



Recommendations on  
**GOOD GOVERNANCE  
FOR GRASSROOTS SPORT**

PROJECT COORDINATOR:



PROJECT PARTNERS:



## **Title: Recommendations on Good Governance for Grassroots Sport**

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*These Recommendations on Good Governance for Grassroots Sport are prepared in the framework of the project "Promotion and Encouragement of Recreational Team Sport (AGON)" funded by the ERASMUS+ Programme.*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

These Recommendations on Good Governance for Grassroots Sport are prepared in the framework of the project “Promotion and EncourAGement of RecreatiONal Team Sport (AGON)” funded by the ERASMUS+ Programme<sup>1</sup>. To counteract the rising levels of obesity and public health deterioration due to physical inactivity, the project is aimed at encouraging a more active lifestyle by promoting grassroots sport. It involves a total of 15 leading sports organisations from Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland<sup>2</sup>.

The **aim** of these recommendations is to propose measures that would help improve the systemic conditions required for the promotion of active lifestyle and improving public health among kids and adults by their involvement in grassroots sport activities. The recommendations are **addressed** to the state and municipal institutions, sports organisations and businesses supporting and organising sports activities **at national**, i.e., the Member State **level**.

These recommendations use the official **definition of grassroots sport** as defined in the European study on funding of grassroots sport in the EU<sup>3</sup>:

*Grassroots sport covers all sport disciplines practiced by non-professionals and organised on a national level through national sport. The definition thus excludes individuals who spend the bulk of their time practicing sport, or who take the bulk of their revenue from the practice of sport.*

The recommendations are furthermore based on the **definition of good governance in sport** as adopted by the European Commission’s Expert Group “Good Governance” established in the framework of implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014<sup>4</sup>:

*The framework and culture within which a sports body sets policy, delivers its strategic objectives, engages with stakeholders, monitors performance, evaluates and manages risk and reports to its constituents on its activities and progress including the delivery of effective, sustainable and proportionate sports policy and regulation.*

The good governance in the context of these recommendations is seen from the perspective of the grassroots sport sector as a whole, identifying it as a set of collective efforts to ensure adequate legal framework, infrastructure and support, cooperation among the involved actors and activities to promote grassroots sport.

These recommendations are organised into three action areas:

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<sup>1</sup> Project No. 561095-EPP-1-2015-1-LV-SPO-SCP

<sup>2</sup> Czech Handball Federation, Estonian Floorball Union, Estonian Handball Association, Estonian Foundation of Sport Education and Information, Latvian Sports Federations Council, Latvian Handball Federation, Latvian Floorball Union, Latvian School Sport Federation, Lithuanian Handball Federation, Lithuanian Floorball Federation, Lithuanian Union of Sports Federations, Polish Floorball Federation, Polish Olympic Committee, Polish Handball Federation, International Floorball Federation

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, 2011

<sup>4</sup> Expert Group “Good Governance”, Deliverable 2: Principles of good governance in sport, September 2013

- 1. Cooperation** – among the public, non-governmental and private sectors with an aim of promoting public involvement in grassroots sporting activities, be it through ensuring required regulatory framework, common activities, etc.
- 2. Infrastructure and resources** – access to sports halls and outdoor infrastructure, funding for grassroots sport organisations and activities.
- 3. Promotion of grassroots sport and involvement of people** – making active lifestyle popular through media campaigns and marketing, attraction of trainers and participants, involvement of different generations in sporting activities.

The recommendations have been developed from December 2015 to May 2016 through stakeholder consultations involving the AGON project partners and the actors representing the public sector, sports federations and private entities involved in the organisation of grassroots sport activities, namely, representatives of the Department of Sport of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, Latvian Sports Federations Council, Latvian Sport for All Association and organiser of the Riga marathon. In addition, partners of the AGON project have contributed with examples of existing good practices supporting the recommendations in the three action areas. The process of development of these recommendations was moderated and this document has been prepared by Latvian Sports Federations Council in cooperation with the Latvia-based consultancy company i-DEA Consult.

