



European Union and Sport

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European Union and Sport

The new EU Commission takes office

The Commission headed by Jean-Claude Juncker has started its five-year term on 1 November following the approval of the Parliament on 22 October 2014. During its plenary session in Strasbourg, the European Parliament approved the new college by a rather strong majority (426 in favour, 209 against, 67 abstentions).

Sport finally added to Commissioner's portfolio

The decision to nominate Mr. Tibor Navracsics as head of the "Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship" portfolio has been heavily criticized. Nevertheless, after his hearing, Members of the European Parliament asked Jean-Claude Juncker for a change of his portfolio. Consequently citizenship was withdrawn from Mr. Navracsics' portfolio in exchange for sport. Therefore, the new portfolio is called "Education, Culture, Youth and Sport".

The EOC EU Office, which had condemned the fact that sport was overlooked in the first version of the Commission (see our Monthly Report of September), welcomed this correction. Folker Hellmund, head of the European Olympic Committees EU Office, declared: *"It's better late than never. I am happy to see that Mr. Juncker has heard our message, which was backed by the European Parliament. Sport represents 3.7% of European GDP, employs 15 million persons and is essential to social cohesion, public health and economic growth. In times when European society needs exactly that, it makes sense to put sport high on the EU agenda. We are looking forward working*

with the new EU Commission to help sport brings its full potential to European citizens".

Patrick Hickey, President of the EOC, also welcomed the inclusion of sport in the final portfolio of the Commissioner: *"We are pleased that the role of sport in European society has been properly recognised with this correction and I hope that this is the start of more meaningful dialogue with all stakeholders in Europe who want to place sport higher up on the EU agenda. I am confident that if the EU firmly embraces sport it can be a force for good in Europe's social development and peaceful coexistence".*

Sport connected to several policy fields

Several other Commissioners will also be important for sport, considering the broad range of policy fields on the European Agenda, which have a potential impact on sport: health, tax policy, data protection, trade, visa policy, social inclusion, gender equality, regional policy, intellectual property rights, gambling regulation, etc.

This new EU Commission can benefit from a stronger political legitimacy: it is led by the first President to be indirectly elected by European citizens; it reflects the current political balance of powers across European Governments and can rely upon the support of a vast coalition (EPP, S&D, ALDE) within the European Parliament. The upcoming months will reveal if it seizes upon these favourable circumstances to implement a strong political agenda and if the first official appearance of sport within the

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Commissioners' portfolios will lead to a different EU sport policy.

Further information:[Press release of the European Commission](#)[Press release of the EOC EU Office](#)

Petition on journalists' access to sport events

On 7 October 2014, the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament held a debate on a petition submitted by the International Sports Press Association (AIPS) regarding "the accreditation fees that radio sports journalists are required to pay in Europe". AIPS protests against the fact that journalists are sometimes obliged to pay accreditation fees in order to gain access to sport events for radio coverage.

During the debate in the Parliament, Ioannis Daras, Chairman of AIPS Europe (with 48 countries and 5.500 members), denounced this recurring incident as contradictory to the freedom of the press, the right of information and the rules of free competition. AIPS then mentioned similar examples in football, rugby and cycling.

The European Commission explained that it is not within their competence to deal with such an issue and that the Audiovisual Media Services Directive does not provide any rules against charging for journalists' accreditation. The MEPs who took part in the discussion took a different stance. They insisted upon the violation of a fundamental right to information and the danger of over-commercialization of sport.

The Committee of Petition eventually decided to refer the matter for further investigation to two other EP Committees: CULT (Culture and Education) and IMCO (Internal Market and Consumer Protection), which will now decide if they give an opinion or not.

