



EU Work Plan  
for Sport | 2011-  
2014

## Expert Group "Sport, Health and Participation": Deliverables 4-5



## 1. INTRODUCTION

*"60% of EU citizens seldom or never engage in physical exercise"  
(2010 Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity)*

Policies and actions to promote the participation in and the health-enhancing values of sport and physical activity have been developed in Member States and have been addressed by the EU, mainly through initiatives in the fields of sport and health, such as:

- 2007 White Paper on Sport<sup>1</sup>;
- 2007 White Paper on a Strategy for Europe on nutrition, obesity and overweight-related health issues<sup>2</sup>;
- EU Platform for action on diet, physical activity and health;
- High Level Group on nutrition and physical activity;
- 2008 EU Physical Activity Guidelines<sup>3</sup>;
- 2011 Communication on developing the European dimension in sport<sup>4</sup>.
- 2011/2012 Council outcomes relating to physical activity<sup>5</sup>;
- 2012 EP Resolution on the European dimension in sport<sup>6</sup>;
- EU funding for projects promoting physical activity.

In particular, the Council in its EU Work Plan for Sport (2011-2014)<sup>7</sup> gave priority to the topic of "sport and health" and established the Expert Group on Sport, Health and Participation (XG SHP). The group's mandate was wide-ranging: to **"explore ways to promote health enhancing physical activity and participation in grassroots sport"** and to **"identify measures by mid-2013"**.

The XG therefore decided to focus its work on **5 deliverables** covering the following topics:

1. Priorities for a future EU policy initiative on HEPA
2. Strengthened cooperation between the sport and healthcare sectors
3. The contribution of physical activity to active ageing

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission White Paper on Sport, COM(2007) 391final.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission White Paper "A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues", COM(2007) 279 final.

<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/documents/c1/eu-physical-activity-guidelines-2008\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/documents/c1/eu-physical-activity-guidelines-2008_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> European Commission Communication "Developing the European Dimension in Sport", COM (2011) 12 final.

<sup>5</sup> Council conclusions on promoting health-enhancing physical activity, Brussels, 26-27 November 2012; Council conclusions on closing health gaps within the EU through concerted action to promote healthy lifestyle behaviours, Brussels, 1-2 December 2011; Council conclusions on healthy ageing across the lifecycle, Brussels, 7 December 2012; European Year for active ageing and solidarity between generations - Council declaration, 7 December 2012.

<sup>6</sup> European Parliament Resolution, 2 February 2012 on the European dimension in sport (2011/2087(INI)).

<sup>7</sup> Council Resolution on a European Union Work Plan for Sport (2011-2014); OJ C162/1, 1.6.2011.



4. Input for the next Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity
5. Proposals for future EU level work in the field of physical activity

The XG has met five times, in September 2011, March 2012, June 2012, February 2013 and July 2013. Deliverables 1-3 were presented to the Council in mid-2012 and provided input to the 2012 Council conclusions on promoting health-enhancing physical activity. These conclusions call on Member States and the Commission to take further action to promote HEPA and participation in sport. The group has meanwhile finalised its work on the remaining deliverables 4 and 5.

This document briefly summarises the discussions held in the XG SHP regarding the next planned Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity (Deliverable 4) and it presents the group's proposals for future work on the field of sport, health and participation in the EU context (Deliverable 5).

## **2. DELIVERABLE 4 – INPUT TO THE NEXT EUROBAROMETER**

The Council conclusions on promoting health-enhancing physical activity and on strengthening the evidence-base for sport policy making, both adopted in November 2012, call on the Commission to issue regular surveys on sport and physical activity. Following its announcement in the 2011 Communication on sport, the Commission intends to launch a new Eurobarometer in this field in the second half of 2013.

Regarding “Input for the next Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity”, the XG SHP had in-depth discussions, including on general strengths and weaknesses of such surveys, and provided oral and written input in form of suggestions for possible changes or additions to the previous version of the Eurobarometer (launched in 2009). There was a strong wish by the XG SHP to ensure time-series and thus comparability of results, which corresponded to the unambiguous advice from the scientific community to avoid changes to questions or to keep them very limited as any change, even in the text between questions, would risk hampering comparison with the results of the previous Eurobarometer. The exchanges of views also extended to other, more complex physical activity measurement tools, notably the Global Physical Activity Questionnaire (GPAQ) and the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) as well as the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS). Furthermore, many Member States highlighted as a reference point the EU Physical Activity Guidelines (EU PA GL) and the planned Council Recommendation on HEPA introducing a monitoring framework.

