



European Union and Sport

European Parliament: Adoption of the Resolution concerning "Online Gambling in the Internal Market"	2
The upcoming Danish Presidency and "Sportvision 2012"	3
Council Meeting on Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	3



EU policy matters

State aid policy and sport: European Commission approved Hungarian sport scheme	4
EU conference on Sport Agents	5



Funding programs and studies

Sport programme part of "Erasmus for all"	6
3rd EU-Level thematic Conference on Volunteering 2011	6
European Year of Volunteering: Final Conference	7
Hearing on Volunteering	7

At a glance / Internal

EOC 40th General Assembly – Sochi (Russia)	8
EOC Athletes Commission in Brussels	8
NOC of Denmark visits the EOC EU Office	9
Dates in December and January	10



European Union and Sport

European Parliament: Adoption of the Resolution concerning "Online Gambling in the Internal Market"

The European Parliament adopted in Strasbourg on 15 November 2011, a Resolution on online gambling in the Internal Market, following a report prepared by Jürgen Creutzmann, German MEP.

In the Resolution, the European Parliament's response to the European Commission's "Green paper on online gambling in the Internal Market", which was published in March 2011, calls for a coordinated EU approach to online gambling, especially when it concerns the fight against illegal gambling and the protection of minors and other vulnerable consumers.

Following the Resolution Member States should be free to set rules on online gambling but identifies clear benefits for coordination in some areas. It also stated that Member States should introduce a licensing model to provide security for gamblers and to ensure gambling providers follow the rules that have been laid down.

It also calls on the European Commission to look at the possibility of blocking transactions between credit card issuers and blacklisted gambling providers. There should be restrictions to access to online gambling sites in order to protect vulnerable consumers e.g. minors, such as age verification and restrictions for electronic payments. MEPs want the European Commission to explore common standards for operators and emphasize that a shared

European code of conduct on online gambling could be a first step.

"Gambling and sport: the need to ensure integrity"

With regard to sport, it appears that the text voted by the European Parliament is extremely positive for sport organisations. Indeed, the Resolution contains a last part devoted to integrity (points 32 to 44 of the report). While the Resolution underlines the necessity to ensure the integrity of sport competitions, notably by recognition of the property rights of sport event organizers (point 40), it recalls in addition the necessity to secure a fair financial return. Finally, the European Parliament, "calls on the European Commission and Member States to work with all sports stakeholders with a view to identifying the appropriate mechanisms necessary to preserve the integrity of sport and the funding of grassroots sport" (point 44).

To complete the activities of the European Parliament in the field of sport, the Assembly will vote on the so-called FISAS report on the "European Dimension of Sport" during the next plenary session in Strasbourg on 12 December 2011.

Further information:

[The Resolution of the European Parliament on online gambling in the Internal Market](#)



November 2011

The upcoming Danish Presidency and "SPORTVISION 2012"

Denmark will chair the Council of the European Union in the first semester of 2012. The Danish Presidency has announced that their priorities in the field of sport will mainly focus on four fields: The content of the sport programme, match-fixing issues, anti-doping and the role of sport in the society. The Danish Presidency will also arrange a sport conference on 19-20 March 2012 in Copenhagen. The conference has been named "SPORTVISION 2012" and will address the present challenges in "Sport for



DANISH PRESIDENCY
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION 2012

All" and explore answers and solutions in the following fields:

- **Fitness doping:** Strategy for stopping steroids.
- **Volunteering:** Recent strategic challenges in volunteering.
- **Financing & Health:** How can "Sport for All" contribute to the EU 2020 strategy on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?

Further information:

[Danish Presidency](#)

[SPORTVISION 2012](#)

Council meeting on Education, Youth, Culture and Sport

On November 28, the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council took place in Brussels. The Council discussed sport issues as good governance in sport and adopted a resolution on the representation of the EU Member States in the Foundation Board of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and the coordination of the EU and its Member States' positions prior to WADA meetings. The Council also adopted conclusions on the role of voluntary activities in sport in promoting active citizenship in the context of "2011-European Year of Voluntary Activities". In addition to this, the Council adopted conclusions on combating match-fixing within sport, which aim to foster close cooperation and information sharing between Member States, the European Commission, sport actors and gambling operators.

Furthermore the Council discussed the new EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport, presented by the European

Commission. The programme is supposed to start 2014 with an overall budget of 238 million EUR for seven years. The main objectives are to support transnational projects in policy fields as anti doping or dual careers, to finance grass roots sport events and to support seminars and conferences.