Further information:[Petition submitted by AIPS](#)[Debate in the Committee on Petitions](#)

EU Sport Ministers Meetings

On 20-21 October 2014, an informal meeting of the EU Sport Ministers was held in Rome within the context of the Italian EU Presidency. The main issues discussed were "sport as a tool for social inclusion of vulnerable groups" and "financial fair play in football". Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, and Michel Platini, President of the UEFA, were invited to present their points of view. Mrs Vassiliou said "*While money in sport is certainly welcome to help its development, it must not be at the expense of the very nature of sport (...)* The European Commission has already recognised the

relevance of the objectives of Financial Fair Play. Both EU State Aid rules and UEFA objectives help introduce discipline and rationality in football club finances." She also gave an update of recent EU developments in sport with a focus on the European Week of Sport.

Formal Sport Ministers Council in November

The next formal meeting of the EU Sport Ministers, that is to say the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS), will take place on 25 November 2014 in



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Brussels. The only document that will be adopted is the "*Council conclusions on sport as a driver for growth and innovation*" which is considered to raise the profile of sport and to lead to a closer cooperation with the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry.

Besides the adoption of the Council conclusions, a policy debate on sport and physical activity for school age level will be organised.

Sweden refers to the Court of Justice for its restrictive online gambling regulation

The European Commission decided to refer Sweden to the Court of Justice of the EU for its restrictive online gambling regulation, including sports betting. The Commission claims that the Swedish gambling law - which does not allow any other businesses and operators than those owned by the state and located within its jurisdiction, to receive licences - is inconsistent with EU regulation on free movement of services.

According to the EU law, Member States can limit the cross-border provision of certain forms of gambling services on the basis of public interest such as preventing criminal activities or protecting residents from gambling addiction. These measures, however, must be "suitable and necessary"

and must pursue the objectives for the public interest in a "consistent and systematic manner." According to the Commission, the Swedish system of issuing online sports betting licenses is not systematic and is not effectively monitored when it comes to business activities of service providers.

Sweden had been asked to ensure compliance of its national rules with EU legislation on several occasions, but according to the Commission, the changes made were not satisfactory.

Further information:

[Press Release European Commission](#)

Funding programmes, studies and projects

Erasmus+ Sports: New call and Programme Guide

On 6 October 2014, The European Commission and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) published a new call for proposals for Erasmus+ including the sports chapter, together with the 2015 Programme Guide.

In total 16,8 million EUR will be allocated for not-for-profit sport events and collaborative partnerships. The biggest change compared to 2014 is the focus on the European Week of Sport (EWoS), an initiative launched by the Commission to promote sport and physical activity in the EU which will take place for the first time in September 2015.



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Consequently, the call for proposals distinguishes between a first round of proposals dealing with partnerships and events related to the EWoS, and a second round of proposals for collaborative partnerships and events NOT related to the European Week of Sport. Specific eligibility criteria exist for the different activities. These criteria are explained in detail in the

Programme Guide. The deadlines for application are 22 January for the first round and 14 May 2015 for the second of proposals.

Further information:

[Erasmus+ Guide 2015](#)
[Call for proposals](#)

Internal and visits

EOC EU Office launches new website

The EOC EU Office is happy to announce the launch of its new website. Over the course of the past few months, our office has worked hard to update its new website including a completely new design and structure.

The new layout is very user-friendly and gives our visitors already on the front-page an overview of what is going on at EU-level. The new website provides you with information on EU sport policy-making and keeps you up to date throughout the different pages including: Latest news, "News of the Day" (a collection of links to other websites), and upcoming events.

Folker Hellmund, Director of the EOC EU Office, explained: *"We are pleased to launch this new website. It will allow us to communicate more efficiently with our partner organisations and the National Olympic Committees in Europe. Furthermore, it will contribute to promoting our key priorities and to position the EOC EU*

Office as the voice of the Olympic Sports Movement in Brussels."

In order to raise the attractiveness of the website, "Our latest Tweets", changing videos, and new pictures have been integrated. Furthermore, you will easily find the contacts of our partner organisations and staff members.

The EOC EU Office is also working on an intranet for its partner organisations and for the National Olympic Committees (NOCs). The intranet would allow partners and NOCs to download a wide range of relevant documents related to EU sport policy. In addition, the intranet will serve as a platform to exchange views on sport-related topics.

