomes have been mentioned:

- 46 NOCs answered the questionnaire and nominated a contact person for EU matters
- Main interests for the NOCs are the EU funding possibilities as well as key political discussions e.g. related to the European Sport Model and integrity

Members of the Commission explored the gap between the answers provided in the questionnaire regarding the interest for the EU projects (e.g. 80% with a strong interest to be partners) and the actual figures (e.g. 20 NOCs involved in 2019). Having an employed person dedicated to support NOCs in project applications and promotion of the involvement of non-EU countries during EOC events were some solutions discussed by the participants.

For the next topic, Heidi Pekkola made an overview on the current negotiations at the EU level regarding the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 stressing the work done by the Office to promote sport in the different

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financial programmes, notably Erasmus+, but also ERDF, ESF+, IPA III and NDICI.

To conclude this session, the current discussions and cases at EU and national level as well as their impact on the European Sport Model were presented. Other relevant topics for sport were also mentioned, such as the relations with the Council of Europe, VISA policy or the question of micro-plastics and E-sport.

Discussion with Heidi Sulander

Heidi Sulander, Chair of the Sport Working Party from the current Finnish EU Presidency started her presentation by introducing the general

priorities of the Finnish Presidency as well as those in the field of sport. Then, she presented the different activities planned during the upcoming months with a specific focus on the Conference organised during the European Week of Sport (see separate article), and the Council of Sport Ministers in November.

To conclude the day, all Commission members were invited to attend the Diamond League Memorial Van Damme where Juri Tamm, Chair of the EOC EU Commission, and Niels Nygaard, EOC Vice-President, handed over trophies on the behalf of EOC EU Commission to the best Young athletes of the Youth competition.

The EOC EU Office organised a Funding Seminar for all European NOCs

On 17-18 September 2019, the EOC EU Office organised a Funding Seminar, in its premises, in Brussels. The aim of this meeting was to inform all European NOCs and partners of the Office about EU Funding opportunities as well as to exchange experiences on current and past projects funded by the relevant programmes. Participants came from various sport organisations including NOCs of Turkey, Greece, Germany, Israel, Andorra, Ukraine, Kosovo, Azerbaijan, Slovenia, Czech Republic, France, Slovakia, Sweden, Cyprus, Austria, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Belgium, Netherlands, Estonia, Poland, and other partners i.e. FIBA Europe, Rugby Europe, European Athletics, the Austrian Federal Sports Organization (BSO), and International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF).

The first day was dedicated to NOCs from non-EU countries with the objective to give them an overview on the EU external policies and funding opportunities. In this regard, the participants were introduced to funding instruments, IPA II and ENI in particular, and other political cooperation activities. In addition, the participants received an introduction to the external dimension of internal EU funds. To conclude the first day, the group had a meeting with the colleagues from the European

Commission's DG Education and Culture who provided further information about the external dimension of EU sport policy and Erasmus+ before answering questions raised by the participants.

By way of introduction to the second day, Folker Hellmund, Director of the EOC EU Office presented the objectives of the day:

- providing information on the existing funding opportunities
- enlarging the network of the participants (e.g. non-EU NOCs or EFs)
- exchanging of good practices and discussing project ideas
- providing practical advices on project application and management
- becoming aware of current obstacles and identifying opportunities in future funding programmes

He stressed the necessity to increase the number of applications from NOCs and encouraged

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Programme countries to support the other NOCs by involving them in their applications as partners.

Following the general introduction, current and future funding opportunities were emphasised starting with Erasmus+ Youth and the rather new programme, European Solidarity Corps. Thereafter a presentation on the Erasmus+ Sport and the European Week of Sport as well as an analysis of 2018 call results were given to the participants. As part of the programme of the second day, two sessions of practical workshops on Erasmus+ Sport projects were organised. The workshops focused on practical advices for project application and management as well as on the different topics covered by the programme. The aim was to increase the knowledge of the participants, to help with the application process, share experiences and discuss potential project ideas.

In the afternoon, the use of EU Structural Funds by sport organisations was on the agenda notably with a concrete example provided by Ales Solar

(NOC Slovenia) who shared his experiences on the European Social Fund projects. The seminar concluded with a review of the Future Funding programmes 2021-2027.