Further information:

[To see the complete press release of the Council meeting \(sport from page 24\)](#)

[The complete Council conclusions on combating match-fixing](#)

[Complete Council conclusion on the role of voluntary activities in sport in promoting active citizenship](#)

[Complete resolution on the Foundation Board of WADA and the coordination of the EU and its Member States' positions prior to WADA meeting](#)



EU-policy matters

State aid policy and sport: European Commission approved Hungarian sport support scheme

EU State aid rules have been a major source of concerns since the publication of the Communication on sport "Developing the European Dimension of Sport" from January 2011. Indeed, the European Commission proposed in this document "to monitor the application of State aid law in the field of sport and consider guidance if the number of sport related State aid cases increases". In addition, the European Commission considered that "there have only been a few decisions concerning State aid to sport and, as in other sectors in a similar situation, stakeholders have repeatedly called for further clarification regarding the financing of infrastructure and sport organizations". The question was whether such schemes of public financing, developed throughout the EU, were at risk.

In this context, the decision of the European Commission to clear the Hungarian sport support scheme is therefore positive news.

On 9 November 2011, the European Commission approved under EU State aid rules a proposal by Hungary to grant around 60 million EUR of yearly public financing towards the renovation and upgrade of existing sports infrastructure in Hungary. The Commission agrees that the funding scheme furthers a common interest, while ensuring sufficient safeguards are in place to minimize potential distortions of competition between professional clubs: "Public support

of sport infrastructure used by professional clubs clearly falls under EU State aid rules. However, I am satisfied that the Hungarian scheme contains proper safeguards to limit distortions of competition and to ensure that the scheme will benefit citizens to a large extent" said Vice-President Joaquín Almunia, Commissioner dealing with competition policy.

Earlier this year, Hungary adopted a programme to increase the participation of citizens in sport activities that requires the modernisation of sports infrastructures and the training of young people. The measure focuses on the five most popular team sports in Hungary, namely football, handball, basketball, ice-hockey and water-polo, as they are expected to have the greatest impact on the local population's sports activity. In order to receive funding under the scheme, professional sports clubs are obliged to design a strategy that includes initiatives for the public, such as the organisation of mass sports events, training of the young generation or reserving schedules for local citizens to use sports infrastructures.

Further information:

[Press release of the European Commission „State aid: Commission clears Hungarian sport support scheme“ \(IP/11/1322\)](#)



EU conference on Sport Agents

On 9 and 10 November the European Commission organised the „EU Conference on Sport Agents“ which took place in Brussels. About 120 representatives from sport organisations and politics discussed options for a more efficient regulation of the profession.

The responsible EU commissioner for sport, **Androulla Vassiliou** (DG EAC), stated that the activity of sport agents is part of the public discussion only because of the growing commissions and transfer sums in football. With regard to this, several „ethical questions“ have been



raised, for instance about the transparency of financial flows, the exploitation of minor athletes or conflicts of interest through double representation of players and clubs. In her view organised sport is responsible for the introduction of efficient rules against the misconduct of sport agents.

The Belgian Conservative Ivo Belet (MEP) described the regulation of sport agents as a challenge which can only be coped with at EU level. In his opinion, the measures FIFA has taken so far are not sufficient. Therefore the European Parliament and the Commission will have to keep up the political pressure. In this context, he mentioned the recent resolution of the European Parliament with regard to a European dimension in sport, where the delegates have asked the Commission to „develop and implement“ a European licensing and registration system for sport agents.

Participants from sport agreed that the existing FIFA licensing system cannot provide for adequate control of the market

for sport agents. Although FIFA, ECA, EPFL, FIFPro and the EU Football agents associations (EFAA) shared their view on the principal challenges (more transparency, better control of financial flows, protection of minors, reducing high commissions) no common approach could be identified on how to regulate the sector. The current FIFA proposal was more or less supported by ECA, EPFL and FIFPro, but opposed by EFAA which asked for an EU directive on sport agents.

The Commission has reservations to take up measures at EU level on its own initiative. However, the European Parliament and the representatives of the sport agent sector continue to keep up their political pressure. By summarising the conference, Director Gregory Paulger explained the three options of the Commission:

- Legislative proposal for a binding EU Directive on sport agents on the basis of internal market rules;
- Proposal for a politically binding recommendation according to article 165 TFEU;
- Voluntary standardisation of qualification criteria for sport agents through European standardisation in form of a CEN-standard.

