

MONTHLY REPORT

OCTOBER 2021



EUROPEAN
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEES



EU
Office



INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

New elected BOIC President: Jean-Michel Saive

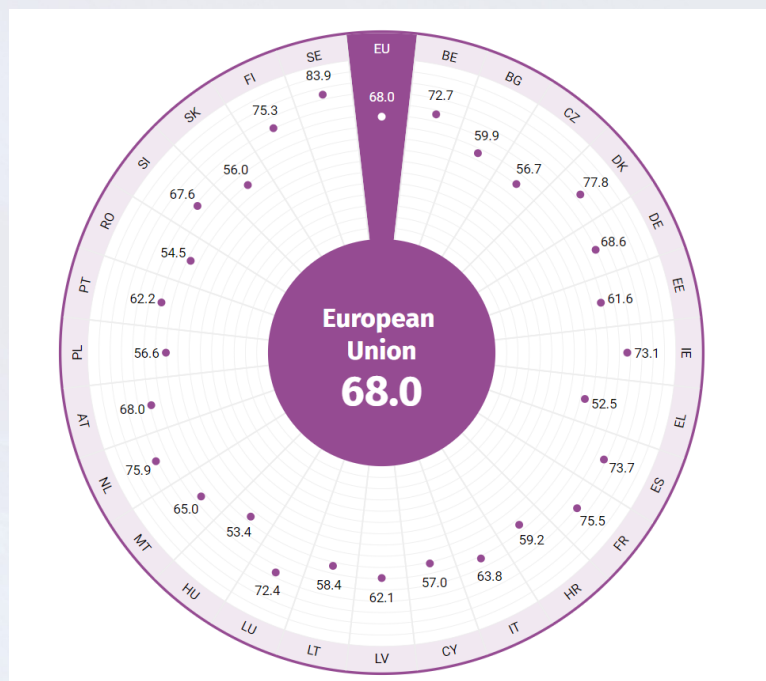


"The value of sport for society cannot be underestimated. Just think of all the positive aspects that sport at recreational level can bring: health lifestyle, inclusion, learning new skills, integration, friendship, respect, just to name a few."

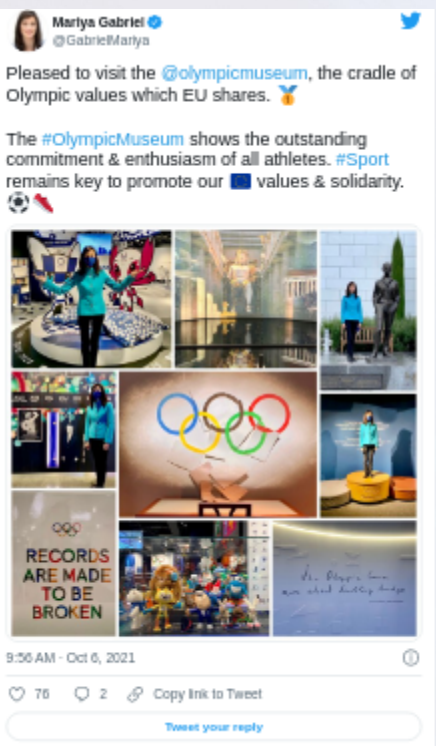
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Gender Equality Index



Source: Gender Equality Index 2021 - European Institute for Gender Equality



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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference is currently taking place in Glasgow. Even if the results have not yet been determined at this point, it can in any case be stated that the reduction of global warming to 1.5 degrees can only be achieved if every individual and every area of society contributes to the reduction. This also applies to sport worldwide, which is as well part of the problem, especially through the large number of events and competitions it organises to increase CO2 emissions. Encouragingly, more than 270 sports organisations have already signed up to the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework since its inception in 2018. The IOC's announcement to reduce its emissions by 50% by 2030 and 30% by 2024 is also a step in the right direction and should be taken up by other sports federations.

The EOC EU Office, together with the IOC, has launched a series of webinars with the aim of providing practical information on how sports federations can determine their own carbon footprint and reduce it if necessary. In this context, sports federations should also actively accompany the implementation of the Green Deal by the European Commission, as it offers both challenges (future legislative measures) but also opportunities (funding possibilities) for sport.

The Slovenian Presidency is slowly entering its final phase and the Council of Sports Ministers on 30 November will show whether the Presidency's original goal of adopting a powerful resolution in favour of the European Model of Sport can be implemented.

The recent discussions on the idea of a European Super League in football have shown that economic profit-making should not be the overriding motive for reform ideas. The current distribution of funds in the Champions League already has a significant impact on the level playing field in national leagues and would be further strengthened by the introduction of the ESL.

The European Parliament will also adopt its report on the future of sport in Europe in November. It was certainly not a disadvantage that Tomasz Frankowski, a former professional sportsman, acted as rapporteur. The comprehensive report contains many positive suggestions and fits well into the series of previous EP reports by Fisas (2012) and Takkula (2017). In particular, the calls for greater consideration of sport in future and existing funding programmes, the clear commitment to the European Model of Sport, the highlighting of the topic of dual careers, the special role of sports clubs and the strengthening of voluntary work are worthy to mention. Especially the latter topics are not on the agenda every day and will require special support in the future.

Stay healthy and all the best!



Folker Hellmund
Director EOC EU Office



INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH



Jean-Michel Saive is a former professional Belgian table tennis player. He competed at seven consecutive Olympics between 1988 and 2012 and he was also a winner in singles at European Championship in 1994. He has been a member of BOIC's board since 2009 and between 2013 and 2017 he was Chair of the Athletes Commission before becoming one of the BOIC's vice-presidents.

1. First of all, congratulations for your recent election as BOIC President! You have been Vice-President of BOIC already before, you had an incredible successful sports career and were member of different athletes' commissions on international, European or national level. Do you feel well prepared for the new position and what is on your agenda?

Let me start by saying that it is an honour for me to have been elected President of the BOIC by the Belgian sports federations. I hope to be able to gain from my sporting career in table tennis as well as my experience in sports administrations. During and after my sporting career, it was my personal mission to strengthen the athletes' voice in the various commitments and voluntary positions that I got elected to in athletes' commissions, boards of sports organisations or in leadership positions within these organisations. It is extremely important that athletes get the opportunity to take up key positions in sport to enable them to share their experience and knowledge to the benefit of athletes. In this regard, it is also worth to note that I am not the only athlete in a key position at the NOC. Dominique Monami, bronze medallist of the Sydney 2000 Games in tennis (women's doubles), has just been appointed Vice-President of the BOIC.

