

The House of European Sport

Tweets of the month



ENGSO

@ENGSOsport 24 February

Save the date for the 25th ENGSO General Assembly that will take place in Paris, France, on 9-10 June

Tibor Navracsics

@TNavracsicsEU 15 February

Good discussion with #IOC President Thomas Bach on fight against #doping & role of #sport in integrating #refugees in communities @iocmedia

EUSport

@EuSport 2 February

This year is the 30th anniversary of #ErasmusPlus. We are proud that #sport is a part of this great programme!
<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus->

Editorial 2

EUROPEAN UNION AND SPORT

Maltese Council Presidency reaches portability agreement with EP 3

ECHA publishes report on health risks of artificial turf 3

Second International Forum for Sports Integrity organised in Lausanne 5

ITU and FEI reach Memoranda of Understanding with event organisers 6

FUNDING PROGRAMMES, STUDIES AND PROJECTS

European Commission publishes consultation on Erasmus+ 6

Consultation and Council position published on Solidarity Corps 7

INTERNAL AND VISITS

EOC – Winter European Youth Olympic Festival 2017 in Erzurum 9

PARTNERS' CORNER

Czech NOC: Project "Sport Parks Inspired by the Olympics" has taken off 10

ENGSO: ASPIRE project on social inclusion of refugees launched 11

NEXT MONTH

Dates in March 2017 11

EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

The integrity of sport remains one of the main challenging topics for the sport worldwide. In this regard, it was important that the IOC took the initiative to put the topic on the agenda again by organising the second International Forum for Sports Integrity (IFSI) in Lausanne on 15 February 2017 (s. article). The Commissioner for Sport, Tibor Navracsics, took part in the event and reiterated the importance of integrity for the future development of sport. From the EOC EU Office's point of view, the EU Institutions could play a stronger role in strengthening integrity by providing additional means for respective projects via the Erasmus+ Sport Programme.

By referring to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP), the IOC has announced recently that it will incorporate major amendments to the Host City Contracts from 2024 onwards. These changes will include the protection of human rights, the prohibition of any form of discrimination, the establishment of effective compliance systems against fraud and corruption and the contribution to sustainable development. With all these amendments, the IOC has taken up critics from civil society organisations and seems much better prepared for the ongoing discussions on the implementation of the Olympic Agenda 2020 and more general on the future of Olympic Games as such.

The countdown for the deadline of the 2017 Erasmus+ Sport call is running and the EOC EU Office is hoping that more sport federations and clubs will take the chance to get funded as well. Our assessments of the selection results in the last years have unfortunately revealed that only a limited share (less than 30 %) of beneficiaries in the Erasmus+ Sport Programme are stakeholders from organised sport. However, with the opportunity of small collaborative partnerships and the new financing system of simplified grants, the EOC EU Office is confident that the Programme became a lot more attractive for organised sport actors.

On 8 and 9 March, the European Commission is organising its annual EU Sport Forum in Malta. On this occasion, the EOC EU Office will present its SIGGS Project on Good Governance. Acting EOC President Janez Kocijancic is invited to provide a welcome note. In addition, he will also be part of a panel discussion on Good Governance.

Finally, I would like to mention that not only the international and European sport has to cope with a lot of challenges, but the European Union as well. The five potential scenarios that EU Commission President Juncker has published today confirm the instable balance of the European Union due to the heterogeneous interests of its members on the one hand and unsolved problems on the other hand.

Enjoy your read,



Folker Hellmund
Director EOC EU Office

EUROPEAN UNION AND SPORT

Maltese Council Presidency reaches portability agreement with EP

On 7 February 2017, the Maltese Presidency reached a provisional agreement with European Parliament representatives to remove barriers to cross-border portability of online content services in the internal market.

The proposal for a “Regulation on cross-border portability of online content services in the internal market” is one of the initiatives related to the Digital Single Market Initiative (DSM), one of the European Commission’s priorities in the current period. It aims to *“allow consumers who have subscribed or bought online content services in their home country to access it when temporarily present in another country within the EU.”* As other initiatives related to the DSM, such as the copyright reform, cross-border portability could potentially have a negative impact on the system of territorial licensing common for sport broadcasting rights, if it would allow citizens easy access to foreign broadcasts. The verification of a citizen’s home country and a clear definition of a “temporary stay” are therefore important aspects of the regulation.