The Council Expert Group on „Good Governance“ will also deliberate about additional steps towards a regulation of the activity of sport agents at EU level.

Further information:
[Commission Website](#)



Funding programs and studies

Sport programme part of „Erasmus for All“

Erasmus for All – an EU sport funding programme is developing

The European Commission (EC) published its proposal on a new funding programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport entitled “Erasmus for All” on 23 November. The global budget of the programme amounts to 19.5 billion Euros covering the period from 2014 to 2020. Out of this global budget 238 million Euros – or 34 millions a year – are allocated to a sub-programme for sport. By proposing “Erasmus for All”, the European Commission sets up a fully valid EU sport funding programme for the first time in the history of the European Union. The funding measures generally aim at promoting the European dimension in sport – grassroots sport – and focus in particular on:

- Strengthening good governance and the knowledge base for sport in the EU promoting health-enhancing physical activity;
- Exploiting the potential of sport to foster social inclusion, promoting dual careers through education and training of athletes;
- Tackling transnational threats such as doping, match fixing, violence, racism and intolerance.

The following activities can be supported:

- Transnational collaborative projects;
- Non-commercial European sporting events of major importance;
- Strengthening of the evidence base for policy making in the field of sport;
- Capacity building in sport;
- Dialogue with relevant European stakeholders.

The proposal of the EC has to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. In the course of this decision making process changes to this document can be made. Depending on the outcome of the discussions on the multi-annual financial framework in 2013 the amount of the budget can also change.

The EU Office will continuously update the progress of the negotiations of the “Erasmus for All” programme.

Further information:
["Erasmus for All"](#)

3rd EU-level Thematic Conference on Volunteering 2011

From 3 to 4 November around 200 participants representing public authorities and non-profit voluntary organizations met in Athens, Greece, to share experiences, learn and explore possible next steps to support the further development of volunteering in Europe.

Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, emphasized that volunteering is an act of solidarity and contributes to social cohesion. The European Commission’s study on “Volunteering in the European Union” estimated that in 2010 some 100 (of 500)



November 2011

million Europeans were engaged in voluntary activities. Ways and strategies have to be found and developed to motivate the other 400 million Europeans to volunteer as well. The EU can bring added value to volunteering by providing support to networks and platforms. In the plenary discussions, participants agreed that

voluntary activities need to be clearly distinguished from paid employment and should by no means replace it. The 4th and final conference organized within the framework of the European Year of Volunteering will be held in Warsaw, Poland, on 3 December 2011.

European Year of Volunteering: Final Conference

The 4th and Final Conference of the European Year of Volunteering was held in Warsaw on December 1-2. The Conference was organised by the European Commission and the Polish Presidency of the EU. Focus of the conference was on preparing a lasting legacy for the European Year of Volunteering. The Policy Agenda on Volunteering in Europe, so called P.A.V.E., adopted by the EYV 2011 Alliance, was presented to the European Commission and served as a basis for the discussions.



In the discussions European Year of Volunteering was considered to be best of the EU thematic years organised so far.

During the year several documents have been adopted to promote volunteering e.g. Council Conclusions on the "Role of voluntary activities in social policy" and Commission's Communication on "EU Policies and Volunteering: Recognising and Promoting Cross-border Voluntary activities in the EU". Most important for the Sport Movement are the conclusions on the "Role of Voluntary Activities in Sport in Promoting Active Citizenship", which was adopted by the Council on November 29. Together with P.A.V.E. these documents will hopefully keep volunteering on the agenda after the year as well.

Next year, 2012, will be the European Year for "Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations".

Hearing on Volunteering

The European year of Volunteering 2011 Alliance organized a hearing on Employee Volunteering on the 9 November. The hearing was hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). The two most significant topics were the VAT-issue and evidence based economic value of volunteering. As the policy makers need evidence based information to during the decision making process, also voluntary sector needs evidence for the economical benefits it does provide. To facilitate that, the EP is working with the John Hopkins

University, where they have developed a lighter methodology to gather information. Another way to provide statistical information on volunteering, are so called satellite accounts for volunteering, which are already in use in some countries. Launching satellite accounts in all EU countries is in progress.

In the debate most concerns were raised over the concept and true nature of EV, i.e. how to secure that work during paid time would be truly voluntary. The definition was



November 2011

found to be inadequate and the participants stated that the golden rule of volunteering is that it has to be based on a free will. Another issue raised was the responsibility of

insurance coverage, which should always stay with the employer.