Personally, I feel well-prepared having been able to learn from these different positions and from working with inspiring persons such as Pierre-Olivier Beckers. In my positions at the BOIC as well as in the months before the elections, I took the time to talk to federations, clubs, officials and athletes. My aim is to continue this, with the BOIC as an Olympic Committee at the service of athletes and federations and close to athletes and federations. In terms of my agenda, my first goal is now to meet and listen to the various stakeholders in Belgium. Based on these exchanges, I intend to set ambitious goals for the BOIC for the upcoming years. I look forward to the challenges that are ahead of us, together with the partners of the NOC.

2. The Belgian team performed very well at Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. What are the main reasons for this success?

It is important to stress that sport in Belgium is a competence of the communities (Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking). In this regard, a close cooperation between these communities and their administrations is crucial to get sporting success at international level. The BOIC is the Olympic partner in this elite sports policy in Belgium.

It is true that Team Belgium performed well and that we achieved many of the objectives that were set. The focus in Belgium, in coordination with the communities, is on significantly increasing the number of Top-8 performances. The fact that we managed to increase the number of Top-8 results from 19 in Rio 2016 to 26 in Tokyo 2020 shows the progress, which is the result of the investments made by these

elite sport partners. And of course, with 7 medals, including 3 gold in important Olympic sports such as athletics and gymnastics and in a

team sport with field hockey, Tokyo 2020 was a success for Belgium.

3. In which direction the Belgian sport system can still become better?

We have to be ambitious in terms of the results that we want to achieve, but we have to further define these ambitions for the upcoming years together with the elite sports partners in Belgium. One element which is very important to note is the inspiring role of elite athletes towards grassroots sports and the general population. In this regard, we do hope that the sporting results of recent years will

significantly increase sports participation in Belgium at all levels. This in turn can lead to sporting success at elite sports level. The interconnectivity between grassroots and elite sports is therefore very important. The University of Brussels (VUB) is currently conducting a study on the societal relevance of elite sports. We look forward to these results.

4. At EU level there is a discussion about the meaning of the European Sport Model, that is characterised by elements such as solidarity mechanisms, promotion and relegation, open competitions, club system or volunteering. Do you think this model and the contribution of sport to our societies is sufficiently recognised?

As I explained before, grassroots and elite sports are two sides of the same coin. A pure commercial approach to sport endangers this connection, which is detrimental for smaller sports, for youth sports and for the development of sport in the long run. The value of sport for society cannot be underestimated. Just think of all the positive aspects that sport at recreational level can bring: health lifestyle, inclusion, learning new skills, integration, friendship, respect, just to name a few.

Sports clubs with its voluntary structures are an integral part of our society. The added value that they bring cannot be underestimated. This deserves clearer recognition. The recognition of volunteers is a good example. Just think of the referees or stewards that devote their spare time to make sure that matches can be played or competitions can take place. Initiatives such as a Day or Week of the Official are an example of how we can value these volunteers.

5. Hosting major sport events becomes for smaller countries more and more difficult. What kind of events you would like to see in the upcoming years in Belgium or could organised together with another country?

It is my opinion that these sports events should also give something back to society, especially when public investments are made. The World Championships Cycling that were held in the Flemish region this year is a good example with many supporters alongside the road throughout the different competitions. I'm confident that such an event provides a great return for society: in economic terms, in fan experience, but also in sports participation through projects and actions that bring people in touch with a

sport or sport club. Belgium will host some other important sports competitions in the near future. One example is the World Championships 3x3 Basketball which will be hosted by the city of Antwerp in 2022. Also here, the promotion of a new dynamic sport can create a positive dynamic that goes far beyond the sports competition itself. Hosting sport events is also a great way to enable your athletes to perform at the highest level close to home and in front of the home fans. The World

Championships Gymnastics in 2023 in Antwerp is one of these opportunities that is coming up.

I hope Belgium can host some more of these events with a clear vision and a tangible return to society.

7. BOIC has been an active player in several European projects such as B-WISER, SIGGS, POINTS, RINGS. To which extent will BOIC continue to be actively engaged on EU funding in your agenda and priorities?

When good practices exist across our borders and when these practices can be shared and can create an added value for the BOIC of Belgian sports organisations, it is important that we benefit from these opportunities. The projects that you referred to helped the NOC and its partners in important subjects such as dual careers, good governance and integrity.

With the RINGS Project, we hope to further professionalise certain elements of the activities of the NOC. With the success of the Erasmus+ Sport programme, I do hope that many sports organisations in Belgium find their way towards these European cooperation projects.

The EOC EU Office is thanking Jean-Michel Saive for his interview and contribution to the monthly report.



EU SPORT POLICY AND FUNDING NEWS

The Committee on Culture and Education approves the EP report on EU sports policy

On 26 October, the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) of the European Parliament adopted its initiative report on “EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward”.

The European Parliament adopts a sports-related report each parliamentary term, outlining the institution’s position on the topic and its recommendations to the European Commission, Member States and sport organisations.

With this report, the CULT Committee intends to provide a comprehensive assessment of desirable evolutions for EU sports policy, with provisions on a wide-range of topics related to sports (gender equality, anti-discrimination, sustainability, human rights, safeguarding, athletes’ rights and representation, etc.).

The approved report acknowledges the importance of a European Sport Model based on values such as solidarity, sustainability, inclusiveness, open competition and fairness, and opposes profit-based models and breakaway competitions.

Increased support to sport organisations, especially grassroots sports actors, is asked by MEPs, through increased funding of sports-related projects. MEPs are asking to strengthen the links between elite sport and grassroots sports, considered key to ensure the functioning of a model offering everyone the possibility to engage in sport.

Among other provisions, the report also asks for measures to safeguard children from abuse and harassment in sports, ensure better participation and representation of women in sports, promote an active lifestyle for all citizens and raise awareness on LGBTQI+. The EOC EU Office is also pleased to see that MEPs recognise the efforts made by sport organisations to ensure good governance principles.

The EOC EU Office has monitored discussions closely and is pleased to witness that the report is taking a shape which is certainly in line with most of its priorities.

The report is a legally non-binding document but provides a number of positive elements that should be taken up commonly by sport organisations and European institutions.

