

Tweets of the month



EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice Feb 3

Great initiative from @EuSport to consult relevant sport stakeholders regarding the implementation of the #EU Work Plan for #Sport 2017-2020. Discussions will feed the ongoing implementation report and recommendations prepared by @EuSport.

EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice Feb 3

The important subject of sport's role in social inclusion discussed at a regular @eusport breakfast meeting. Continued and even increased financial support for #sport and #socialinclusion projects expected in the new #MFF.

EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice Jan 30

It is great to see our partner @CEVolleyball, represented by Development Manager Vuk Karanovic, sharing their positive experiences with @EUErasmusPlus #sport at #SportInfoDay. He encourages all sport governing bodies to use this opportunity and apply funding from @EUErasmusPlus.

ASOIF

@ASOIFSummerIFs Jan 29

In a move to strengthen the cooperation with EU institutions, protect the important role of IFs and tap the full potential of sport, ASOIF has become a partner of the @EOCEUOffice.

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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

The European Union has made history in recent days. With effect from 31 January, Great Britain is the first member state to leave the European Union. In recent months it has become clear that Brexit knows no winner. The extent to which sport and all other economic and social sectors will be affected by Brexit will become clear in the coming months when the conditions of the withdrawal are negotiated. There is still a threat of hard Brexit. From today's perspective, only three options remain: 1. conclusion of the exit agreement by the end of 2020 2. extension of the negotiations (application until 1 July 2020) and 3. hard Brexit.

From a sports point of view, the first two options are to be pursued, although the termination of the agreement this year is considered almost impossible. The EOC EU Office is already affected by Brexit and wishes its former British partner SARA a good development and thanks for the good cooperation over the past years.

The European Commission presented its Work Programme 2020 at the end of January. For the first time it clearly shows the impact of the new Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. Organised sport in Europe should take a close look at the EU Commission's priorities and reflect to which priorities sport should and could contribute. Climate change, digitalisation, integration or the fight against child abuse, to name only few issues, are on the agenda of many sports associations anyway. The EOC EU Office will continue to report on the implementation of the planned activities of the EU Commission and will be available to all National Olympic Committees and other partner organisations if there is interest to contribute in terms of content or policy.

On 16 March, the EOC EU Office will host its 6th European Sports Evening in Brussels. With the President of the International Olympic Committee Thomas Bach, the European Commissioner for Sport Mariya Gabriel, the French Minister of Sport Roxana Maracineanu, the President of the European Olympic Committees Janez Kocijancic, and the President of the International Summer Olympic Sports Federations Francesco Ricci Bitti, have announced high-profile speakers to discuss in particular the future of the European Sport Model. We are looking forward to that event!

Kind regards,



Folker Hellmund
Director

EUROPEAN UNION AND SPORT

European Commission 2020 Work Programme

In January, the European Commission presented its Work Programme for the year 2020, the first for the new Commission elected at the end of 2019. The main focus is of course on the six priorities set out in President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines. It also reflects the main priorities of the European Parliament and those outlined in the European Council's Strategic Agenda for 2019-2024.

Under the motto 'A strong Europe in the World', six priorities have been established in the Work Programme to bring tangible benefits to European citizens

- A European Green Deal,
- A Europe fit for the digital age,
- An economy that works for people,
- A strong Europe in the world,
- Promoting our European way of life and
- A new push for European democracy.

In all areas, several initiatives can be relevant for sport. For instance, in '**the Green Deal**', which should ensure carbon neutrality by 2050, a European climate law will be proposed with the European Climate Pact involving all relevant stakeholders. Digital skills and the use of non-personal data will be central in the second priority while social market economy and social rights will be key in the priority '**An economy that works for people**'. This topic also covers the Commission's efforts to establish a European Child Guarantee to ensure that children have access to basic services

and support the education of young people where sport can play a role.

The priority '**Promoting the European way of life**' will have some relevant activities for sport including the promotion of skills, education and integration and the promotion of European security (e.g. combating child abuse).

From an external relations perspective, the Commission is working on a post 2020 Eastern Partnership as well as an agreement with ACP countries (of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific). Furthermore, an Action Plan 2021-2025 on Human Rights and Democracy as well as on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment is on the agenda.

Finally, the Commission will also deal with 'the Conference of the Future of Europe' (see related article) as well as supporting a right of initiative for the European Parliament in order to strengthen the relationship between the two institutions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Work Programme 2020](#)

[The von der Leyen Commission's priorities for 2019-2024](#)

[European Commission 2020 Work Programme : An ambitious roadmap for a Union that strives for more](#)

The United Kingdom left the European Union

On 31 January, almost four years after the initial vote by UK citizens, the United Kingdom formally left the European Union. Now, both sides still need to decide what their future relationship will look like. In this regard, a transition period (or implementation period) started on 1 February and is due to end on 31 December 2020.