The EOC EU Office would like to thank all partners and participants for their active participation in the discussions and encourages them to apply for EU funded projects.



PARTNERS' CORNER

Meeting with Finnish MEPs: Let the good collaboration continue!

The Finnish Olympic Committee, the EOC EU Office and the European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO) organised a meeting for Finnish MEPs on 4 September 2019 at the European Parliament, in order to discuss the current issues within European sports policy. The event was hosted by MEP Elsi Katainen. MEPs Sirpa Pietikäinen and Mauri Pekkarinen also took part in the event, and 4 other Finnish MEPs were represented by cabinet members. A separate meeting with MEP Eero Heinäluoma was also organised during the day.

MEP Katainen welcomed the participants together with Mikko Salonen, the CEO of the Finnish Olympic Committee. Despite a busy day full of meetings and hearings, the Finnish Minister for Science, Culture and Sport Hanna Kosonen also made an appearance and presented the Finnish EU Presidency priority themes in the field of sport. Heidi Sulander, Chair of the Council Working Party on Sport and Counsellor at the Permanent Representation of Finland to the EU, presented the state of play of the negotiations between the Commission, European Parliament and EU member states on the Erasmus+ Programme 2021–2027.

The organisers presented the core topics that are certain or likely to arise during the ongoing mandate of the European Parliament.

EOC EU Office Deputy Director Heidi Pekkola presented the latest developments concerning the mainstreaming of sport into other funding programmes, most notably the European Social Fund Plus, including its health strand, and the European Regional Development Fund, and asked the MEPs for their continued support for sport. During the previous term, MEPs adopted several amendments, which could improve the chances of funding for sport as a tool for health,

social inclusion and regional development in 2021–2027. During the previous term, MEPs also supported tripling the future Erasmus+ budget, which will hopefully be reflected in the negotiation results of the EU multiannual financial framework.

CEO of the Finnish Olympic Committee Mikko Salonen raised the importance of safeguarding the sustainable financing of sport through lotteries. In Finland, the revenues from the government-owned lottery Veikkaus are crucial for sport, especially for the financing of grassroots sport.

ENGSO Secretary General Kaisa Larjomaa pointed out in her presentation, that although there are no Finnish MEPs in the committee responsible for sport (CULT), there are many other opportunities for MEPs to get involved with sports topics. Sport Intergroup has been an important platform for raising and discussing a variety of topics related to sport during the past term, and the organisers encouraged the Finnish MEPs to support the creation of the Intergroup also for the current term. The possibility to ask sports related questions from Commissioner-designates (responsible for not only sport but also those responsible for health, cohesion, competition, etc.) during the EP hearings in September and October was also mentioned as a great way to enhance the relevance of sport in the EU.

Competition is an area of EU Policy that has raised concerns within the sports movement in the last years, contrasting the notion of specificity of sport, as described in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. At its worst, private commercial leagues are stopping their players from taking part in national teams' activities. Heidi Pekkola presented some cases and discussions related to the European Sport

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Model, which is based on the voluntary work done in the grassroots of sport. While grassroots sport provides elite sport with the future stars that give their magic to sport, elite sport's revenues ensure the continued development of grassroots sport – clubs that makes millions of Europeans physically active – through the solidarity mechanism. In order to distinguish voluntary-based sports from purely commercial actors, the model needs to be

properly acknowledged. Collaboration with MEPs in this matter would be warmly welcome.

EOC EU Office would be pleased to welcome also the delegations of other NOCs to meet the MEPs of the respective country and is happy to help with the arrangements.

NEXT MONTHS

<i>04-05 October</i>	European Sport Platform, Rome
<i>07-08 October</i>	European Sport Skills Summit, Helsinki
<i>14 October</i>	SHARE meeting, Brussels
<i>18 October</i>	#BeActive Gala Awards, Budapest
<i>19 October</i>	POINTS workshop, Czech Republic
<i>21-22 October</i>	POINTS workshop, Slovenia
<i>25-26 October</i>	EOC General Assembly, Warsaw
<i>05-07 November</i>	World Conference on Doping, Katowice
<i>21 November</i>	#BeInclusive EU Sport Awards Gala, Brussels
<i>02-03 December</i>	Special Competence Seminar, EOC EU Office, Brussels