Following stakeholder consultations and discussions within the CULT Committee over the summer, this vote was the last step before the final adoption by the plenary session of the European Parliament, which could take place in November or December.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[European Parliament press release](#)

[Draft report \(July 2021\)](#)

[Amendments to the draft report \(September 2021\)](#)

Council of Europe adopts revised European Sports Charter

On 13 October 2021, the Committee of Ministers adopted a recommendation on the Revised European Sports Charter submitted by the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport ([EPAS](#)). The adoption of the revised Charter concludes a process that started in 2018 during 15th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for sport in Tbilisi.

The European Sports Charter is the Council of Europe's standard which lays down the basic principles for national sports policies. It aims at providing guidance to Member States on sport legislations or other policies and at developing a comprehensive framework for sport, but is not legally binding. The Charter was first adopted in 1992 and last revised in 2001. Thus, the new revision aimed at adapting the Charter to the current environment and challenges that sport faces.

During the consultation process the sports movement, including the EOC EU Office, presented its points of view and called for [further developing the European Sports Model](#).



Importantly, the Charter recognises the key features of the European Sport Model such as the principle of openness in sporting competitions (Art. 14), the solidarity mechanisms (Art. 4) and the autonomy of sport (preamble).

The importance of volunteering in sport is echoed in Art. 4 and 16. Moreover, the preamble states that "the current structure of competitive sport in Europe (...) which respects the regulatory role of international governing bodies, has delivered benefits in terms of coherent development of sport and international solidarity". A values-based approach to sport, another key feature of the European Sport Model, is highlighted throughout the Charter.

Another important and new aspect is that Art. 10 of the Charter considers access to sport to be a fundamental right. All human beings have an inalienable right of access to sport in a safe environment, states the Charter.

CoE Deputy Secretary General Bjørn Berge highlighted: "In the context of globalised and commercialised sport, it is more important than ever for European States to clarify the common features of a framework for European sport and to clarify the values to be upheld in sport. I particularly welcome the fact that the revised version underlines the principle of a right to sport to be enjoyed by all citizens".

The EOC EU Office welcomes the adoption of the revised European Sports Charter and hopes it will serve Member States as a good basis for further discussions with the organised sport in order to develop the values-based European Sport Model.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Press release CoE](#)

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2021\)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the Revised European Sports Charter](#)

[CoE: Webpage "Revision of the European Sports Charter"](#)

The European Year of Youth 2022

On October 14, the proposal of 2022 becoming the European Year of Youth, originally voiced in the State of the Union address 2021 by President von der Leyen, was formally adopted.

The aim of this year is to honour and support the European Youth. One of the main triggers for the initiative, according to von der Leyen, are the sacrifices that the European Youth have done during the Covid-19 for the sake of the wider population. So many young people have had to put their life on hold during the pandemic (studies, student jobs, sport activities) and thus, they deserve to be the focus of the upcoming year, as highlighted in the State of the Union address of the Commission's President in September.

It is further meant to encourage all young people to grow into active citizens and actors of positive change for the European Union. EU policies for young people shall promote opportunities and support their personal, social and professional developments. Therefore, the ALMA initiative (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve) is being created in order to help young people find their way to the job market by combining support for education, vocational training or employment in their home country or with a work placement in another EU country.

Lastly, building on the Conference on the Future of Europe, the youth shall draw inspiration from actions, visions and insights of their peers and fellow European citizens to make the common EU project stronger.

"Young people play a key role in shaping our Europe of tomorrow. Whether those are pensions, attractiveness of rural areas, digitization or climate change — solutions are only possible if they are being found together with young people" commented [Sabine Verheyen](#), Chairwoman of the European Parliament's Culture and Education committee.

The programme of activities is currently under construction and all interested parties are invited to submit feedback on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Commission until 15 December. A survey on the [Youth Portal](#) was launched in order to include young people in the organisation of the European Year of Youth 2022. The scope of activities will cover thematic areas such as equality and inclusion, sustainability, mental health and well-being and quality employment.

Sport can and should also play a role through granting the youth access to sporting opportunities after the Covid-19 pandemic, supporting a healthy lifestyle and promoting the benefits of sport that are well aligned with the thematic areas of the initiative e.g. equality, inclusion and well-being.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[European Commission Press Release](#)

[ALMA Initiative](#)

[Conference on the Future of Europe](#)

[European Year of Youth 2022 Feedback](#)

Young Europeans discuss the sustainable legacy of the Paris and Milano-Cortina Olympic Games in the European Parliament

On 8 October, representatives of the Olympic Movement, of Organising Committees for the Olympic Games, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and elite athletes gathered with young Europeans to discuss the footprint of Olympic Games on society and the environment. The event, took place during the European Youth Event (EYE) in the European Parliament in Strasbourg and was organised by the French National Olympic Committee (CNOSF) and moderated by Eva Rebmann, Policy Officer of the EOC EU Office.

In light of the preparation for two Olympic and Paralympic Games in Europe (Paris 2024, Milano-Cortina 2026), the event aimed at shedding light on how the Olympic spirit stands for friendship, fair play, solidarity and mutual understanding beyond the Games, promote sustainability and ensure health and well-being among European citizens.

Masomah Ali Zada, an Afghan national who participated in the Tokyo Olympic Games as part of the IOC Refugee Olympic Team, shared her experience as a female cyclist in her country, the role of sport in her life, and raised awareness on the need to support Afghan athletes, especially women. Renaud Clerc, French para-athlete, highlighted the need for major events such as the Olympic Games to bring sustainable change to society and leave a real impact for persons with disabilities.

Marie Destremau, in charge of Environmental Excellence at Paris 2024, and Iacopo Mazzetti, preparing the legacy of Milano-Cortina 2026, both explained how their Organising Committees intend to reduce the environmental impact of these Games as much as possible and make the social legacy of these major sports events positive and sustainable, including by mutualising efforts between both Organising Committees.

MEPs Marc Tarabella (S&D, Belgium) and Tomasz Frankowski (EPP, Poland), Co-Chairs of the Sports Intergroup, mentioned the European Parliament's current work on sports policy, including related to social inclusion, anti-discrimination and sustainability, and highlighted the role of sport to accompany societal changes.

This edition of the EYE represented the peak of the European Parliament's youth consultation process for the Conference on the Future of Europe. The ideas raised during the week will feed into recommendations for policymakers on the future of Europe.