With this new service, the EOC EU Office intends to meet the needs and expectations of the Olympic Sports Movement.

Further information:

[EOC EU Office Website](#)
[EOC EU Office Twitter account](#)



EOC EU Office meets the Sport Unit

On 15 October 2014, the EOC EU Office met with the Sport Unit of the European Commission in order to discuss recent developments regarding the new European Commission and EU sport policy in general. The Sport Unit was represented by Yves Le Lostecque (Head of Unit) and Susanne Hollmann (Deputy Head of Unit).

As the meeting took place before the official vote on the new EU Commission, the EOC EU Office raised several questions on the state of play of the new Commission and especially on the Commissioner-designated Tibor Navracsics. Further information was given on the impact of the internal organisation of the Commission. Sport will remain under the same Directorate General, but will be moved from the Directorate "Youth and Sport" to the Directorate Culture. Furthermore, a discussion took place on how the expert groups will work together with the observers as all candidates have been accepted.

Another topic on the agenda was the future implementation of the Erasmus+ Sports Programme. There was an exchange of views on the pre-financing rate of collaborative partnerships and volunteering as a contribution in kind, with a view to facilitate the participation of grassroots sports in projects funded by the EU. The EOC

EU Office also suggested keeping the discussions ongoing with other sections in order to ensure the possibility for sport to be taken into account under other Programmes as well. Last but not least, the EOC EU Office confirmed its intention to contribute to possible modifications of the regulations before and after the mid-term review (2017) of the Programme. A clarification of the status of Switzerland as a Programme Country is expected to be published in the near future.

Regarding the EU Sport Forum, the Sport Unit shortly presented the programme of the two-day event. Moreover, the EOC EU Office inquired on the priorities and events of the future EU Presidencies. At the next formal Sport Ministers Meeting, which will be held 25 November, the Council conclusions on sport as a driver for growth and innovation will be adopted. The upcoming Latvian and Luxembourgish Presidency will focus on grassroots sports, the development of soft skills and especially physical education (in schools).

At the end of the meeting, the EOC EU Office announced the date for the European Evening of Sport (6 May 2015) and the Special Competence Seminar (12-13 November 2014).

17th ENGSO Forum: Physical Education and Activities in Schools

The 17th ENGSO Forum gathered 50 participants together on a boat between Stockholm and Helsinki on 27-29 October to discuss the topic "Physical Education and Activities in Schools". The event kicked off with an EU Seminar to update the participants on the current European sport

policy. Policy Officer Agata Dziarnowska, from the Sport Unit of the European Commission and Deputy Executive Secretary Francois Tricarico, from the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport of the Council of Europe (EPAS), gave an update on the sport policy developments in these two institutions.



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The Forum itself looked into the topic of physical education and activities in schools with three sessions as experts gave interesting presentations on scientific research results, existing policies and practical examples. Among the presentations Sports Policy Consultant Mikkel Nortoft Magelund from the NOC and Sports Confederation of Denmark shared insights on their successful lobbying process in obtaining 45 minutes of daily physical activity in Danish public schools. As a practical example the YouMe - Young Mentors Programme of Akershus Regional Sports Confederation from Norway was presented. The programme educates young mentors to encourage and inspire other youth in becoming physically active. Furthermore, the Forum included a study visit to the Metropolitan Sports Academy in Helsinki to learn about the Finnish dual career model.



The ENGSO Forum offered a platform for different experts to exchange their ideas on physical activities in schools and to network with other European stakeholders.

Further information:
[ENGSO website](#)

Dates in November 2014

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| 6 | Council Working Party on Sport |
| 11 | Armistice Day, Public Holiday in Belgium |
| 12 | Advisory Board Meeting, European Week of Sport, Brussels |
| 12-13 | Special Competence Seminar, Brussels |
| 21 | EOC Executive Committee Meeting, Baku, Azerbaijan |
| 21-22 | EOC 43 rd General Assembly, Baku, Azerbaijan |
| 25 | Sports Ministers Council Meeting |

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