*For deliverable 4, the XG agreed to recommend to the Commission to take account of the XG SHP's comments when drafting the new questionnaire for the next Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity. The majority of members in the group insisted on having as few changes as possible. Some found that the same questions could be used regarding the first part of the questionnaire (frequency of participation) while a combination of old and new questions could possibly be envisaged for the remaining part of the questionnaire. For new questions the short IPAQ could serve as a model.*

## **3. DELIVERABLE 5 – PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE WORK**

Concerning “Proposals for future EU level work in the field of HEPA promotion”, the XG SHP suggests that future EU level work should focus on the following activities:



1. Considering that the Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on promoting HEPA across sectors will be a priority for the work in the Council under the LT Presidency, the XG encourages the MS in the Council to work towards a timely adoption of that text. Once adopted, the implementation of the Recommendation will fall under the second EU Work Plan for Sport (likely start mid-2014). This future process should be anticipated and closely supported by the EU structures for sport, both at the expert and the policy level. In particular, it is important to ensure that the next EU Work Plan will:
  - prioritise EU-level work in the field of sport, health and participation (e.g. among "priority themes" and "key actions");
  - provide for the necessary structural elements to steer the implementation process (e.g. in a possible annex relating to the work of Expert Groups):
    - In particular, it should confirm a leading or advisory role for the future Expert Group on Sport, Health and Participation;
    - It should include the necessary elements relevant to the new reporting activities (e.g. role of actors, timelines, involvement of other policy areas/structures);
    - It should provide for a close coordination with the working structures for health, notably the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity, and possibly other EU bodies;
    - It should foresee close cooperation with the relevant structures of the World Health Organization (WHO);
    - It should provide possibilities for different Expert Groups to cooperate with each other.
  - contain provisions that encourage the adoption of regular progress reports by the Council on the implementation of the Recommendation on HEPA, coordinated with other relevant Council formations (e.g. EPSCO, Transport). These reports should also include an analysis of main shortcomings in HEPA promotion in the Member States and point out main fields for action;
  - consider the possibility of calling for a future update of the EU Physical Activity Guidelines, involving relevant organisations.
2. In addition to the implementation of the planned Recommendation, future work in the field of sport and health should focus on specific thematic fields of actions aimed at developing a European culture of citizens engaging in sport, physical activity and active mobility. These fields have been identified as follows:
  - Cooperation between the sport and the health care sectors – *follow up to the Council conclusions on HEPA, based, among other things, on the guidance provided in deliverable 2 developed by the XG SHP;*
  - The role of physical activity in active ageing – *follow up to the Council conclusions on HEPA, based, among other things, on the Principles (deliverable 3) developed by the XG SHP;*



- Awareness-raising activities encouraging physical activity, in particular the establishment, organisation and implementation of a future European Week of Sport, focussing on “participation in sport” – *follow up to the Council conclusions on HEPA*;
- Identification of the role of HEPA in EU programmes 2014-2020 besides Erasmus+;
- A strengthened evidence-base for physical activity and participation in sport, with a particular focus on economic savings (in cooperation with other relevant Expert Groups, e.g. XG STAT) – *follow up to the Council conclusions on HEPA*;
- Identification of areas where HEPA can contribute to the aims of the Europe 2020 Strategy;
- The link between active travel and air quality<sup>8</sup>, long term development<sup>9</sup> and renewable energy, including urban development, travel security or energy efficiency<sup>10</sup>;
- Successful regional and national approaches to promote physical activity and participation in sport as well as active mobility (cycling and walking) and regarding evaluation of results;
- Ways to target education institutions (kindergartens, schools, universities) in order to create the most valuable interactions with the sport sector, local authorities and the private sector;
- Analysis of trends of physical education classes in educational institutions in EU Member States (XG ETS in cooperation with XG SHP)
- Ways to develop sport and physical activity in the work environment;
- Tackling of health inequities through the reduction of inequalities regarding access to sport (including school sport facilities) and offers in local sport clubs and sport for all organisations with adapted activities to all ages and for all physical fitness conditions.

In order to implement relevant measures and actions in these fields, the XG SHP recommends the establishment of a follow-up EU Expert Group relating to the areas of sport, health and participation, and draws attention to the need to foster horizontal cooperation between Expert Groups (e.g. sport statistics and education and training).

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<sup>8</sup> de Nazelle A, et al. Improving health through policies that promote active travel: evidence to support integrated health impact assessment. *Environment International*. 2011; 37: 766

<sup>9</sup> Global Risks 2013. Insight Report of the World Economic Forum. Initiative of the Risk Response Network. Eighth Edition (ISBN: 92-95044-50-9)

<sup>10</sup> GJ Zhang, et al. Energy consumption and the unexplained warming over northern Asia and North America. *Nature Climate Change* (2013), doi:10.1038/nclimate1803



*In summary, the XG SHP recommends to the Member States to work towards a timely adoption of the Council Recommendation on promoting HEPA across sectors and to ensure a smooth implementation process. It encourages Member States and the Commission to follow up on the 2012 Council conclusions on HEPA and to take additional action to ensure that renewed measures will help increase the proportion of EU citizens who participate in sport and who reach recommended physical activity levels, thereby reversing the trend of physical inactivity in the EU and in Member States.*