FURTHER INFORMATION

[European Youth Event \(EYE\) 2021](#)

[Recording of the event](#)

9th Edition: European Week of Regions and Cities 2021

The European Week of Regions and Cities is an annual four-day event, which brings together relevant stakeholders including EU institutions, politicians, policy-makers, experts, civil society organisations and academics. This with the scope to discuss common challenges faced by European regions and cities, promote capacity building and knowledge exchange, as well as boost cooperation and networking. Aligned with its scope, the European Week of Regions and Cities had four core themes in 2021:

- Green Transition
- Cohesion
- Digital transition
- Citizens engagement

These themes have been presented and discussed through a series of talks, webinars, workshops, participatory labs, special sessions and side events, one of them being a Workshop: Healthy recovery through Active Development in our regions. As part of the cohesion's theme and in the context of the [SHARE initiative](#), it took place on 12 October 2021.

The workshop aimed at raising awareness on the major contribution that sport and physical activity can make to the second objective of the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027. It highlighted the role of sport and physical activity in contributing to address the socio-economic damages caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and promoting sustainable economic and social development across EU regions. Most remarkably, the workshop introduced the notion of Active Development, which combines sport into regional development strategies. Hence, in line with the Joint Action Plan between the European Committee of Regions and the European Commission, the workshop aimed to raise awareness on the relevance to transition towards a prevention healthcare system, as well as cleaner, greener and more sustainable lifestyles.

The workshop started with video testimonials from Tomasz Frankowski (Member of European Parliament) and Vasco Alves Cordeiro (First Vice-President at European Committee of the Regions). In merit, Tomasz Frankowski mentioned that the topicality of Active Development, as well as the efforts of the European Parliament in presenting a report (see separate article) with concrete inputs to support sport organisations also through EU funding instruments. EOC EU Office warmly welcomes these remarks, as it has been actively working for the full mainstreaming of sport into different funding programmes for several years. Likewise, the EOC EU Office welcomes the remarks of Vasco Alves Cordeiro on the EU's efforts in strengthening recognition on the value of sport across different policies. Both testimonies highlighted the relevance of the [SHARE Initiative](#).

The second part of the workshop included a series of presentations from different stakeholders:

- Karl-Erik Nilsson (First Vice-President, UEFA) who highlighted the relevance of Cohesion policy and EU funding to boost sport investment, particularly to finance grassroots organisations and related development of infrastructure across Europe.
- Anne-Jochum de Vries (CEO, SportFryslân) showcased Sport Fryslân as a key example of successful cooperation between province of Fryslân, Frisian municipalities, clubs and associations, commercial and social partners, health institutions and volunteers in the field of sport.
- Satu Liiro (Development Manager, The Regional Council of Lapland, Finland) provided an overview of the impact of Covid-19 on the sport ecosystem in the region, particularly on the organised sport movement and sport-tourism whilst mentioning interregional collaboration as vital to boost Active Development.

- Fernando Parente (Director of Healthy Campus and Universities Relations, Fédération internationale du sport universitaire – FISU) mentioned that international federations and municipalities are increasingly investing more resources and developing more services in the realm of sport and physical activity for grassroots level and citizens. And yet, it has been highlighted the importance for governments to further invest in sport and physical activity within the context of schools and education so to holistically promote the sport-sector and its benefits.

Speakers unanimously agreed on the importance to strengthen efforts to recognise within the EU' policies the value of sport for preventing health disease and boosting healthy lifestyles among Europeans. Hence, the webinar was concluded by Marisa Fernandez Esteban (Deputy Head of Sport Unit, DG EAC – European Commission) who underlined the relevance of Active Development across various policies, as well as the role of well-being – both at the individual and societal level – in promoting regional wealth.

The 9th edition of the European Week of Regions and Cities and its workshops demonstrated the relevance of the notion of Active Development to regional development, provide valuable opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the dialogue and actively engage with the implementation of the European Union Cohesion policy, as well as showing the role of EU Funding such as Erasmus+ and ESI-funds as key tools to achieve the set goals and boost sport investments.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[SHARE Initiative](#)

[SHARE Database](#)

[Active Development: An Integrated Contribution from Sport and Physical Activity to Economic and Social Development](#)

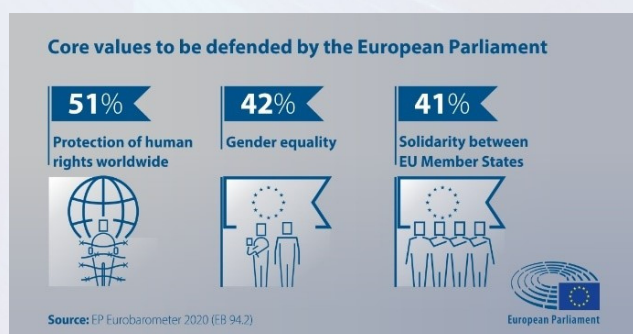
Recording workshop:
[Healthy recovery through Active Development in our regions](#)

European Gender Equality Week – CULT Committee meeting

At the initiative of the FEMM Committee, the European Parliament was holding its second European Gender Equality Week between October 25 and 28. This decision to hold a second edition was based on the success of the first one. All parliamentary committees and delegations were invited to hold events addressing gender inequality issues in their area of competence.

The main objectives of the European Gender Equality Week included: ending gender-based violence, improving work-life balance, eliminating the gender pay gap, promoting equal access to leadership positions, improving access to sexual and reproductive health, empowering women, advocating for women's rights in third world countries, making gender budgeting a reality and having gender balance in all EU institutions and beyond.

Gender equality is an issue found in as many topics as there are policy fields in the European Institutions: security at home and abroad, social and financial impacts of the pandemic, budgeting, tourism, disarmament and technology.



The CULT Committee of the European Parliament in charge of culture and education, held an exchange of views with the Commission on the promotion of gender equality in the EU funding programmes Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps.

This exchange of views was the opportunity to reflect on gender equality, promote an environment that is free from gender-based violence and stereotypes in order to provide equal opportunities for development and leadership. The CULT Committee also expressed the need to assess how these programmes contribute to closing the gaps in professions: the promotion of female talent and promoting a level playing field for all athletes regardless of their gender, for example.