- Formal procedure

On Wednesday 29 January 2020, the Members of the European Parliament voted in favour of the UK's withdrawal agreement with a simple majority (621 votes in favour, 49 against and 13 abstentions) followed on 30 January by the Council of the EU. As already [announced](#), the departure of UK MEPs led to redistribution of their 73 seats. While 27 seats will be divided between 14 Member States, 43 seats will be kept for potential EU enlargements and/or for the potential transnational MEPs.

Beyond trade relationship, a key question remains the citizens' rights after Brexit (e.g. freedom of movement). On 15 January, MEPs adopted a [resolution](#) on the topic where they call both the UK and EU Members States to adopt consistent and generous measures to provide legal certainty for UK and EU citizens residing in their territory.

- Future relations and impact on sport

During the 11-month transition period, the UK will continue to follow all of the EU's rules (e.g. freedom of movement, travelling to and from the EU) and its trading relationship will remain the same.

Any potential agreement between the UK and the EU on their future relations will need ratification from the UK, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU as well as all national parliaments of the 27 Member States. The transition period can only be extended once.

Finally, an important question is related to the impact Brexit might have on sport activity. Due to all uncertainties related to the final outcomes of the transition period, it is difficult to speculate on potential consequences for sport outside the UK even if topics such as data protection (e.g. fight against doping), commercial impact, freedom of movement (e.g. transfer of players), working rights, intellectual property rights and VAT could be impacted. More information can be found on Sport and Recreation [website](#).

Furthermore, the UK's participation in EU funding programmes remains uncertain. Despite the withdrawal, all current Erasmus+ projects involving UK partners that have a contract to deliver funded activities have been advised to continue to do so for the moment.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[UKWithdrawalAgreement](#)

[Brexit deal approved by the European Parliament](#)

[Brexit: Council adopts decision to conclude the withdrawal agreement](#)

Shaping the Conference on the Future of Europe

One of the biggest initiatives that the new Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed in her political guidelines for the European Commission's term 2019-2024 is the organisation of a Conference on the Future of Europe ('Conference'). By setting up this Conference, Mrs von der Leyen wants to blow new wind in the EU democratic system by strengthening the citizens' voice in EU policy-making.

EU institutions (Parliament, Council and Commission) are currently exchanging views to determine jointly and swiftly the scope, format, structure and objectives of the Conference.

The Conference seeks to operate as a bridge between the EU citizens, on the one hand, and EU policy decision-making, on the other hand. To realise this objective, the EU will create a platform where open, inclusive, transparent and structured debate with citizens can take place.

On 22 January, the Commission was the first institution to present its position in a Communication. Several "hot" topics are summed up in the Commission's Communication, like climate change, promotion of European values and strengthening equality. However, EU citizens as well as NGOs, civil society, members of the European institutions and other European bodies can also propose topics of their interest (e.g. issues relevant for sport).

The Commission announced that the Conference will be running for two years and should be launched on 9 May 2020 which is 'Europe Day'. At the beginning of 2022, under the French Presidency of the Council, the outcomes and recommendations of the different debates should be presented and next steps considered.

On its side, the European Parliament also adopted its position on the Conference. The Parliament endorsed the Commission's initiative while stressing that they should have a leading role in the Conference's process. The Parliament provides its position on the objective and scope of the Conference as well as on the practical organisation and the expected outcomes.

Finally, the position of the European Council will be published during the current Croatian Presidency which mentioned the Conference as a key priority for them.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Commission's Communication to the EP and the Council on shaping the conference on the future of Europe](#)

[European Parliament's position on the Conference on the Future of Europe](#)

[Priorities of the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#)

FUNDING PROGRAMMES AND STUDIES

7th Erasmus+ Sport Info Day receives high attention

On 30 January, the European Commission, together with its Executive Agency EACEA, welcomed more than 500 participants, including representatives of several European federations and National Olympic Committees, to its biggest annual event dedicated to the Erasmus+ Sport Programme. Like all its previous editions, the 7th Info Day served two main purposes: to inform potential applicants about the various facets of the Erasmus+ Sport Programme and its application process, as well as to create space for networking and partner search. All of these purposes have been met.



While the representatives of the European Commission and Croatian Council Presidency outlined the sport policy context of the call for proposals, experts from the Executive Agency focused on practical matters such as the application and selection process for the current call for proposals (deadline 2 April 2020). The afternoon programme was then dedicated to a more in-depth discussion of the evaluation

process, financial and funding rules, and small collaborative partnerships.