## 2. BACKGROUND

According to the Eurobarometer Survey on Sport and Physical Activity carried out in 2013, 41% of Europeans exercise or play sport at least once a week, however, an important proportion of EU citizens – 59% – never or seldom do so. And while overall, the figures have not changed significantly since 2009, the proportion that never exercises or plays sport has increased from 39% to 43%. The report also highlights large disparities in the level of physical activity in Europe between the countries labelled as the Northern, where 54%-70% of people play sports at least once per week, and the Southern countries, which are least likely to engage in regular sports activities – 60%-78% of population there never do sports.

The stagnating levels of physical activity in Europe have an adverse effect on people's health and lead to negative economic costs such as increased health care costs, decreased employability and productivity.

According to the World Health Organisation<sup>5</sup> (WHO), physical inactivity has been identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (6% of deaths globally), followed by high blood pressure (13%), tobacco use (9%) and high blood glucose (6%); overweight and obesity are responsible for 5% of global mortality.

To counteract this global trend of physical inactivity and spread of non-communicable diseases, the WHO has developed global physical activity guidelines for the different age groups. WHO explains: "participation in regular physical activity reduces the risk of coronary heart disease and

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<sup>5</sup> Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health, World Health Organisation (2010)

stroke, diabetes, hypertension, colon cancer, breast cancer and depression. Additionally, physical activity is a key determinant of energy expenditure, and thus is fundamental to energy balance and weight control". WHO recommends a daily activity of at least one hour for kids and 30 minutes for adults and seniors.

WHO also points out the crucial role of its member states and urges the development of national guidelines, which are limited, and mainstream the physical activity concept in other policy areas such as transport, education and other.

In the opening speech of the "Sport and Physical Activity for Development of the Human Capital" (16/02/2015) conference in the framework of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2015, the Latvian minister of Education and Science illustrated how sport for all is a cross-cutting issue concerning various policy areas: "According to UN estimates, the number of people living in cities will double in the next 30 years. For urban inhabitants, the main environment for physical activities will be the city, its parks, bike paths, and freely available sports grounds. Therefore, the main challenge for town planning today is the development of not only an active, but also a green city. A city that is open to all social groups, especially young people."

The agenda of sports is also advanced by the European Union. In 2007, the European Commission developed a Commission Working Document, the White Paper on Sports, which highlights the societal and economic importance of sport and puts forward a number of proposals for the EC's and the Member State actions.

The role of grassroots sport is especially highlighted in the context of public health promotion. It is indicated that the people who regularly practice sport, do so within or outside more than 700 000 sports clubs and that the vast majority of physical activities takes place in amateur structures.

As a follow-up to the White Paper, EU Physical Activity Guidelines were published in the Autumn 2008 making specific recommendations on what policy actions could be taken by the Member States in support of health-enhancing physical activity in the fields of sport, health, education, transport, environment, urban planning and public safety, working environment and services for senior citizens.

An important pre-condition for achieving a stronger grassroots sport sector that would also lead to higher participation rates are sound principles of **governance** and management applied in the sector. What constitutes good governance in sport has been a topic of discussion for many institutions and initiatives, among them the Expert Group on Good Governance established by the European Commission whose work in 2011-2014 resulted in defining **ten principles**<sup>6</sup> representing a set of standards and operational practices leading to the effective regulation of sport:

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<sup>6</sup> Expert Group "Good Governance", Deliverable 2: Principles of good governance in sport, September 2013.