Viviane Hoffman, Deputy Director-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture at the European Commission reminded that gender equality in sport is one of the core principles in the EU Work Plan for Sport. Furthermore, the High-Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport, which is currently in place to draft recommendations on different aspects of gender equality in sport, the Erasmus+ grassroots initiatives that focus on gender equality and diversity and the #BeInclusive sport awards are all good practice examples. Following a question from Tomasz Frankowski (EPP, Poland) on women in sport (gaps in participation, awards, wages, rewards, leadership), Viviane Hoffman concluded that the High-Level Group will present recommendations in late 2021 or early 2022.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Programme of the European Gender Equality Week](#)

[Committee meetings of the CULT Committee](#)

EU Innovation Agenda for the Western Balkans set to support sport

On 6 October, leaders of the EU Member States met with their Western Balkans counterparts in the Slovenian town of Brdo to discuss the “European Perspective of the Western Balkans”. Part of the “[Brdo Declaration](#)” – a statement of intent which concluded the summit – is the commitment by the European Union to launch an Agenda for the Western Balkans on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport – “[Innovation Agenda for the Western Balkans](#)”.

Building on the EU’s 2018 Western Balkans strategy and its flagship initiative “[Supporting reconciliation and good neighbourly relations](#)”, which referred, for the first time in such a strategic document, to the need to “enhance cooperation in culture and sport”; the new Innovation agenda goes even further. Based on three pillars – political, regional and thematic – the Agenda and its proposed implementation actions will contribute to a number of priorities among which is “Fostering cultural, academic and youth cooperation within the region and the EU.”

Under the political pillar, the EU plans to support the reforms in the region in the fields of science and research and in education, culture and youth by implementing the *acquis communautaire* (part of which is also article 165 TFEU dedicated to sport). Furthermore, the EU aims to support (in the long term) the full association of the Western Balkans countries to Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps as well as to Horizon Europe and Creative Europe programmes. One of the main objectives under the regional axis of the Agenda is then the support to “regional cooperation and people-to-people exchanges in the academic, youth, cultural and sport fields.”

In the area of sport, the [EU concretely plans to](#):

- Promote participation of the Western Balkans in Erasmus+ Sport actions and #BeActive Awards;
- Promote the involvement of the Western Balkans countries in the HealthyLifestyle4All initiative;
- Continue implementing the “European Week of Sport Beyond Borders in the Western Balkans” initiative, which co-finances, through the Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance II, the coordination of the European Week of Sport in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro;
- Promote participation of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro in the international dimension of Erasmus+, and conclude Erasmus+ Association Negotiations with North Macedonia and Serbia.

It needs to be reminded that sport-related activities in the Western Balkans and Turkey can now be co-financed also through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) III, which, for the first time, includes an explicit possibility for its managing authorities to support sport.

Since 2018, the EOC EU Office has been actively advocating for a better inclusion of sport in the new EU’s external funding programmes and for its recognition as an important instrument and “enabler” of sustainable development, good neighbourly relations and public diplomacy. It is therefore delighted to see that after Global Europe, also IPA III provides possibilities for the support of sport – at least on paper.

To turn this potential into reality, the EOC EU Office invites the concerned National Olympic Committees and other sport organisations to collaborate with the EU Delegations and IPA’s managing authorities in their respective countries and inquire about the possibilities for cooperation and funding provided by the new Instrument.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[IPA III – Factsheet](#)

European Commission publishes Physical Activity Fact Sheets 2021

The Physical Activity Fact Sheets 2021, published on 13 October 2021 aim to provide a snapshot of physical activity levels in all 27 EU Member States and related policy initiatives. The current fact sheets represent the third edition of the Physical Activity Fact Sheets following those curated by the European Commission and WHO/Europe in 2015 and 2018.

Generally speaking, the WHO recommends that children and adolescents engage in at least 60 min of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each day. For adults, the WHO recommends at least 150 min of moderate-intensity physical activity or 75 min of vigorous-intensity physical activity each week. However, maintaining sufficient levels of physical activity is becoming increasingly difficult since daily environments and professional workspaces have become more sedentary and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on closure of sport clubs have also increased the barrier to physical activity.

Acknowledging that physical activity has numerous benefits for an individual's health throughout their lifespan a number of global and regional policy initiatives have been established to counter physical inactivity. Since the EU Physical Activity Guidelines, the Council of the European Union recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) from 2013, the WHO physical activity strategy for the European Region 2016-2025 and the WHO Global action plan on physical activity 2018-2030, the EU DG for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture and the WHO Regional Office for Europe have been supporting a collaborative project to establish and extend monitoring of physical activity. The collected data in the physical activity fact sheet in collaboration of the European Commission, WHO and the Member States presents a baseline for monitoring the progress made towards achieving the 23 HEPA indicators. These indicators cover the existence of national recommendations, regular surveillance, level of

engagement, coordination, funding, policy implementation, sport-/health-/school-/workplace-setting, urban planning, integration of special populations and raising awareness.

The 2021 Fact Sheet shows a general improvement in the indicators from 2015 to 2021 and stabilisation of implementation of both the EU Physical Activity guidelines and the Physical activity strategy of the WHO European Region.

TABLE 4. SECTORS WITH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS FOR MONITORING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Sector	No. of countries
Health	24
Education	15
Sports	17
Transport	8

Important increases were detected for indicators 15 (HEPA in the training of physical education teachers), 20 (Schemes to promote physical activity at the workplace) and 21 (Schemes for community interventions to promote physical activity in older adults). No progress or even a decrease has been observed for achievements rates concerning children, adolescents and adults reaching the minimum of WHO recommendation, the existence of a national policy of action plan promoting HEPA and regular physical education in schools. However, these rates were already maximal in 2018 and most national physical activity policies or action plans were multi-sectoral, covering multiple sectors recognised as important for HEPA promotion.

Even though the Covid-19 pandemic certainly had an impact on physical activity due to lockdowns and limited access to public spaces and infrastructure for physical activity, it also led to a new wave of advocacy for physical activity. Studies showed that even minimal levels of physical activity had a protective effect in case of Covid-19 infections.

TABLE 6. SECTORS THAT RECEIVED FUNDING FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEPA

Sector	No. of countries
Health	20
Education	15
Sports	22
Environment	11
Urban planning	10
Transport	15
Other	11

The current public awareness of the health benefits of physical activity sparked by the Covid-19 crisis should be nurtured to implement future health-promoting policies.

