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General policy

1st Regional policy reform after 2006

On 18th February the European Commission adopted the third “Report on Economic and Social Cohesion” by making concrete proposals for a reform of regional policy after 2006.

A transitional arrangement will apply to the new Member States from when they join on 1st May this year until the current assistance period expires in 2006. While the PHARE programme (strengthening of economic and social cohesion) will continue to run for a further three years, the SAPARD (agriculture and rural development) and ISPA programmes (transport and environmental projects) come to an end with the accession of the new members. Some 22 billion (22 000 million) EUR will be released from the Structural Fund for the accession countries between 2004 and 2006.

As per the Commission’s proposal, only three financial instruments (European Regional Development Fund ERDF, European Social Fund ESF and the Cohesion Fund) will be used in the cohesion policy from 2006. The previous aims and Community initiatives are to be combined into three priorities.

Sport

News from the institutions

2nd Olympic Games: importing horses from third countries

In order to prevent the spread of equine viral arteritis (erysipelas or red murrain epidemic), the temporary admission of registered horses into the EU was laid down in Commission decision 92/260 EEC. This is amended by decision 93/197 EEC on the documentation required for importing horses.

On 20th February 2004 the European Commission published a decision with a view to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Athens. According to this decision, stallions that have not been gelded may be imported into the EU for the purpose of taking part in the competitions even if the health guarantee relating to equine viral arteritis cannot be produced in accordance with decision 92/260 EEC. In that case, however, the health certificate must contain a reference to the fact that the animal will be taking part in the Games. It must also state the export date immediately following the equestrian sports events. It must, in addition, contain the assurance that the animals will not be put to stud or used for insemination while they are in the European Union. Once imported into Greece, the horses are subject to veterinary observation by the Greek authorities. In the case of the Olympic Games, they will also be monitored by the International Equestrian Federation (FEI).



http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/l_055/l_05520040224en00640065.pdf

3rd Postscript to MR January 2004, p.4: Single Market of services

In the aforementioned article, we had quoted as follows:

“Particular public interest is of significance if, in the case of a monopoly, the number of State lottery counters were to significantly fall in the future and consumers had to travel greater distances. Taking profits for a public or “good” cause cannot be cited as an argument for an exception from the freedom to provide services.”

Contrary to our previous account, the facts justifying a special exemption from

the freedom to provide services are as follows:

In the case of State lotteries, a restriction on holding lotteries and games of chance in order to prevent compulsive gambling or fraud, for example, could be cited as arguments for maintaining the monopoly. Providing a proportion of the financing of sports organisations or other non-profit-making institutions with lottery revenue is not in itself, on the other hand, deemed to be sufficient grounds.

The directive proposal is being presented to the Council on 11th March 2004. Thereafter, it will be passed on to the Parliament as part of the co-decision procedure. However, Parliament will not deal with the proposal until the next parliamentary term (elections to the European Parliament on 13th June).

Legal questions

4th Safety at the Olympic Games

The Council of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs has adopted a handbook with recommendations for cooperation against terrorism at the Olympic Games and other large sporting events. In the text, it is proposed that permanent contact points be set up in the Member States and that ad-hoc liaison officers be used at the events. Border controls could be reintroduced for safety reasons. At least six months before the respective sporting event, a risk analysis should be carried out.

Support programmes

5th Call for proposals "Public Health" published

The European Commission has published the annual call for proposals in the Programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003 to 2008). The programme's general objectives are the following:

- to improve information and knowledge for the development of public health
- to enhance the capability of responding rapidly and in a coordinated fashion to health threats
- to promote health and prevent disease through addressing health determinants across all policies and activities

In connection to these aims annual priority areas are defined. This year the subjects belonging to the area „health determinants“ might be of special interest for the sport movement, as for example:

- **Nutrition and physical activity** – Emphasis will be on innovative measures and approaches to improve dietary habits, excess weight and obesity, and physical activity habits in all population groups.
- **Health promotion** in particular settings – Promotion of health in schools.

Eligible for participation are juridical persons – such as NGOs, federations and universities, public institutions etc. – from the EU member states, the 10 acceding countries, the EFTA–EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) as well as from the applicant countries (Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey).

A specific number of project partners is not explicitly specified, nevertheless a broad geographic coverage is evaluated as a positive and important characteristic by the Commission.

The co-financing by the Commission goes up to 60% of the eligible costs for the respective project, exceptionally even up to 80%. The supported projects shall not run longer than three years.

Deadline to hand in proposals is 26 April 2004.



http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/index_en.html

In order to increase clarity about the implementation of the programme and to encourage potential beneficiaries to submit projects in 2004, the Commission

is organising an **Information Day** taking place on Monday 22 March 2004 in Luxembourg. Registration is possible by e-mail until 15 March at the following address: sanco-infoday-2004@cec.eu.int

6th Action programme to promote active citizenship

The new “Community action programme to promote active European citizenship (civil participation)” was decided on by the Council early this year and came into force retrospectively on 1st January 2004. The previous town-twinning programme is being incorporated into this action programme, which henceforth provides for three actions.