1. **clarity of purpose/objectives** – absolute clarity on the role, function, responsibilities, as well as short and long-term objectives of sports bodies being a critical first step to good governance;
2. **code of ethics** – a range of ethical practices, the conduct and culture of the organisation as a whole by instilling values of integrity, equity and transparency;
3. **stakeholder identification and roles** – each sports body having different stakeholders reflecting its particular range of participants and interested parties such as players/athletes, managers, owners, coaches, leagues, clubs, supporters, agents, match officials, as well as commercial partners and equipment manufacturers. Sports bodies should establish minimum representation and democratic standards that stakeholders should meet in order to participate in consultation and/or decision making;
4. **democracy and minimum standards** – sports bodies should establish a clear organisational framework for membership and decision making via appropriately representative, inclusive and competently populated bodies fit for purpose, democratic procedures and acting in pursuance of the objectives, strategic plan and vision of the sports body concerned;
5. **delegation and committees** – clarity of responsibilities for the different organs that make decisions within a sports body being critical to promoting the efficiency of policy development and effective governance;
6. **management** – the successful implementation and acceptance of good governance in a sporting body being influenced by whether and how well the board and the management embrace good governance. The board and management should seek to promote a culture of good governance throughout the entire organisation;
7. **judicial/disciplinary procedures** – sports bodies should put in place a suitable judicial/disciplinary framework that meets their particular needs (and any requirements of its international sporting family);
8. **inclusivity and youth engagement** – sports bodies should be inclusive and represent the diverse nature of society and their sports whether by reference to gender, race, sexuality, disability, age or otherwise. The long term viability of sport and sports bodies depends on future generations of participants being attracted to sport as competitors, match officials, volunteers and administrators. In developing sports policy and promotional initiatives it is good practice for sports bodies to engage and consult with representative youth groups as a form of future proofing for the sport to minimise generational disconnects;
9. **statutes, rules and regulations** – the statutes, rules and regulations of sports bodies should be available as public documents, be clearly drafted and identify the process for amendment. To promote transparency and accountability the web sites of sports bodies is an ideal place to set out statutes, rules, regulations, vision, strategic plan and other policy positions;
10. **accountability and transparency** – sports bodies should establish clear levels of oversight and accountability for their various decision making bodies to ensure that powers are exercised appropriately and consistently with the objectives and functions of the relevant body. Key performance indicators and evaluation procedures



commensurate with the size of the sports body should be set at all levels of the organisation to promote efficiency and good management.

These recommendations address six out of the ten above-mentioned principles, namely, (1) clarity of purpose/objectives, (2) stakeholder identification and roles, (3) management, (4) democracy and minimum standards, (5) inclusivity and youth engagement, and (6) accountability and transparency.

### 3. ACTION AREAS

#### 3.1. ACTION AREA 1: COOPERATION

Good governance in the grassroots sport involves mutual cooperation of **five groups of stakeholders**:

- 1. State institutions** such as ministries or other governmental institutions being the main policy makers and supporters of the development of sports activities in the particular territory through (1) provision of the necessary legal basis and favourable tax policy that stimulates development and implementation of the grassroots sport activities, and (2) financial support to the grassroots sport activities.
- 2. Municipalities** and municipal institutions being the main supporters for organisation of the sports activities in their territory through (1) provision of the access to the publicly-owned sports infrastructure for the organisers of the grassroots sports activities and (2) logistical support to organising grassroots sport activities, especially, larger scale events in the cities.
- 3. Non-governmental organisations** – often in the form of associations, federations or clubs representing specific field of sports – being the main engine behind promoting and organising the grassroots sports activities.
- 4. Private sector actors** – sports clubs or fitness centres – are often active organisers of the grassroots sports activities that operate mainly on the commercial grounds.
- 5. Volunteers and informal groups** of sports enthusiasts being active supporters of the grassroots sport activities and organisers of the sports activities in local, especially rural communities.

#### EXAMPLE 1: Poland

##### PilkaNaHali.pl – Play your favourite team sport

PilkaNaHali.pl is a 4-year project run by a private company with the aim to eliminate problems associated with the lack of infrastructure and partners to practice team sports. The company organises sport events enabling people to play team sports such as football, volleyball, basketball, handball and badminton. It hires several dozens of sports facilities throughout the city of Warsaw and provides training for people allowing for them to practice their favourite discipline.

The main target group are people who are active in sport whereas cannot be involved in it due to lack of a sports hall, partners or simply time to organise a game and motivate fellows. Age and professional status of the players does not matter and include from 20-year old students to 50-year old businessmen.



The company cooperates with a number of partners in provision of joint actions with the aim to increase the attractiveness of the provided service and for joint marketing activities to reach the widest possible audience of potential customers. The cooperation partners include private sector actors such as Brand 24 and Senfino – companies being active in the IT industry, and the non-governmental organisations such as Warsaw Foundation of Volleyball Academy and Polish Handball Federation.

The company organises an average of 200 games for amateurs per month and involves around 4 500 players with an average age of 30.