Building on these results, the next steps should include the determination on how to attain the goal of 15% reduction in physical inactivity by 2030 and attaining the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by more participation in physical activity.

With the ongoing recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, policy design, development and implementation of HEPA promotion must be strengthened to maintain the positive trends visible in the 2021 fact sheets.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Physical Activity Fact Sheets 2021](#)

The European Parliament releases a study on the taxation of professional football in the EU

The European Parliament's Subcommittee on tax matters (FISC) published a study on the taxation of professional football players' remuneration in the European Union. Based on an overview of the EU football economy and its actors and a comparative analysis of the taxation system for professional football players in seven countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain), the study formulates recommendations for a future European Union approach.

The authors stated that the heterogeneity of the rules for professional football clubs and agents to access the EU internal market and supervisory practices hinders the functioning of a proper internal market. Similarly, tax and social security handling of football players' remuneration is unlevelled across the EU.

In countries where professional football players benefit from tax incentives, this is usually also the case for other taxpayers (for instance expatriates or other athletes). France, Italy and the Netherlands give football players the possibility to benefit from an expatriate tax regime, exempting part of their salary from taxation: the exemption is of 30% in France and the Netherlands and of 50% in Italy.

In Belgium, football players do not benefit from an expatriate tax regime but the country does offer incentives in relation to wage withholding tax for sports clubs: 80% of the wage withholding tax can be spent by the clubs instead of being paid to the tax administration. In Spain, the incentives that were in place since 2003 no longer exist. The so-called "Beckham law", which allowed professional football players arriving in Spain to be qualified as expatriates and thus non-resident taxpayer, was abandoned in 2015. In Portugal, a specific tax regime exists for "non-habitual" tax residents, but it is not open to professional football players. Finally, no specific tax regime exists in Germany for football players to benefit from.

The study also underlines that most EU Member States recognise the importance of attractive tax regimes for the industry to grow and for the competitiveness against non-EU countries where taxation levels are low (United Arab Emirates, Qatar) or where measures specifically dedicated to football players (Turkey, China) exist.

The authors state call for harmonised good governance rules for football agents and professional football clubs, for instance through an EU license system that includes anti-money

launders legislation, for an adequate monitoring and sanctioning system. However, the authors underline that EU action regarding the taxation of professional football players is subject to legal limitations. The EU only has little prerogatives regarding direct taxation, personal income taxation is in the hands of EU Member States.

Therefore, the authors call for awareness on the importance of the topic, knowledge building, increased transparency and support to best practices, which would ultimately help Member States in improving their system. The UEFA, its member associations and other football stakeholders are also asked to be actively involved for a fair taxation of professional football.

New European Parliament initiative: “The role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism”

On 21 October, the background analysis “The role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism” was published. Requested by the European Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education (CULT), its main aim is to inform and provide expertise to the Members of the CULT Committee for an own-initiative report of the same name, with Salima Yenbou from the Greens as Rapporteur.

In general, the study assesses the suitability of the [EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025](#) as tool to combat racism in the fields of culture, education, media and sport. This action plan was welcomed by civil society organisations and the [European Parliament Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup](#) and is considered to provide a comprehensive approach to enabling the effective fight against structural and intersectional forms of discrimination. Additionally, the research project assesses in how far the funding programmes under the auspices of the CULT Committee are aligned with the objectives of the Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025.

For the role of sport in the fight against racism, the researchers concluded that sporting practice offers many opportunities to prevent discrimination and racism while simultaneously providing social capital for its participants and enabling them to bridge disparities. Coaches and professional athletes can act as role models and strengthen social cohesion and tackle prejudice against minorities. Especially team sports provide an effortless opportunity to its participants to engage in meaningful relations with team members with widely different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

At the same time, sport events have shown potential to be a cause for concerns as well. On both recreational and professional level, sport arenas have been found to be a site of overt racism, misogyny and homophobia by spectators and players. Further criticism concerns the all too homogenous set-up of the sporting sector from sport organisations to journalists. A vast majority is made up of white heterosexual men that consequently fail to represent women, members of the LGBTI+ community and people of colour.

A number of mitigation measures remain to be done for sport to reach its full potential.

- Banning hate speech from all sports arenas and training facilities;
- Fostering social interaction and team building between different social groups;
- Eliminating obstacles for mobility towards more professional levels for minorities;
- Striving for more diversity and inclusion in key positions in the whole of the sports sector;
- Including and enforcing non-discrimination clauses in managerial and coaching contracts.

On 25 October, the own-initiative report had been subject to a first exchange of views and including the presentation by experts within the CULT Committee meeting. Researcher Bert-Jan Buiskool outlined preliminary recommendations encompassing the strengthening of the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025, developing a baseline on the contribution of EU funding programmes to the fight against racism and establishing monitoring arrangements and effective dissemination of good practices.

Overall, parliamentarians agreed that racism and discrimination incidents still occur regularly in our societies, including during major sports events. While several Members of the European Parliament recognised the power of sport, at any level, to fight against these phenomena, MEP Asim Ademov (EPP, Bulgaria) directly called on sport organisations to take action.

The role of funding programmes in the field of sport

Sport is recognised as economic driver, source of non-formal learning and facilitator for inclusion. Therefore, it is located under the umbrella of the [Erasmus+ funding programme](#), which promotes the European dimension of sport.

The topic of fighting racism is generally embedded in the context of making Erasmus+ more inclusive. In the past funding cycle 2014-2020, 1174 sport projects were co-funded by Erasmus+.

Based on this number, the researchers estimated that a total of 94 projects were related to the fight against racism with an awarded budget of slightly over €20 million. Overall, this shows that a substantial share (8%) of racism-related projects have been implemented throughout the 2014-2020 cycle.

Next Steps

The complete set of recommendations will be published at a later stage in an additional briefing and discussions within the CULT Committee will continue until a common position is found, which will then be voted on by the plenary.