In her introduction, Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Sport, gave a strong support for the preservation of the European Sport Model: **“I believe that the European Sport Model is unique, different from the way sport is organised in USA, Russia or China. In this regard, it is a tool we should promote at international level, a tool that needs to be protected as it is an integral part of our Cultural heritage. We should think together how to value this approach”**. In addition she stated, “Sport touches the hearts of European citizens. It addresses the physical but also the mental as a tool for promoting health and well-being. Thanks to its magic, it also touches the hearts and souls of our citizens”.

In the following panel discussion Vuk Karanovic, Development Manager at the European Volleyball Confederation stressed the positive aspects of Erasmus+: “While preparing the application we could not imagine the impact we would have. There was a direct positive impact on the jobs of everyone involved and positive political impact as we could argue that we were funded by the EU.” Addressing other sports federations he said: “Give it a try. It is enriching your work.”

The 2020 call is open until 2 April and has a financial envelop of €57 million. As in the last years, three different types of actions are available: Collaborative Partnerships, Small Collaborative Partnerships, and Not-for-profit European Sport Events. The EOC EU Office encourages the sport movement to make better use of those funding possibilities and provides support and advice to the partners during the application process.

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This year's Info Day also served as a "platform" to inform the EU sports world about the new Erasmus Programme 2021-2027. Positively, the budget for the next seven year period will significantly increase. A duplication of the budget looks realistic but even a tripling could be possible, depending on negotiation outcomes between the EU institutions.

Moreover, the mobility part in sport will be decentralised and be taken care of by the national agencies.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Webstreamed presentations are available [here](#).

European Commission organised a stakeholder meeting on the future Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programme



On 29 January, the European Commission invited in Brussels more than 600 representatives from trainers, experts, policy makers, national agencies and organisations active in the field of education, training, youth and sport on the topic "Co-creating Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps". The objective of the meeting was to look ahead to the future programme period 2021-2027 with proposals for improving the programme as well as exchanges of good practices. Several workshops were on the agenda to allow participants to provide input and fine-tuning of the support mechanisms and technical aspects of the implementation in a "co-creation" process.

The introductory speech was delivered by the new Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel who presented the most recent analysis of Erasmus+

outcomes stressing the achievements of Erasmus+ and the necessity to increase impacts on EU citizens in the future. Even if Erasmus+ is clearly a success story, she underlined "the necessity to simplify the access to the programme and to make them more flexible, more international, more inclusive and greener".

Break-out sessions

Following two inspiring testimonies from youth participants to Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, the participants were divided in parallel workshops ("break-out sessions"). One of the sessions was dedicated to "learning mobility in sport" as Key Action 1 mobility will, for the first time, also be applicable for the Sport Chapter during the next funding period. The discussion was organised around three main questions:

- How to identify the proper organisations / participants for mobility in sport?
- What would be a successful mobility activity?
- Which outcomes can we expect from mobility exchanges in sport?

The EOC EU Office and other participating organisations mentioned several key elements including:

- Make the application process and the mobility requirements as easy as possible to facilitate

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the participation of sport organisations from all size (e.g. allow exchanges between only two organisations);

- Flexibility in the type of mobility (e.g. duration, individual/organisation mobility, learning outcomes);
- Allow mobility for both professional and grassroots level including for the staff of sport organisations (e.g. coaches, managers).

The EOC EU Office also attended two other break-out sessions respectively on “Simpler rules for a more inclusive programme” and “Communicating with impacts”.

The main message from the Commission was the willingness to make the programme more inclusive and accessible to grassroots actors and organisations. In this regard, the approach for KA2 actions (projects) should deeply evolve with simplified financial application and more attention given to the quality of the deliverables. Participants discussed the different proposals, stressing the

need for better support (e.g. clear guidelines, templates, national expert on sport to help with the application processes) from national and European agencies as well as the importance of recognition of volunteers’ contribution to the projects. The Commission also announced the development of a “Communication and Dissemination toolkit” as well as an updated platform which should help the participants make their achievements accessible to all EU citizens.

The upcoming months will see the Commission continue to work on the preparation of the next Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programme with the involvement of the relevant stakeholders.

INTERNAL AND VISITS

EOC EU Office Board meets in Lausanne



The annual meeting of the EOC EU Office Board was held in the Olympic capital Lausanne on 28 January, back-to-back with the Executive Committee meeting of the European Olympic Committees.

After the welcoming remarks by EOC President Janez Kocijancic, the Board discussed the activity report and accounts of 2019 as well as the budget and work plan of 2020, which were all approved by the Board. EOC EU Office Director Folker Hellmund highlighted the numerous activities carried out by the Office in 2019, including the Funding Seminar organised for all 50 NOCs and Office partners in September 2019. Regarding the activities of 2020, the European Evening of Sport to be organised in Brussels on 16 March, will be in the major event for the EOC EU Office. In addition, the Funding Seminar will be also organised this year.