*More information: <http://pilkannahali.pl>*

Ideally, for the grassroots sports to be promoted and implemented successfully and following the principles of good governance, the above mentioned five groups of players should actively cooperate and support each other. For example, the grassroots sport is promoted through sports clubs be it run by private sector or a non-governmental organisation, a municipality offers the infrastructure to its habitants, e.g., a swimming pool or a tennis court to be used at a discounted price thus supporting development of the grassroots sport in their geographical area, and national or regional authorities provide public financial support to overall or specific grassroots activities be it in the form of grants or tax reductions. In addition, the local sports infrastructure could be developed through public-private partnership, e.g., a municipality provides its land to a sports club investing in development of the sport infrastructure, for example, building a tennis court that is made available to the local inhabitants along with the members of the sport club. Municipalities could also support larger scale grassroots sport activities in their territory by provision of logistical support such as security and traffic management during such events as a marathon in the city.

In the real life, however, the mechanism of cooperation for promoting and supporting the grassroots sport does not function genuinely and demonstrates certain shortcomings or **gaps**.

Firstly, the **players** itself **are fragmented** thus making it difficult to integrate in a wider cooperation mechanism. This especially concerns the informal groups and non-governmental organisations. While the informal groups often does not have any legal status and thus are difficult to access, they can be active drivers behind local grassroots sport activities, such as a local informal football team that gathers every weekend to play a football match. The non-governmental organisations, on one hand, represent a certain group of people in the specific field of sports, whereas on the other – often act towards their specific goal and are not always willing to integrate into a wider network of the representation organisations of the same kind of sports or a federation gathering a wider range of sports organisations.

Secondly, the insufficient public financial support through strategic grants to the grassroots sport had encouraged the providers of the grassroots sport activities to become self-sufficient and financially stable by themselves. As a result, these organisations – be it private or non-governmental – are able to operate on their own and thus are **not very motivated to integrate** and operate **into** a wider **cooperation network** for governance of the grassroots sport. Also, over the recent years many private organisers of the grassroots sport have activated and thus in a way have been “competing” with the sports federations that mainly operate as non-governmental or non-profit organisations.

Thirdly, there is a **lack of grant schemes targeted at a specific purpose**, for example, at a specific target group, e.g., children, or at certain types of activities, e.g., outdoor sports, that are funded from public – European, national or regional funds – and that are accessible by organisers of grassroots sport activities through proposing a competitive project. The public financing supporting the grassroots sports as such does not provide concrete and sustainable results evoking a positive systemic change. It is also challenging to make the informal groups and volunteers of organising grassroots sport activities eligible for financial grants.

### EXAMPLE 2: Czech Republic “One more hour of physical training”

This is a pilot project initiated and coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic, and implemented in close cooperation with six sports federations (football, ice-hockey and skating, basketball, handball, volleyball and rugby) and schools across the country.

Its aim is to encourage physical activity and interest in sport of school children by offering the option of an extra hour of sport in the framework of the after-school clubs organised in schools where children do homework and play before they go home. The project is both focused on training the teachers in a common methodology on the basis of all sports thus avoiding early sport specialisation, as well as practical organisation of sport hours in cooperation with the local sports federations. The cooperation between schools and the sport federations at the local level should also help sport clubs to attract new members in the future.

The academic year 2015/2016 is the first year of operation for this project and has so far attracted the interest of 150 schools. Evaluation is planned for June 2016.

More information: [www.msmt.cz](http://www.msmt.cz),  
<http://www.msmt.cz/sport/realizace-pokusneho-overovani-ucinnosti-programu-hodina?lang=1>

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order to strengthen the **cooperation among all stakeholders** it is recommended to:

1. develop effective coordination mechanisms and working relationships among the state institutions, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, private sector actors, volunteers and informal groups of sport enthusiasts recognising their respective competencies for promoting and organising grassroots sport activities in transparent and democratic manner;
2. integrate into wider European/international movement through increase of cross border activities and compliance with the international federations' regulations;
3. exchange of good practices, transfer of knowledge and networking of stakeholders active at national and international level;
4. build the mutual trust among the involved players as an opposite to introduction of control mechanisms such as, for example, heavy public procurement procedures for organising grassroots sport events;
5. cooperate with all stakeholders on an equal basis, i.e., the legal status of an organiser of the grassroots sport activities be it non-governmental, commercial or informal should not prevail in supporting its initiatives.