FURTHER INFORMATION

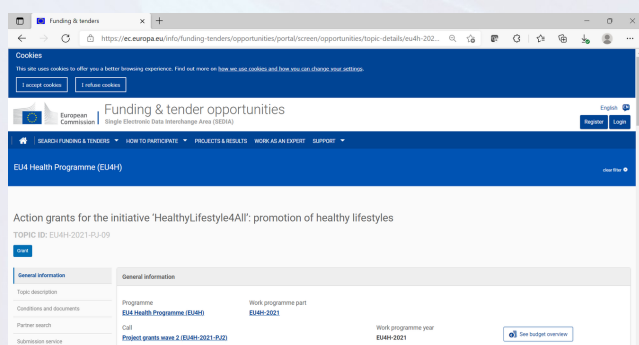
[Study: The role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Press Release](#)

Second wave of the EU4Health Call for project grants published

On the 13 October, the European Commission has published the second wave of the EU4Health calls for project grants under the 2021 Work Programme on the Funding and Tenders Portal.



The second wave of the EU4Health Programme includes 13 topics ranging from health data, healthy lifestyles, infections, mental health, cancer, genomics and more. Most remarkably, it includes the [Action grants for the initiative 'HealthyLifestyle4All' promotion of healthy lifestyle](#) (EU4H-2021-PJ-09) directly linked with the ['HealthyLifestyle4All' initiative](#).

This Action has the scope to support the 'HealthyLifestyle4All' initiative by strengthening health literacy and promoting healthy lifestyles with a focus on the school settings and the concept of healthy schools. Accordingly, activities are expected to increase opportunities for regular physical activity and healthy lifestyles by boosting exchanges of best practices on health literacy and develop guidelines for the implementation of successful practices. Proposals are also expected to build on existing initiatives and school networks and complement major European Union initiatives including the [European Week of Sport](#).

There is not a set minimum or maximum grant amount for each project proposals whilst a maximum of three proposals are expected to be financed each year with an overall budget of €4.400.000 for this Action in 2021. The grant is a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that only certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were actually incurred in the project – not the budgeted costs – are reimbursed.

This has an expected co-financing rate up to 60% for project meanwhile it is possible to apply for a higher co-financing rate (maximum 80%), if the project is of 'exceptional utility' according to [set criteria](#).

Applications are acceptable either by a sole applicant or by a consortium of minimum three entities from three different eligible countries. Eligible applicant includes EU Member States and EEA countries, as well as international organisations meanwhile there are no associated countries to the EU4Health programme, currently. Accordingly, this action targets actors such as Member States, regional and local governments, education establishments and civil society organisations (e.g health sector).

As such, sport organisations are not the primary target of the action; and yet, there are possibilities for sport organisations to participate for instance as partners, associated partners or subcontractors.

Indeed, the project proposal should include both the education and health sector and receive commitments from responsible local/regional/national authorities. Hence, depending on their role, sport organisations with existing experience/knowledge and initiatives in the area of health literacy, healthy lifestyle and education, can be valuable project partners ([Partners Search List](#)).

The deadline for submitting applications is the 25th of January 2022 at 17:00h (CET) meanwhile the project implementation is foreseen to start in October 2022.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[EU4Health Programme: Call for action grants under the Annual Work Programme 2021](#)

[EU4Health Standard application form](#)

[EU4Health Detailed budget table](#)

[EU4Health 2021-2027](#)



PARTNERS' CORNER

EOC President & Secretary General visit the EOC EU Office

On October 11, the EOC EU Office had the pleasure to welcome EOC President Spyros Capralos and Secretary General Raffaele Pagnozzi to its premises in Brussels. The agenda contained an introduction of the Office by Folker Hellmund, Director of the EOC EU Office and was followed by a comprehensive exchange on Office's daily business and services and was finalised by an update on currently relevant policy fields.

Firstly, recent successes were presented, highlighting the importance of the activities in Brussels. The work around the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on sports and recovery of the sport sector from the crisis with different policy documents as well as the inclusion and increase of budget for sport in more EU funded programmes being part of them.

The European Sport Model, the athletes' voice, human rights, sustainability, online piracy, gender equality and the Conference on the Future of Europe were subjects of lively discussions that will feed into the future activities of the EOC EU Office. Furthermore, Capralos and Pagnozzi were given a first preview of the third edition of the EU Funding Brochure that is soon to be launched. It is meant to be a practical support for NOCs and partners regarding EU funding opportunities for sport.

Capralos meets Commission Vice-President Schinas

On the same day, EOC President Spyros Capralos also met the European Commission's Vice-President Margaritis Schinas to exchange on current topics at the EU level. Discussions focused on the shared Olympic and EU values of tolerance, equality, respect, solidarity and the future of Europe.



The meeting also addressed the vital importance of putting the athletes' voices forward, as they are at the centre of the Olympic movement. Thus, it has been agreed that a Conference for European athletes in the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe will be organised. This event will be a unique opportunity for Olympic athletes from all over the Europe to get together, express their voice as athletes but also as citizens on the future of sport and the role of sport in our societies.

The team of the EOC EU Office expresses its thanks for the visit and the fruitful discussion whilst looking forward to the future activities.

EOC EU Office organises a Partner meeting “Update on EU Policy”

On 15 October, the EOC EU Office held an online meeting providing all its partners an update on EU policy. Considering that the last weeks had been particularly busy for the sports movement with multiple high-level meetings of, for instance, IOC President Bach and EOC President Capralos with Commission Vice-President Schinas or Commissioner Gabriel, the partners were presented timely developments and updates.

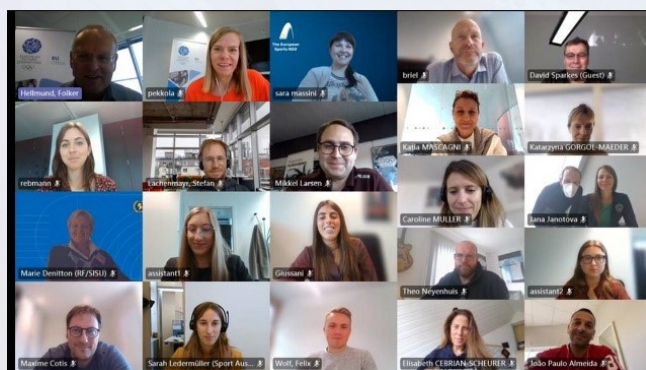
Amongst the most prominent topics that the EOC EU Office has been working on in the past months is the safeguarding of the European Sport Model (ESM). The EOC EU Office has actively advocated and promoted the key features of the ESM such as solidarity, volunteer engagement, and sporting merit both at the Member States level as well as with the Members of the European Parliament. Moreover, the Office contributed to a Commission study on the ESM, which is expected to be published in March 2022 handing the topic over to the French Council Presidency.