Actions 1 and 2 assist with the overheads of non-profit-making institutions operating at European level and pursuing goals within the framework of the programme. Action 3 supports town-twinning projects initiated by local authority districts, municipal and regional administrative bodies, authorities and their associations. For this, the programme provides 40% of the available annual budget. Especially in the European Year of Education through Sport 2004, sporting events are eligible for assistance, provided they form part of an educational programme relating to a topical European theme. The next submission deadline for applications is 2nd April for initiatives that begin between 1st August and 30th September.



http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/L_030/L_03020040204en00060014.pdf

7th LEADER+ sports project from the Vogtland region / Saxony

Last year an international amateur fencing tournament was held in Saxony with the help of the Community initiative LEADER+. The purpose of LEADER is to help to develop rural areas and it is implemented in identified assistance regions. In this respect, the development of rural areas is not only considered in terms of agricultural structures. Sport can make a decisive contribution to the positive image of a region and to how well known it is and can therefore be of benefit to the tourist sector.

Thus, last year the “International Spa Fencing Tournament” was subsidised. The project sponsors SG Medizin Bad Elster and Chursächsische Veranstaltungs-GmbH had invited amateur fencers from European spas to this tournament. There, they competed against each other in mixed teams. The tournament was



supplemented by a framework programme to enable people to get to know each other better and exchange experiences.

For 2007 an international amateur football tournament involving more than 400 teams is planned. The organiser is the European Oldie Football Sports Club (EOFS). An application for a partial grant, which is intended to initiate this project, has already been submitted to the local Vogtland action group.

Miscellaneous

8th EYES 2004 in the Committee of the Regions (CoR)

As part of its 53rd plenary meeting, the Committee of the Regions held a forum on the subject of “Education through sport in Europe’s regions and cities” on 11th and 12th February in Brussels. The plenary meeting debated, among other things, what effects holding large sports events has on the host regions. In addition, an opportunity was provided afterwards to visit exhibitions on the Olympic Games in Athens, the America’s Cup 2007 in Valencia and on best practice examples of regions and cities in which “education through sport” is already the focal point. On the German side, the Saarland was represented with its exemplary project “wir im Verein mit Dir” (we in association with you). In this project, primary school pupils are given an opportunity to find out, in an active way, about local sports clubs and what they have to offer, by spending a school day in a sports hall.

In a workshop, which was opened by the newly-elected President of the CoR, Peter Straub (President of the Landtag of Baden-Württemberg), the organisers were able to comment in more detail on the contents of the exhibitions. At the same time, interested parties were given an opportunity to ask the organisers directly for details and to present their own ideas and initiatives.

9th Social dialogue in the European professional football sector

The European Federation of Professional Football Clubs (EFFC) is striving for the Commission to recognise it as a partner in the European social dialogue.

The project “Promoting Social Dialogue in the European Professional Football Sector”, which is supported by the Commission, is currently investigating the structural and organisational prerequisites for being allowed to act as a European player in social dialogue.

In addition, the following criteria must be fulfilled in order to be able to intervene actively in the process of social dialogue:

- institutional and organisational structures: the (national) member association of the European federation must already be actively involved in social dialogue between employers and employees at national level
- the European federation must consist of experts in social dialogue

- the European federation must be representative (at least 7 member associations from 15 Member States)
- compliance with and adherence to Community legal norms

Recognition as a partner in European social dialogue would mean that the Commission has to listen to the European Association of Professional Football Clubs regarding matters of industrial law. The Commission would therefore have to set up a social committee. Consultations and negotiations would be held within the framework of that committee. The Commission currently maintains a social dialogue with 30 partners from the most diverse economic sectors.

In the Commission's opinion, the UEFA is not the right European umbrella association to represent the specific interests of the professional clubs from an industrial law and/or social point of view. This opinion is based on the argument that there is no institutionally necessary and clear separation between employees (footballers) and employer (club) under the umbrella of the UEFA.

The EFFC is striving to achieve recognition from the Commission to enable it, as the employers' side and among other things, to counter the employees' side and players' union FIFPRO at European level. It sees it as its job to contribute, within the framework of social dialogue, to the European legislative process.

10th YOUTH action programme: study trips offer

As part of the "Youth for Europe" action, further education opportunities are being offered from September 2004 to February 2005. These will take the form of short study visits for youth group leaders, those involved voluntarily or full time in youth work and people interested in the YOUTH programme.

In addition to the chance to exchange experiences with international participants relating to the main focus of the respective event, the seven study trips also offer an opportunity to meet and get to know new project partners. The costs of the trip are being financed by the YOUTH programme, apart from the participants' contribution of 100 EUR each.



Two of the total of seven further education courses revolve around the subject of sport:

- Denmark (5th–12th Sept. 2004): Sport and Youth 2004
- Luxembourg (7th–14th Nov. 2004) Education through Sport

Another one has as its theme YOUTH projects on the German–Polish–Czech border.

- Germany (5th–12th Sept. 2004) Cross–border Cooperation along the German–Polish–Czech–Border by bike



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