For **state institutions** it is recommended to:

1. ensure a positive impulse to the development and governance of the grassroots sport through legislation on the national level and by establishing a cooperation platform for all key stakeholders to discuss issues relevant for the grassroots sports and to identify challenges or concrete actions to be done;
2. stimulate organisation of the grassroots sport activities and active involvement of people through favourable tax policy;
3. promote and encourage policies and practices aimed at introducing, implementing and ensuring representation of all groups of society and gender mainstreaming in all fields and at all levels of sport;
4. seek to form partnerships, engage in dialogue and cooperate with governments, European institutions and other state agencies in a range of areas by linking public funding to minimum standards of good governance, particularly in relation to financial subsidies and the deployment of public money by sports bodies;
5. establish financial grant schemes targeted at reaching a specific purpose, target group or specific sports activities. For example, a grant programme targeted at more active involvement of children and senior citizens in the grassroots sport activities – be it at a more general or specific level, e.g., cycling, running, Nordic walking, etc.

For **municipalities** it is recommended to:

1. provide the first support and act as a “one-stop agency” to **volunteers and informal groups** developing and organising grassroots sports activities in their territory through provision of the necessary infrastructure, financial and logistical support;
2. support and activate **informal groups** of sports enthusiasts that can be active drivers behind local grassroots sport activities, such as, for example, gathering regularly for playing a beach volleyball match or organising a small informal beach volleyball tournament over a weekend;
3. promote the work of **volunteers** and their involvement in organising grassroots sport activities.

For **non-governmental organisations** representing a specific field of sports it is recommended to:

1. integrate into a wider network of the representation organisation of the same kind of sports or a federation gathering a wider range of sports organisations;
2. involve volunteers in organising and supporting grassroots sport activities.

For **private sector actors** it is recommended to:

1. consider social entrepreneurship as an alternative form of operation for organising grassroots sports activities not to convert the grassroots sport into a business sector;
2. involve **volunteers** in organising and supporting grassroots sport activities.

## 3.2. ACTION AREA 2: INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

Successful implementation of the grassroots sport activities requires **three groups of resources**:

1. financial resources for funding promotion and implementation of the grassroots sport activities;
2. infrastructure for implementation of the sport activities;
3. human resources for organising and managing the implementation of the grassroots sport activities.

### Financial resources

On the financial side, the activities of the grassroots sport are mainly financed through:

1. **public** financial resources such as state or municipal budgets through provision of grants and subsidies;
2. **budgets** of sports clubs or sports non-governmental organisations through membership fees;
3. **private** funds in the form of sponsorship as part of a marketing policy of a particular company, e.g., the producers of sport products or equipment, or small commerce for organising a small-scale sports event.

While the public funds and **budgets** of the organisers are always **insufficient** to satisfy all needs for development and implementation of the grassroots sport activities, the main **dispute concerns the aspects of** private funding and sometimes its **ethics**. For example, is it ethical if sports activities are sponsored by sectors that create an antidote for a physical activity such as smoking, use of alcoholic drinks or other addictions, e.g., gambling?

### EXAMPLE 3: Estonia “Estonia is Moving”

The “Estonia is Moving” programme is a nationwide campaign running since 2007 with an annual budget of 80 000 EUR. It aims at increasing the number of Estonians who are physically active, informing the population of the options of participating in sport and physical activity, and raising awareness about the benefits of a physically active lifestyle. The programme operates in a number of initiatives in pursuit of these goals including staging of mass participation events, activation of sporting programmes within schools, organising of seminars and lectures on health-related topics, etc.

The programme is organised by the Estonian Olympic Committee and the Estonian Sport for All Association in cooperation with the Estonian Ministry of Culture, Olympic Solidarity, commercial sponsors, event organisers, local media, local health and cultural institutions.

The programme has achieved an awareness of 70% across the entire population of Estonia (over 700 000 people) and resulted that approximately 250 000 Estonians participate in mass sport events every year. Since the beginning of the programme, the number of people who are physically active on a regular basis has increased by 7%.