At a glance/ Internal

EOC 40th General Assembly – Sochi (Russia)

The 40th General Assembly of the EOC took place this year in Sochi (Russia) on 23 and 24 November 2011, in the presence of Mr. Alexander Zhukov, Deputy Prime Minister and President of the NOC of Russia, IOC President Jacques Rogge, **EOC President Patrick Hickey** and 48 NOC representatives



and guests. Over 300 participants gathered for two days in Sochi before heading towards Moscow, where a special event was held in order to celebrate

the 100th anniversary of the Russian Olympic Committee, in the presence of the Russian Prime Minister Putin.

The 40th General Assembly covered the recent and forthcoming activities of the Olympic Movement. The participants also received detailed information regarding the feasibility report on the European Olympic Games. For this purpose, an extraordinary General Assembly of the EOC will be held on 12 April 2012, in Moscow, as part of the General Assembly of the ANOC.

Octavian Morariu, vice-chair of the EOC EU Commission, and Folker Hellmund, director of the EOC EU Office, presented a report on the European Union.



In addition to the activities reports from the Olympic Movement, the Polish cyclist Tobiasz Lis received the Piotr Nurowski award, which aims to perpetuate the memory of the former Polish NOC President and his example to encourage young athletes to pursue a career in high-level sport. Mr. Vitaly Smirnov (Russia), IOC member, was awarded with the Order of Merit of the EOC. Mr. Alain Calmat (France), Mr. David Hemery (Great Britain) and Mr. Luis Santos (Portugal) were awarded with the European Olympic Laurels.

The 41st General Assembly of the EOC will be held next year in Eilat (Israel) on 7 and 8 December 2012.

Further information:

[EOC Website](#)

EOC Athletes Commission in Brussels

A delegation of the EOC Athletes Commission consisting of Gordan Kozulj (Croatia), Jean Michel Saive (Belgium) and Jeroen Straathof (Netherlands) met EU

decision makers on 22 November 2011 in Brussels to exchange views on matters of relevance for athletes. Talking about the structures of the Athletes Commissions in



November 2011

Europe, Gordan Kozulj informed MEPs Doris Pack, President of the CULT-Committee, Emine Bozkurt and Emma McClarkin that the EOC Athletes Commission represents the vast majority of athletes in Europe both at amateur and professional levels. The discussions also focussed on topical issues such as dual career, the fight against doping and good governance.

Regarding anti-doping measures, the athletes consider these a part of their job. They are fully committed to those measures which they have to comply with 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. By respecting these rules athletes give little but gain a lot, they declared in unison. The athletes concurred



that certain implementing measures based upon the WADA-Code like the whereabouts rule have to be made more user-friendly. They are confident that the revision of the code will provide remedy and satisfy the needs of the athletes.

Gregory Paulger and Michal Krejza of the European Commission invited the EOC Athletes Commission to give input to policy discussions, so that the voice of athletes can be better heard. Furthermore, the European Commission might be able to support the professionalization of the Athletes Commission once the sport funding programme enters into force.

Both EU decision makers and athletes concluded that the exchange of views were fruitful as well as very beneficial and should be continued in the future.

NOC of Denmark visits the EOC EU Office

A delegation of the NOC of Denmark (DIF), led by its president Niels Nygaard and including its executive committee members, visited Brussels on 7 November 2011. The aim of this visit was to have a complete update on EU matters related to sport before Denmark takes over the EU Presidency as of January 2012.

After a meeting with the EOC EU Office, which focused on the activities of the EU institutions in the field of sport in 2011 and the perspectives for 2012, the group visited the European Parliament and met with Ms. Schaldemose, Danish MEP, who in 2009 was rapporteur on the report concerning the integrity of online gambling and was also deeply involved in the progress of the report of the European Parliament concerning online gambling, which was adopted on 15

November 2011. The group also had an



exchange with European Commission representatives.

November 2011



Dates in December

- 6. Council Expert Group on "Good Governance" in Brussels
- 12. Approval of the report on the "European dimension of sport" by Ayxela Fisas in the EP plenary session
- 12-13 Special Competence Seminar for Partners of the EOC EU Office
- 14.-16. Sport Directors meeting in Gdansk

Dates in January

- 12-13 Council Expert Group on "Education and Training" in Innsbruck
- 13-22 Youth Olympic Games in Innsbruck
- 28 EOC Executive Committee meeting in Reykjavik

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