The agreement will apply to content service providers providing against payment, while providers of free services, like public broadcasters, will be able to opt-in to the Regulation, if they verify their clients’ country of residence. Verification will be on the basis of information such as payment details, payment of

a licence fee for broadcasting services, the existence of a contract for internet or telephone connection, IP checks or the subscriber’s declaration about his or her address. The service provider will be able to apply up to two means of verification from the list included in the Regulation. The agreement does however not restrict the definition of a “temporary stay” in any way.

The agreed text must now be formally confirmed by the Council of the EU and the European Parliament. Once adopted, the rules will become applicable in all EU Member States by beginning of 2018 as the Regulation grants providers and right holders a 9 month period to prepare for the application of the new rules.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Press release Council of the EU \(07/02/2017\): “Portability of digital content services: EU Presidency-Parliament agreement”](#)

[Press release European Commission \(08/02/2017\): “Digital Single Market: EU negotiators agree on new rules allowing Europeans to travel and enjoy online content services across borders”](#)

[Factsheet European Commission \(08/02/2017\): “Digital Single Market – Portability of online content services”](#)

ECHA publishes report on health risks of artificial turf for sports people

In the past few months, EU Institutions have demonstrated a growing interest for potential health issues linked to artificial turf used for sport

facilities. It started in June 2016 with the European Commission asking the European Chemicals agency (ECHA) to investigate on the

The House of European Sport

rubber granulates used as infill for artificial turf with the objective to measure the risk of health issues linked to the use of recycled rubber granulate. Published on 28 February 2017, the ECHA report will serve as a basis for the Commission to decide whether further regulation or restriction is needed. Recently, several questions have been raised on this topic by Dutch media, leading to a national public debate as well as parliamentary questions at the EU level.

In its report, the ECHA has concluded that, based on the information currently available, there is at most “a very low level of concern” regarding the recycled rubber granules. The ECHA suggests that several actions should be taken, namely:

- Changes to the REACH regulation to ensure that rubber granules have low levels of hazardous substances
- Measuring of existing outdoor and indoor fields and make this information available in an understandable manner
- European sports and football associations and clubs should work with the relevant producers to ensure the information regarding safety is communicated clearly
- Owners and operations of existing indoor fields should ensure adequate ventilation

The origin of debates on artificial turf can be found in the athletes’ perception of playing on these surfaces. Indeed, several studies illustrated the negative perception that professional athletes have towards artificial turf including the feeling to be more exposed to injuries than on natural grass despite the fact that this statement has not been scientifically confirmed so far.

Another contradictory aspect is nowadays central in EU discussions: the question of the rubber granulates used as infill for artificial turf. Several research projects have been launched on the topic including a large multi-agency research plan currently underway in the US. The final findings of this plan are expected later this year. A status report in December 2016 did point out serious

gaps in our current knowledge regarding the potential health effects of rubber granulate. Therefore, it is a good development that the ECHA is now publishing its findings.

In Europe, the main concerns regarding artificial turf developed in the Netherlands following two documentary broadcasts by Dutch national media. The first investigation led the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) to review its guideline on the subject via a short study in December 2016, maintaining that playing on artificial turf did not pose any health risks to human but recommending to tighten norms regarding the use of rubber to adhere to the consumer-product norms for PAHs. These conclusions have been questioned by another documentary, as scientists raised new questions regarding the current risk model of the RIVM. In addition, a study from the VU (Free University Amsterdam), raised further questions regarding the potential release of substances from the rubber granulate.

A final aspect to be mentioned is the difference between artificial turf in indoor halls and outdoor circumstances. A Finnish study from 2015 showed that the indoor air of all studied arenas was reported to cause some harm, in particular irritation to the respiratory tract, eyes and skin. Thus, indoor turf might require different regulations. These results were also mentioned in the now published ECHA report.

The EOC EU Office will closely follow the future developments on this subject. More information regarding the different studies and the timeline for the upcoming weeks can be found by partners of the office on the intranet.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

[ECHA information on artificial turf evaluation](#)

[ECHA News: Recycled Rubber evaluation](#)

[EPA \(US\): Federal Research Action Plan Status Report](#)

[RIVM December 2016 Risk Evaluation](#) (in Dutch)

Second International Forum for Sports Integrity organised in Lausanne

On 15 February, the second International Forum for Sports Integrity (IFSI) was organised at the initiative of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The Forum took place at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne and brought together around 180 participants from the Olympic Movement (including the EOC EU Office), governments, the EU, the Council of Europe, INTERPOL, UN and other experts. The main aim of the Forum was to discuss recent developments and to enhance cooperation and coordination to safeguard the integrity of sport and its competitions.