More information: [www.liigume.ee](http://www.liigume.ee)

## Infrastructure

As regards the sports infrastructure, it is being developed either by public means - be it from the EU funds, national, regional or local budgets, private investors or through public-private partnerships. The availability of specific kind of infrastructure also plays the key role on what kinds of sports are being developed in the specific geographical area. Therefore, it can become an instrument for planning in favour of developing certain kinds of grassroots sports activities. At the same time, there are many grassroots sport activities that does not require a particular infrastructure and can be done almost anywhere, such as jogging, Nordic walking or making simple gymnastic exercises – to mention a few.

The main challenges linked with the sports infrastructure does not only concern proper planning at both – national and municipal level – on what kind of sports infrastructure should be developed in the particular geographical area or finding the financial sources to cover the building costs, but more importantly – on how to exploit and maintain the developed infrastructure in a sustainable manner. This mainly raises a question on what kind of sports activities need to be introduced in these buildings that could contribute to covering their maintenance costs.

Another aspect is that the load of sports infrastructure is oftentimes unbalanced and measures need to be taken on how to fill them in during the time periods that fall outside the commercial hours. This especially concerns the sports infrastructure in the rural areas, whereas cities often face the opposite problem where the sports infrastructure is overbooked and is not being able to satisfy all the demand.

### EXAMPLE 4: Lithuania “Let’s grow Ronaldo for Lithuania”

This is a project implemented by the **Lithuanian Football Federation** in cooperation with the Lithuanian Handball Federation and UEFA with an aim of providing the necessary conditions for children to play football. The project is launched in response to an opinion poll showing that people love football but often lack the necessary infrastructure or equipment to learn and play.

The project provides an opportunity for organisations such as schools, kindergartens and educational centres to apply for the equipment or infrastructure that they are lacking. The objective is to install and equip 10 big pitches, 100 small pitches, 1,000 goals and 10,000 balls so that 1,000,000 kids can play football.

More information: [www.ronaldo.lt](http://www.ronaldo.lt)

## Human resources

The accessible infrastructure does not necessarily guarantee development of the grassroots sport activities in the surrounding territory. It also requires appropriate human resources, especially, professional coaches or sports enthusiasts that could gather and train individuals or groups of people and introduce them to the active lifestyle. For example, even though the infrastructure is accessible free of charge, people do not use it for sports activities. Changes can only be initiated by involvement of a coach or simply by a local sports enthusiast. Therefore, availability of appropriate human resources for initiating, organising and implementing the grassroots sports activities is essential.

The involvement of persons can either be on a salary or on a voluntary basis – both requiring appropriate resources – be it financial and/or other support mechanisms such as a database of volunteers. These, however, also have certain shortcomings, i.e., funds for financing coaches in grassroots sports are oftentimes scarce, budgets for organising larger-scale grassroots sports events do not foresee fees for organisers, and potential volunteers sometimes face obstacles for servicing, for example, students lack funds to cover transportation costs to the venue of the sports event. Involvement of volunteers and volunteering work as such in some countries is stipulated by law or legal acts. Also, in 2016 the European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO) has issued new legislative documents that define a voluntary work in the field of sports.

#### **EXAMPLE 5: Czech Republic** **Promotion of handball from young age**

This is a project implemented by the Czech Handball Federation with an aim of involving more people in the practice of handball. The project involves 155 schools linking them together with 176 local handball clubs in all 13 regions of the country. This provides the handball clubs with both – the facilities for practicing handball as well as the possibility to train the teachers and instructors at the schools in teaching handball.

The project is implemented through regional centres which organise the following activities:

- training sessions for new players and recruitment events;
- sample training lessons for school teachers and further education events for trainers;
- school leagues, handball mini-camps and tournaments.

More information: [www.chf.cz](http://www.chf.cz), [www.schoolnet.chf.cz](http://www.schoolnet.chf.cz)

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In terms of **financial resources** it is recommended that:

1. attraction of resources for development of grassroots sports activities is stimulated by development of favourable national legislation and policies aiming at activating grassroots sports in the country;
2. grassroots sports activities are financed from certain business sectors such as production and selling of alcohol or tobacco or from short-term speed credits that are gathered through taxes and then channelled to financing the grassroots sport activities in the form of grants or subsidies;
3. organisations involved in grassroots sport activities are granted discounted tax policy, for example, applying a minimised or no Value Added Tax to events of grassroots sport, similarly as in some countries it is for culture activities;
4. special grant schemes or programmes financed from the EU funds, national (state) or regional (municipal) budgets are established for funding grassroots sport activities through calls for project proposals.