Another awaited development is concerning the ruling of the European Court of Justice on the European Super League. The partners had been informed, that this ruling can have a bigger impact on sport than just the football realms. It is expected that the ruling will provide guidance on the competencies of sport federations and the way they can govern their sport. However, this ruling is not due before 2023.

Moreover, partners were informed about the proceedings of the European Parliament Report on “EU sports policy: Assessment and possible ways forward”. In the meantime, the CULT Committee voted on the wording. The EOC EU Office welcomes the further mainstreaming of sport, the ambition to support sport through more funding programmes and the acknowledgement of the ESM and its key features. The plenary vote is currently scheduled for 22 November.

In a dedicated thematic block on human rights the EOC EU Office informed about the calls for a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the recent developments in Poland concerning the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community. Katia Mascagni from the IOC further elaborated on the IOC’s position paper on human rights and their planned guidelines for International Federations on athlete inclusion, child athletes and gender equality. Given the fact that human rights are a fundamental topic, it will be a main task of the next years to develop robust guidelines. The IOC’s Human Rights unit is a vital part of this work.

Green policies represented another main thematic block with updates on the Fit for 55 package that had been published on 14 July and the European Climate Law that entered into force on 29 July. The goals and targets not only impact sports but also represent chances due to increased available funding. Additionally, the partners were updated on the proceedings in the ECHA cases on the restriction of microplastics on artificial turf pitches and the restriction of lead in outdoor shooting. In both cases the entry into force of the respective restriction is not expected before 2023.



Another work in progress is the Commission's answer to the European Parliament Resolution from May 2021 on the "Challenges of sports events organisers in the digital environment". The European Commission announced to set out legislative or any other action addressing online piracy of live content, including live sport events, in 2022 but intends to wait for the adoption of the Digital Services Act.

Since the Conference on the Future of Europe is still ongoing, the partners were reminded of the ways to engage. Each sport organisation can make a proposal and express ideas on the Online Platform or organise an event under the umbrella of the Conference on the Future of Europe. This is a unique chance for every European citizen to influence the future of the EU. The EOC EU Office will assist interested parties that wish to get engaged. Furthermore, the EOC is planning to organise a conference for all European NOC's Athletes Commissions to hear the voice of the athletes on the matter. The results of this discussion will also feed into the plenary session and the final recommendations that will be presented in April 2022.

The Council of Europe revised its European Sports Charter after 29 years. The EOC EU Office actively participated in hearings and consultations throughout the process and welcomes several parts of the Charter, such as the mentioning of the European Sport Model, the acknowledgement of the autonomy of sport and the references to volunteering.

Lastly the partners were informed about the current state of play concerning EU funding, especially regarding Erasmus+ and Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions and planned future activities of the EOC EU Office. The EOC EU Office proudly announces the publication of the third edition of its Funding Brochure that aims to facilitate access to EU funding for all European NOCs and will also offer a series of webinars on EU Funding.

The EOC EU Office expresses its gratitude to all partners that were part of the webinar and especially for the interest in the presented topics. The team of the EOC EU Office is looking forward to the cooperation within the next months.

Lithuania hosted the 4th ENGSO European Sport Platform and CHAMP project conference

The three-day event was held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 21-23 October 2021, hosted by [Lithuanian Sports University](#) and [Lithuanian Union of Sports Federations](#), and organised in partnership with the [European Lotteries](#) (EL), [European Association for Sport Management](#) (EASM), and within the framework of the Erasmus+ Co-funded CHAMP project.

The fourth edition of the European Sport Platform and the CHAMP project conference gathered ENGSO members, partners and friends from all over Europe.

The conference began with ENGSO president Stefan Bergh and ENGSO Secretary General Sara Massini welcoming the participants and introducing the highlight topics of day one: sport innovation and modernization of sport clubs.

CHAMP project conference was hosted and moderated by Lovisa Broms, CHAMP project manager, who introduced the project and its main outcomes, including the free online course "How to manage a modern sport club": www.engso-education.eu/champ. But also to share insights into new findings in the field of sport innovation, digitalization and modernization of the sport movement. (Watch the replay of the conference: <https://youtu.be/L-tyuo6mvjg>). CHAMP aims to give the organised sport movement innovative tools and education for modernisation, offering insights of current trends and solutions for increasing physical activity.

Day two of the European Sport Platform 2021 highlighted the latest EU sport policy updates, the importance of research for grassroots sport, the ongoing inequalities in sport, and the need for athletes to have a dual career. Mr. Tomasz Frankowski, Member of the European Parliament and Mrs. Florencia Van Houdt, Head of the Unit for Sport of the European Commission shared the updates about policy measures within the EU regarding sports, and the work of sport group of the EU Parliament.

The afternoon of the second day was devoted to discussions on the following topics like the Understanding the importance of research and about the "Evidence for impact – how grassroots sports can use research more effectively?"

The second day was concluded with two parallel workshops; Equality in Sport - Change that Inspires Change session shed the light on the (ongoing) inequalities and the second about "Dual Career: from policy to practice" workshop showcased the need for athletes to complete the education process and build future work opportunities

Day 3 - The first session, entitled Sustainability in and through Sport - Air Quality (air quality issues that impact global sport), Dr Paolo Emilio Adami, Medical Manager at World Athletics has addressed the importance of air quality for athletes' health.

European Sport Platform 2021 was concluded with a presentation from Yves Le Lostecque, Head of Erasmus Mundus & Sport Unit – EACEA, who shared important information and updates about the next sport funding, available also to grassroots sport organisations.

This successful European Sport Platform was conclude by the following announcement: The Dutch Olympic Committee * Dutch Sports Federation will be the host of the 5th edition of European Sport Platform 2022. We are looking forward to welcoming you in the Sportcentrum Papendal, Netherlands, in October 2022.

We are particularly grateful to the hosts of the European Sport Platform 2021, [Lithuanian Sports University](#) and Lithuanian Union of Sports Federations, our partners [European Lotteries](#) (EL) and [European Association for Sport Management](#) (EASM), and ENGSO members and friends who joined the event.





UPCOMING EVENTS

24 November 2021

EOC Executive Committee (EOC - Samorin)

25 -26 November 2021

EOC Seminar (EOC - Samorin)

29 November 2021

BeActive Awards (European Commission - Brussels)

30 November 2021

Sport Ministers Council (Council of the EU - Brussels)



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