The Forum was opened by IOC President Dr. Thomas Bach. During his opening address, he highlighted some of the recent activities of the IOC in terms of integrity including the implementation of the Olympic Agenda 2020, the Integrity Betting Intelligence System (IBIS) and the Integrity e-Learning Programme for athletes and officials launched ahead of Rio 2016. In particular, he stressed that *“the sports movement has a special responsibility in the discussion about integrity because by definition, all sports organisation stand for the values of excellence, fair-play and respect. As values-based organisations, we have the double-duty to ensure that we uphold the principles of good governance in all our activities.”* Furthermore, he referred to the Forum as a *“unique platform where we can deepen our cooperation with our stakeholders”* stressing that *“it is only through cooperation and partnership that we can be truly effective”*.

Following this keynote speech, the agenda was divided in two high-level panels. The first panel addressed the fight against match-fixing through future actions for strengthening prevention. European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics, was among the panellists. In his interventions he stressed the need to restore the trust of the general public and

credibility of sport. He also stated that the EU is ready to help and support the IOC’s initiatives. In terms of the EU’s activities in the fight against match-fixing, he stressed that he will strive to find a solution on the EU’s signing of the Council of Europe’s Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions. This signing has been blocked over shared competences as some of the articles of the Convention refer to the EU’s competences whereas other elements fall within the remit of the Member States’ competences. In terms of prevention and education, the EU can play a supporting role through its Erasmus+ Sport funding Programme, which has financed projects such as the SIGGS Project of the EOC EU Office on good governance and the ongoing KCOOS Project involving the IOC.

At the end of the Forum, a Declaration was published with the aim to strengthen the cooperation and coordination in order to protect the credibility and integrity of sport, in particular in the fight against match-fixing and corruption in sport. One of the outcomes that were announced in the Declaration was the establishment of an Olympic Movement Unit on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions.

On the occasion of the IFSI, the IOC President Bach and the European Commissioner Navracsics took the opportunity to have a bilateral meeting. The discussion covered topics such as the fight against doping and the role of sport in integrating refugees in communities. Both topics are high on the Commissioner’s agenda and will feature on the programme at the upcoming EU Sport Forum in Malta.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Press Release IOC Website](#)

[Declaration of Second IFSI \(15 February 2017\)](#)

ITU and FEI reach Memoranda of Understanding with commercial event organisers

At the end of January 2017, both the International Triathlon Union (ITU) and the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) agreed on signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with commercial bodies active in their sport (Ironman and Global Champions League (GCL)), which allowed for extrajudicial arrangements.

The agreement between FEI and GCL includes FEI approval of the GCL rules, which are now in compliance with FEI rules. Beforehand, both the GCL and the FEI Officials, who were sanctioned for officiating at GCL events, had complained against FEI regulations allegedly breaching EU anti-trust regulations before the Belgian Competition Authority. This complaint has since been withdrawn, with FEI President Ingmar De Vos saying: *“The new MOU [...] means an end to the legal issues between us [...] The FEI was always of the belief that there was room for co-existence between the current FEI series and the GCL and [...] now we can turn the page and look to the future.”*

The collaboration between ITU and IRONMAN, a sports company responsible for the organisation of the *Ironman World Series*, focuses on

standardised rules, further collaboration on anti-doping efforts, national federation relations, sanctioning, a single-set of rules, and collaborative marketing initiatives to grow the sport. The MoU therefore ends a dispute regarding rules and the application of anti-doping regulations lasting over several years amiably.

Both agreements showcase the ability of sport federations to reach agreements with commercial actors in their field, while preserving the unity of their sport, including the authority over its rules, and appropriate regulations on aspects such as security and anti-doping rules. These are positive examples of how potential conflicts are solved without legal procedures in front of competition authorities and bode well for current competition discussions handled by the European Commission.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Press release ITU \(30/01/2017\): “ITU & IRONMAN agree to historic partnership”](#)

[Press release FEI \(26/01/2017\): “FEI and Global Champions League reach agreement”](#)

FUNDING PROGRAMMES, STUDIES AND PROJECTS

European Commission publishes consultation on Erasmus+

On 28 February 2017, the European Commission published a public consultation on the mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus+ Programme, which contains the EU’s sport funding line. The consultation aims to gather comments and perspectives from various stakeholders and the

general public on the relevance of the Erasmus+ Programme’s objectives. It will also gather views on the coherence of the programme and its added value in relation to the challenges and opportunities in education, training, youth and sport sectors, compared to what could be

The House of European Sport

achieved by Member States only. The consultation aims to gather views particularly from those who have not yet been subject to any specific surveys related to this evaluation.