As regards **infrastructure** it is recommended to:

1. plan balanced development of the sports infrastructure throughout a country that is based on regional and urban planning policies and criteria taking into account the development trends of the society and local communities;
2. set out clear objectives, criteria and financial support mechanisms on national or regional level for development and maintenance of the sports infrastructure;
3. apply flexible price policy for using the sports infrastructure especially for priority target groups such as children and youngsters, and during the non-commercial hours.

In terms of **human resources** it is recommended to:

1. activate and stimulate involvement of informal groups of sport enthusiasts and volunteers through national or regional public funding mechanisms that are channelled through local and regional authorities or sports non-governmental organisations, e.g., associations or federations;
2. raise the prestige of a voluntary work by defining and recognising it in the legislative documents and by introducing a certification procedure to raise its profile;
3. develop an open and transparent mechanism for becoming a volunteer for the grassroots sports activities and keeping a database of volunteers interested to support sports activities.

### 3.3. ACTION AREA 3: PROMOTION & INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE

One of the main aims of the grassroots sport is to educate, motivate and activate people and involve various generations in grassroots sport activities. The usual impediments for being active and involving oneself in the sports activities include lack of time, lack of interest and motivation, disability or illness, cost or other. Overcoming this requires a multi-sectoral approach including proper **education and promotion work through** information and marketing activities mainly channelled by:

- **sports related organisations**, e.g., federations promoting a specific field of sports or representing a wider range of sports;
- **education institutions** such as kindergartens, schools and universities educating on the advantages of an active and healthy lifestyle;
- **media** promoting active and healthy lifestyle through grassroots sport.

#### EXAMPLE 6: Lithuania

##### Online sporting platform [www.judekim.lt](http://www.judekim.lt)

[www.judekim.lt](http://www.judekim.lt) ("Let's move!" in English) was created by the **Lithuanian Association "Sport for all"** to motivate people to engage in sports and enhance their physical activity. The platform shows how one can do sports anywhere without the need of any special and expensive equipment or a fitness trainer – just walk, climb stairs, ride a bicycle, do exercises at home or outside. Sport is fun! Anyone can do sport anywhere! And one can change one's life by changing personal attitude.

[www.judekim.lt](http://www.judekim.lt) includes the following components:



- Interactive Sport Studio live internet broadcasts with a well-known person or a professional fitness trainer showing a programme of fitness exercises (different for each broadcast). People could write a question to this professional about sports, exercises or healthy eating and get an answer live. The broadcasts could be watched live or afterwards.
- Videos inviting to join in and enhance one's own physical activity broadcasted also on the National TV channel and outdoor media in the city.
- Video competition for school students "My class exercises", i.e. a group of students takes a video on how they do exercises. It had to include more than five exercises done in a creative manner. The two winner classes won a weekend trip to the sport festival "Sport for All 2015", where they had to show their programme of exercises.
- PR campaign for parents publishing articles in parenting magazines and websites on how parents should motivate their kids for sports, at what age kids should try different sports and other related topics done in collaboration with professional sport trainers, psychology, medicine and parenting specialists.
- Social media, i.e., used a Facebook page for communicating on the issues related to healthy and active community.

These activities were carried out twice as 3-month long campaigns in March-May 2014 and 2015 funded by the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee and Physical Education and Sport Support Fund – a public grant scheme for sports activities in Lithuania.

More information: [www.judekim.lt](http://www.judekim.lt)

Promotion of the grassroots sport could be done through:

- **organising of various grassroots sports activities** on national, regional and/or local levels and at education institutions;
- **creating partnerships with media** including organising informative and educative campaigns – be it general, for example, on the national TV or tailor-made for a specific target group, for example, children, families or senior citizens using an appropriate media;
- **social media** that plays an increasing role in channelling the information on the sporty lifestyle thus fuelling the interest in more active participation in the various grassroots sport activities.