EOC President thanked the Office for its extensive work and highlighted the importance to continue to support the NOCs and organised sport to get access to the EU funding programmes.

6th European Evening of Sports will take place on 16 March

Two years have passed since people from sports and politics came together to Brussels to celebrate sport in Europe. This year the EOC EU Office will have the pleasure to organise the **6th European Evening of Sports on 16 March 2020**. The event will be hosted by the Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg with the aim to discuss "How to preserve the European Sport Model?". High-level guests from sports, the EU and national politics are expected.

EOC President **Janez Kocijančič** and **Susanne Eisenmann**, Minister of Education, Youth and

Sport from Baden-Württemberg will open the evening. As a keynote speaker, we are delighted to have once again **Thomas Bach**, President of the International Olympic Committee, followed by a panel discussion moderated by former professional tennis player **Sabine Appelmans**. As panellists, we will welcome **Mariya Gabriel**, European Commissioner responsible for sports, **Roxana Mărăcineanu**, Minister of Sport in France, **Francesco Ricci Bitti**, President of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, and **Janez Kocijančič**, EOC President, to talk about how the European Sport

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Model with its pyramidal structure and solidarity principles can be preserved.

This start to the evening is followed by a cultural and sports programme as well as a buffet.

We are looking forward to a lively exchange and a nice evening together!

Partner visit by the Swedish Sports Confederation's regions



On 29 January 2020, the Swedish Sports Confederation (RF) organised a visit to the EOC EU Office. The group consisted of 11 representatives of the regional offices of RF, which is one of the partners of the EOC EU Office and the umbrella organisation representing sport in Sweden.

The visitors started the day with a meeting with Jytte Guteland, a Swedish member of the European Parliament, getting acquainted with the work of this EU legislative body.

During the afternoon, the group visited the EOC EU Office to learn more about EU sports policy. Heidi

Pekkola, Deputy Director of the EOC EU Office, welcomed the group together with Kaisa Larjomaa, Secretary General of ENGSO, of which RF is an active member.

Heidi Pekkola presented the work of the Office along with EU decision-making processes and bodies, as well as the current EU sports policy debates. The group also got an introduction to ENGSO, the European Sports NGO, and the organisation's current activities, by Kaisa Larjomaa.

The trip concluded on 30 January with a busy day at the European Commission's Erasmus+ Sport Info Day, where the participants got information regarding the ongoing Erasmus+ Call and had the opportunity to network with potential partners from all around Europe.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Swedish Sports Confederation](#)

PARTNERS' CORNER

ASOIF becomes a partner of the EOC EU Office

In a move to strengthen its cooperation with EU institutions, protect the important role of International Federations (IFs) and fully tap into the potential of sport, the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) has become a partner of the EOC EU Office.

[ASOIF](#) serves and represents the Summer Olympic IFs in the most competent, articulate and professional manner on issues of common interest in the Summer Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement, and on any other matter deemed necessary by the IFs.

The partnership agreement was signed on 28 January 2020 in Lausanne, Switzerland, by ASOIF President Francesco Ricci Bitti and EOC President Janez Kocijančič.

"International Federations play a unique role in the development and organisation of sport, not only at global, but also at European level. At the same time they are directly affected by a wide range of EU legislation, for instance the competition and internal market policies," said Francesco Ricci Bitti during the meeting. He added: "With a newly composed European Parliament and European Commission in place, this is an opportune moment for us to further strengthen our dialogue with EU decision-makers and benefit from the unique expertise of the EOC's team in Brussels."

"We are very happy with this new partnership", noted EOC President, Janez Kocijančič, on this occasion. "The Olympic Movement and organised sport must speak with one voice towards the European institutions. The future cooperation with ASOIF in Brussels should be regarded as an important step in this direction. I am sure all partners will benefit from this agreement!"

ASOIF is a known player to the EU institutions and has already participated in a number of high-level EU meetings. For instance, at last year's EU Sport Forum, ASOIF President presented key findings from the Report on the [Future of Global Sport](#). ASOIF's comprehensive work to promote and ensure a culture of [good governance](#) among its member federations has also been widely recognised at European and international level.

The [EOC EU Office](#) is the representative of the European Olympic Committees (EOC) in Brussels, Belgium, and represents the interests of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and other major sport organisations at national, European and international level. For the EOC EU Office, ASOIF is the 29th partner organisation overall. The full list of the EOC EU Office's partner network can be found on the [website](#).

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NEXT MONTHS

11-12 February	RINGS kick-off meeting, Brussels
13-14 February	Seminar on sport and regional development, Brussels
17 February	POINTS workshop, Portugal
20 February	11 th Anniversary EOC EU Office, Brussels
16 March	European Evening of Sport, Brussels
23-24 March	POINTS meeting, Netherlands
26-27 March	EU Sport Forum, Zagreb