The consultation also covers the Erasmus+ predecessor's Programmes (e.g. Lifelong Learning, Youth in Action, Erasmus Mundus, etc.) and contains forward-looking questions regarding a possible successor Programme to Erasmus+ in 2020.

The consultation's results will be used together with the other data and evidence to inform the ongoing independent mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus+ Programme. It will be running until 31 May 2017.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Public consultation on the mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus+ Programme](#)

Consultation and Council position published on Solidarity Corps

On 17 February the Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council adopted Conclusions on investing in Europe's youth, focusing on the European Solidarity Corps. The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) is a new funding initiative, which had been announced by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in his State of the Union speech in September 2016 and is considered as a deliverable of the Council's Bratislava Roadmap. In last December, the Commission had launched the Programme in a communication for young people to sign up.

The aim of the European Solidarity Corps is to give young people the chance to take part in a range of solidarity activities that address challenging situations across the EU. Participation is to not only benefit young people, but also assist national and local authorities, non-governmental organisations and companies in their efforts to cope with various challenges and crises. Sport associations are explicitly mentioned as potential receiving organisations.

Financed by the Commission, organisations working in solidarity-related activities are to be able to recruit young people to volunteer or carry out a work placement, internship or apprenticeship or training with them, provided they meet the criteria for becoming a host organisation and subscribe to the Charter of the European Solidarity Corps.



**EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS**

The Commission is establishing two types of youth placement that young people between the ages of 18-30 can take part in for a period of two to twelve months:

- Volunteer placements - offering full-time voluntary opportunities, with a grant; or
- Occupational placements - providing opportunities to find a job, traineeships, or apprenticeships in a wide range of sectors.

The most contentious point of the new initiative is its funding as the Commission initially explained that the ESC will be set-up gradually. In the first phase, funding is to come from existing Programmes, in particular Erasmus+. In the second phase, scheduled for late May 2017, the Commission will propose a legal framework that will be financed through its own budget line and have a separate legal basis. The ESC is also to make use of existing structures, mainly the European Voluntary Service (EVS), as could also be seen in an amendment to the 2017 annual work programme for Erasmus+. These plans have raised concerns that the ESC could take away funding from functioning Programmes such as the

The House of European Sport

EVS or other parts of Erasmus+, especially considering that part of these funds foreseen for volunteering would then go into the new occupational strand.

Already in October 2016, the European Parliament had adopted a resolution on the 'European Voluntary Service' in which it asked the Commission to assess the benefit of the European Solidarity Corps in assisting civil society in its work. The European Parliament wanted voluntary organisations to be involved in the development of this initiative and warned that its implementation should not undercut budgets that were already allocated to other Programmes. Since then, Parliamentary Questions have sought explanations about the structure of the Corps including the difference to the 'European Voluntary Service', about the Programmes that were to contribute funds to provide training and financial support to participants and whether the Commission would consider boosting the 'European Voluntary Service' instead.

The Council now reiterated this call for the Commission to clarify funding and implementation of the ESC, also regarding the use of other funding lines, and to present "an appropriate

legislative and evidence-based proposal" in the first semester 2017 "avoiding undesirable effects on the labour market".

The Commission is currently preparing such a legislative proposal, expected for May 2017. In preparation, the Commission launched a public consultation on 6 February with a deadline for contributions on 2 April. The questions of the consultation aim at both possible participants as well as organisations and focus on the potential and the challenges of creating a European Solidarity Corps Consultation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Public consultation on the Solidarity Corps](#)

[Council of the EU \(17/2/2017\): "Conclusions on investing in Europe's youth with particular regard to the European Solidarity Corps"](#)

[Website of the European Solidarity Corps](#)

[Commission press release \(7/12/2016\): "Investing in Europe's youth: Commission launches European Solidarity Corps"](#)

[Commission Q&A on the ESC \(7/12/2016\)](#)

[Legislative train schedule: "European Solidarity Corps"](#)

INTERNAL AND VISITS

EOC – Winter European Youth Olympic Festival 2017 in Erzurum

On 12-17 February 2017, the Turkish city of Erzurum hosted the 13th Winter European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF). These EYOFs are organised by the European Olympic Committees in two-year cycles with both a Winter and Summer edition for young athletes between the age of 14-18.

Among the sports represented, there were the most popular winter sports such as alpine skiing, snowboard, biathlon, cross country skiing, ski jumping, figure skating and short track as well winter team sports: curling and ice hockey. In total, 650 athletes competed from 34 participating



countries.

According to the EOC Secretary General Raffaele Pagnozzi, the Athletes' Village had the standard of the Winter Olympic Games and he was impressed by the quality of venues delivered in such a short time. At the closing ceremony, EOC



acting President President Janez Kocijančič called the organisation of the Erzurum EYOF “outstanding” while the Turkish Olympic Committee (TOC) President Uğur Erdener stated that the games were an outstanding success for Turkey and European Athletes.

The next summer edition is to be held in Győr, Hungary from 23 to 30 July 2017. The EYOF in Győr will be supported by the European Union through the Erasmus+ Sport funding Programme.

Pictures: [Twitter account EYOF 2017 Erzurum](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Website of the EOC](#)

[Official website of EYOF Erzurum 2017](#)

[Official website of European Youth Olympic Festivals](#)

PARTNERS' CORNER

Czech NOC: Project “Sport Parks Inspired by the Olympics” has taken off

Delegates from the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) of the Czech Republic, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, and the Netherlands, together with representatives of the Regional Authority of South Bohemia, met in Prague on 31 January – 2 February to start the project “Sport Parks Inspired by the Olympics”.

This two-year project, led by the Czech Olympic Committee, is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, and strongly supported by the International Olympic Committee. Its mission is to use the power and potential of the Olympic Games to bring sport and sporting activities closer to people and inspire them to be active and to live by the Olympic ideals in a long-term and sustainable manner. This is to be achieved by providing umbrella sport organisations (NOCs) with guidance on the organisation of sport-for-all events during the Olympic Games. The project thereby aims to make a concrete and tangible contribution to the implementation of EU Recommendations on Promoting Health-Enhancing Physical Activity and the Olympic Agenda 2020.

“It’s very important for us to know that we are going in the same direction as the International Olympic Committee. We would like to spread the idea of Sport Parks around the world thanks to the support of the European Union and the IOC,” said Jiri Kejval, President of the Czech Olympic Committee.

The project is based on the Czech NOC’s concept of Olympic Parks. The first one, held in Prague during the 2014 Sochi Games, attracted over 400,000 visitors. Two years later, during the Rio Games, more than 1 million visitors enjoyed various sport and cultural events at four Olympic Parks spread around the country. Visitors –



mainly kids and youngsters – also had the chance to meet current and former Olympians. Many of these activities attracted kids to visit local clubs to try out sports they had discovered at the Parks.

The objective of the project “Sport Parks Inspired by the Olympics” is to take this concept and develop it into a comprehensive handbook which will provide organisers with tools for the preparation, organisation, evaluation and sustainability of their own Parks.

Partner organisations will bring to the project their own wealth of experience in the organisation of various sport-for-all events. They will share, for example, their know-how regarding cooperation with municipalities, local governments and sport clubs, or their experience in the management of volunteers, both of which are vital to ensuring the sustainability of future Sport Parks.

The handbook will also include an important section on pre- and post-park activities. This aims at keeping people active beyond the duration of a Sport Park. Draft recommendations and guidelines will be tested with various events organised primarily during the 2018 Winter Olympics. The handbook will be presented in the autumn of 2018.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Twitter account @sportparks](#)

The House of European Sport

ENGSO: ASPIRE project on social inclusion of refugees launched

ENGSO, together with 13 partner organisations, launched a new project called “*Activity, Sport and Play for the Inclusion of Refugees in Europe (ASPIRE)*” on social inclusion of refugees in and through sport. The Kick-off meeting of the project was organised in the premises of the EOC EU Office in Brussels on 8-9 February. ASPIRE is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Sport Programme of the EU and supported by the European Lotteries.

As a first step of the project good examples and key factors for successful practices will be collected through a study. Based on the outcomes of the study, the project consortium will develop an educational module on social inclusion of

refugees targeted for sport organisations. This educational module will be disseminated through national training sessions which will be organised in nine project countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Serbia, Spain and Sweden.

ASPIRE is a two and half years project and it will finish with a pan-European Conference in mid 2019.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[ENGSO and key partners launch a new project on social inclusion of refugees](#)

Dates in March 2017

6 March 2017	<i>Working Party on Sport, Brussels</i>
7 March 2017	<i>Sport Intergroup: “Digital Single Market and Sporting Events”, Brussels</i>
7 March 2017	<i>Seminar on “The evolution of players’ rights in professional football” organised by MEP Theodoros Zagorakis, Brussels</i>
8-9 March 2017	<i>EU Sport Forum, Malta</i>
10-13 March 2017	<i>European Youth Sport Forum, Malta</i>
15-16 March 2017	<i>Sports Directors Meeting, Malta</i>
28 March 2017	<i>Working Party on Sport, Brussels</i>