#### EXAMPLE 7: Latvia Latvian Health Week

Latvian Health Week, organised since 2012, is a part of the Europe-wide MOVE Week taking place each year in May. It is organised in the framework of the "NowWeMOVE" initiative, the largest European "Sport for All" campaign, whose vision is to engage more than 100 million Europeans in physical activity by 2020.

In Latvia, the event is organised by its national coordinator – the **Latvian Sport for All Association**. The event brings together organisers of various indoor and outdoor sporting events across Latvia under one common umbrella. The activities proposed in the framework of the Latvian Health Week are advertised through the event's website, on social media, TV and in printed press with an aim of involving as many participants as possible across the country. Participants – without prejudice to their age or fitness level – have access to different physical activities such as jogging, Nordic walking, hiking, cycling, jumping rope, abdominal exercises, climbing stairs, pull-ups, etc.

In 2015 the event involved more than 100 partner organisations such as local municipalities, schools, sports clubs and other making more than 32 000 people “move”.

More information: [www.sportsvisiem.lv](http://www.sportsvisiem.lv), [www.moveweek.eu](http://www.moveweek.eu)

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

For **promoting the grassroots sport** and **involving more people** in the physical activities it is recommended to:

1. raise the profile of the grassroots sport through media campaigns organised on the basis of developed action plans with concrete budgets by establishing long-term cooperation partnerships with the actors of media;
2. promote specific grassroots sport activities such as concrete fields of sports through information campaigns and free-of-charge activities targeted at general or specific audiences, organised by the respective sports federations in possible cooperation with the state and municipal actors;
3. ensure advertising of all grassroots sport events by choosing the appropriate media be it on local, regional, national or international level and involve TV, radio, outdoor media, printed press, the internet and/or social media;
4. liaise with the media for granting discounts on promoting grassroots sport events as opposed to the commercial advertising rates for, e.g., cosmetics, means of cleaning, shoes, etc.;
5. activate the use of social media for promoting grassroots sport and active lifestyle through organisation of various, e.g., video, photo, sport results competitions and involving local and national “celebrities”;
6. involve educational establishments in promoting physical activities and healthy lifestyle from early age and raising the prestige of sports at schools through organising competitions and creating a motivation system, e.g., a range of nominations for the ones with the best sport results;
7. create motivation system for becoming more active and organise events for specific target groups, for example, families with children, youngsters of certain age groups, seniors, etc.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Even though these Recommendations present the opinion of its authors and contributors that is based on their long-term experience in development of the grassroots sport activities in various capacities, it is a belief that its content and the presented ideas would contribute to improvement of the systemic conditions required for the promotion of active lifestyle and improving public health among kids and adults by their involvement in grassroots sport activities.

The recommendations set out the good governance principles from the perspective of the grassroots sport sector as a whole and identify a set of collective efforts to ensure adequate legal

framework, infrastructure and support, cooperation among the involved actors and activities to promote grassroots sport.

This especially concerns the three action areas addressed by these Recommendations:

- 1. Cooperation** – that is essential among the five key stakeholders – the state organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, private sector actors and volunteers and informal groups of sport enthusiasts that mutually contribute towards promoting and organising involvement of wider public in grassroots sporting activities, be it through ensuring favourable regulatory framework, logistical support or organising sport activities.
- 2. Infrastructure and resources** – the three intertwined resources – financial, infrastructural and human – are essential for making grassroots sports activities accessible to wider public.
- 3. Promotion of grassroots sport and involvement of people** – it is important to make active lifestyle popular through educational and media campaigns and marketing for activating and involving different generations in sporting activities.

These recommendations were presented and the practical aspects of their implementation were discussed at the symposium organised on 17 May 2016 in Liepaja, Latvia in the framework of the project “Promotion and EncourAGement of RecreatiONal Team Sport (AGON)” funded by the Erasmus+ Programme. The final version of the document will be distributed among the leading sports organisations in the EU Member States. To ensure the distribution of these recommendations in the Member States even further, as well as to contribute to better coordination of various activities for good governance in the grassroots sport, this document will be also submitted to the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture.