

## **ENGSO GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2008, ISTANBUL**

### **ENGSO STATEMENT RELATED TO THE PAN EUROPEAN SPORTS**

#### **Sport Political Issues and Processes in Europe: Chances, Challenges, Changes**

President of the European Non-Governmental Sports Organisations, ENGSO, Birgitta Kervinen, wished participants warmly welcome to the ENGSO Pan-European Pre-Seminar named Sport Political Issues and Processes in Europe:—Chances, Challenges and Changes. For the first time in ENGSO's history the ENGSO General Assembly and the Pre-Seminar were organised in Istanbul, Turkey. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Olympic Committee showed a part of the rich history and variety of European sport culture.

Pan-European sports policy co-operation in ENGSO covers activities of all 40 ENGSO member organisations around Europe. The role of ENGSO is to promote the sports interests in the political sphere at European and at national level. As a strategic player, ENGSO strives to be a counterpart both to the Council of Europe and the European Union, as well as a link with the international and European sports organisations, especially with the umbrella sports bodies such as the European Olympic Committees and European Paralympic Committees.

#### **Council of Europe**

The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport of the Council of Europe, currently covers now 26 European Member States. EPAS priorities are sports ethics and the study on autonomy of the sports movement in Europe, combating racism and discrimination in sport and also organising the 11th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Sport in Greece to take place in December 2008. ENGSO as a partner with EPAS and as a Bureau and a Governing Board Member, participates in the priority tasks within the area of EPAS sports policy.

Representative of ENGSO is participating in the EPAS Working Group building up of the Consultative Committee. This Committee will be a new partner body for sport NGO's in the Council of Europe and will start its activity in 2009.

ENGSO shares the concern of the EPAS's Governing Body on how to increase the membership of EPAS not only within the member countries of the Council of Europe but also

within sports organisations themselves. ENGSO is willing to assist EPAS in preparing future criteria for its organisational membership. Furthermore, ENGSO Youth is a member of an Advisory Council of Youth.

ENGSO underlines the value of including ENGSO member organisations into their national delegations, at the 11th Ministerial Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Sport in Greece in 2008.

## **European Union**

There are two highly important processes going on in the European Union concerning sport: the White Paper on Sport and the article on sport in the Lisbon Treaty.

**The White Paper on Sport** was launched by the European Commission in July 2007. ENGSO very actively participated in the consultation process and submitted position statements to the White Paper on Sport.

ENGSO considers the structure of the White Paper's three themes: the societal role of sport, the economic dimension of sport and the organisation of sport, to be the right approaches.

ENGSO is satisfied that the European Commission has emphasized the role of voluntary non-profit sport organisations and also emphasized enhancing public health through physical activity as priority key policies in the White Paper. The implementation of the Pierre de Coubertin Action Plan with these priorities is of prime importance. ENGSO is represented in the Sport and Health Working Group of the EU member States, as well as in the Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

ENGSO welcomes **the Lisbon Treaty** and the future sports' competence as an area in which the European Union can carry out measures to support, coordinate or complement the actions of the Member States. ENGSO finds it most important that the non-profit voluntary sports movement is included in the draft treaty's text.

ENGSO regards it of great significance that the European Union takes into account the implementation of the subsidiarity principle. It is vital to regard sports as a national competence in which the Union plays a complementary role.

ENGSO would like to emphasise that the specific characteristics of sport mentioned in article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty should be defined more specifically. ENGSO can not accept leaving

the decisions made on sports' specificity only to rulings made by the European Courts on a case-by-case-approach.

When the Lisbon Treaty is ratified by all EU Member States by the end of this year, sports may have an opportunity to receive **an EU funding programme on sport** in 2011. This is in addition to **the budget line for sport and a pilot funding project in 2009**. ENGSO supports the plans of the European Commission that the pilot projects could be financed in 2009 to establish a network for enhancing physical activity and a network to provide information for non-profit sports organisations.

ENGSO regards the studies on non-profit voluntary sports organisations and on the financing of grassroots sports as necessary, as well as the approval of Physical Activity guidelines in every policy areas.

Moreover, ENGSO supports the broad integration of sport into the existing EU programmes and funds. ENGSO urges that in the future, the programmes should take into consideration the nature and integration of voluntary non-profit sports organisations.

When preparing the White Paper on Sport, ENGSO appreciates that the European Commission has listened carefully to the European sport movement's views. As already mentioned in the White Paper, the European Commission published a document called '**Structured Dialogue**' in the Commission's Conference on the White Paper on Sport in Brussels on 8-9 October 2007. With this document the Commission wishes to put into practice a well-structured dialogue on sport in Europe between the European Commission and European sports organisations.

This Structured Dialogue document calls for **ENGSO, EOC and EPC for regular meetings** as a Brussels-based EU working group on sport, to exchange views on current developments. ENGSO regards this kind of platform ideal for sports political negotiations and wishes the sports political meetings between the Commission and these three bodies will soon be implemented.

ENGSO underlines the necessity for good and effective co-operation between the European umbrella sports bodies - European Olympic Committees and European Non-Governmental Sports Organisations ENGSO, as well as the need for common dialogue between the EU Ministers responsible for sport, the European Commission and the European sports movement.

ENGSO is looking forward to the forthcoming **French Presidency** and is willing to participate in the preparation of the European Sport Forum in Biarritz in November 2008.

On the 8 May 2008, **the European Parliament adopted the resolution of the White Paper on Sport**. The Parliament's decision is mainly positive from ENGSO perspective.

The Parliament's report on sport shares ENGSO's concern that specificity of sport is unsatisfactory from the perspective of sports organisations. It also emphasizes the very positive role played by revenues generated by state-owned lotteries and gambling operators. ENGSO fully agrees with the report's concern about the possible deregulation of lotteries and gambling markets. MEPs consider it appropriate to use lottery profits for purposes that are in the public interest, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt regulatory measures to ensure that sport is protected from any improper influence relating to betting. Consequently, ENGSO is most satisfied with the adopted compromises regarding lottery and gambling issues.

## **Co-operation and partnership**

### **European Olympic Committees**

ENGSO welcomes co-operation with the European Olympic Committees within the field of EU sports policy and sees it important to implement further co-operation between the European umbrella sports bodies.

### **European State Lotteries and Toto Association**

ENGSO underlines the importance of public funding for sport, generated to a large extent by the national lotteries both in and outside of the European Union. The proceeds from gambling and lotteries are used to promote broad and equal opportunities for all citizens to take part in physical activities.

ENGSO stresses the need for European co-operation in the area of voluntary non-profit sports movement and national funding for sports. ENGSO shares the same values not only with many sports federations in Europe but also with the European State Lotteries and Toto Association (*EL*). We have a commonality of interests: ENGSO represents 40 national sports organisations and Olympic committees, whereas the European Lotteries have 74 members associations in 43 European states.

## **The EU Office of German Sports**

ENGSO has had a long-term, fruitful working relationship with the EU Office of German Sports. Despite this close co-operation, ENGSO has never actually been a formal member of the EU Office. At its Executive Committee meeting autumn 2007, ENGSO took the decision to apply for membership in the EU Office of German Sport.

ENGSO believes that strengthening the value of grass root sports and non-profit voluntary sports organisations in the context of the European sport policy in the future will be of utmost importance both for ENGSO and the EU Office of German Sports. The interest of ENGSO is to have sports represented widely in the new structure of the office.

## **Other partners**

In addition, ENGSO has ongoing co-operation and mutual change of information with several European and international sports organisations, eg. TAFISA, ISCA, European Fair Play Movement, European Youth Forum and EuroChild.

Istanbul, 16 May 2008

ENGSO GENERAL ASSEMBLY