

EOC

Liaison Office at the European Union



**Report on the impact of the activities
of the European Union
on sports**

March 2006



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General Policy

1st EU-Commission supports gender equality

Gender inequality in the EU will be tackled by 21 specific activities over the next five years. Proposed Commission activities in the 'Roadmap for equality between men and women 2006-10' include helping set up a European institute for gender equality, reviewing existing EU gender equality law and ensuring gender equality is considered in all policies.

The roadmap – adopted in view of the International women's day on 8 March – sets out six priority areas for action in the 2006-2010 period:

- Achieving equal economic independence for women and men;
- Enhancing reconciliation of work, private and family life;
- Promoting equal participation of men and women in decision-making;
- Eradicating gender-based violence and trafficking;
- Eliminating gender stereotypes in society and;
- Promoting gender equality outside the EU.

As well as the funds for the new gender institute, the proposed new €650 million PROGRESS programme will fund some of the activities outlined in the roadmap. EU Structural funds and financial programmes in various policy areas



will also help to provide funding for both roadmap and other EU gender equality activities.



http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/emplweb/news/news_en.cfm?id=136

Sport

News from the Institutions

2nd Expert Meeting on Equal Opportunities through and in Sport

As a follow-up to the European Year of Education through Sport the European Commission has held an Expert meeting with government representatives on 'Equal Opportunities through and in Sport'. The aim of this meeting was to present and disseminate examples of good practice of participation in sports with regard to gender and people with disabilities.

A report of the conference as well as a summary of data received from Member States is available on the web site of the EU-Office of sports.



<http://eu-sports-office.org/en/articlefiles/783.pdf>



Legal Questions

3rd Political agreement on the driving licence directive – sport position fully considered

The Council of (Transport) Ministers reached a political agreement regarding the European driving licence. Common European rules will facilitate the free movement of EU drivers. A single model in credit card format will replace the more than 110 different models currently in circulation.

During the long ongoing discussion sport organisations in Europe had clearly taken position against a tightening of currently valid weight regulations for trailers in category B driving licences. This had been intended by the European Commission in its original text proposal from 2003. However Members of the European Parliament were successfully sensitised to the concerns of sport. The Council approached the European Parliament in this point and thus agreed upon the following rule on vehicle-trailer combinations in category B which even improves the current situation:

Further on trailer-vehicle combinations up to 3500 kg will still be allowed, respecting type-approval rules. Moreover there will be an option for vehicle-trailer combinations up to 4250 kg in category B if a training / test (> for combinations between 3500 and 4250 kg) has been passed.

The sport organisations concerned – which are those whose members need to



tow equipment (such as boats, gliders, horses) on a trailer behind their car in order to be able to practice their sport – reacted relieved.

Following the political agreement, the formal adoption of the directive by the European Parliament will be effective later this year in a second reading. Here no amendments are expected. Then the directive would enter into force by the end of 2006 and therefore be applicable at the latest at the end of 2012.

4th EP: Health Programme 2007–2013

In March, in its first reading, the report on the new Community action programme in the fields of health and consumer protection was approved by the European Parliament (EP).

The EU is endeavouring to improve the health of its citizens and to promote investments in health. The growing percentage of elderly people in society is creating future problem areas for European health policy. The increase in diseases among children, as a result of obesity for example, is also posing new challenges; particular emphasis is therefore being placed on the aspect of “children” in the promotion of health. In the opinion of the parliament, the growing burden due to avoidable illnesses, which can be explained by lifestyle choices and addictive behaviour (e.g. smoking, excessive drinking, drugs, poor nutrition), calls for action at EU level.



The aim of the new EU programme is therefore to build on the existing main points of emphasis in the sphere of public health (information, threats and health-related factors) and to introduce three new areas of emphasis: reactions to threats, prevention of illnesses and cooperation among health systems.

In accordance with the legislative procedure (joint decision-making procedure), now that the EP has considered the matter, the first reading is due to be dealt with in the Council.



5th EU Meeting of Sport Directors on the 29–30 March, Vienna

One major topic at this meeting was “sport and the economy” in Europe. The institute SportsEconAustria presented the findings of its study on sport's contribution to EU economies.

One strategic aim of the Austrian Presidency is to create a satellite account for sport in the national statistics as it has been done similarly for tourism. In doing this the economic contribution of sport to the gross domestic product could be better accounted for. A satellite account would be an ideal tool to show the economic impact of sport. At the moment, there are only rough estimates of how much sport actually contributes to the national economy.

The Austrian presidency hopes that the delegations take on this idea and that it is consequently implemented by the national statistical offices of the Members States and Eurostat, the European statistical office.

6th EP: resolution against racism in football

In March, a declaration initiated by members of parliament against racism in football met with support in the form of 423 signatures from members of the European parliament. This is the largest number of signatures ever collected



for an initiative of this kind. With a view to the holding of the 2006 football world championship, the European Parliament sees this initiative as an answer to numerous racist incidents during national football championships.

The declaration emphasises the fact that, just like other workers, football players also have the right to a working environment free of racism. UEFA is being asked to give referees the option of suspending a game or even stopping it altogether in the event of serious racist incidents. In addition, UEFA is being advised to disqualify from their competitions any “football clubs whose fans or players commit serious racist acts” and to impose fines on the national associations concerned.

7th Commitments from FA Premier League legally binding

The European Commission has adopted a decision under EC Treaty competition rules that renders commitments from the FA Premier League concerning the sale of media rights to the Premier League football competition legally binding. The case concerned the agreement between the clubs participating in the English Premier League competition to sell media rights to that competition jointly through the FA Premier League. These commitments will increase the availability of media rights, and improve the prospects of competition in providing services to consumers.



The Commission sent a Statement of Objections on this case in December 2002. The Statement of Objections recognised that there are in principle benefits to joint selling to football fans and media operators as well as to the clubs of the Premier League. However the Commission raised concerns that in practice the FAPL's implementation of the joint selling agreement deprived media operators and British football fans of choice, led to higher prices and reduced innovation. The FAPL submitted provisional commitments to the Commission in December 2003, which were the subject of a public consultation.

Aid Programms

8th EU supports ISAF World Sailing Games

From 10th–20th May 2006. the ISAF World Sailing Games will be held on Neusiedler See (Neusiedler lake) in Austria. The holding of this large-scale sporting event, which more than 100,000 visitors are expected to attend, is being supported by the European voluntary service of the EU YOUTH Action Programme.

The application of the ISAF World Sailing Games, which, in addition to sporting elements, also comprised aspects of informal and intercultural learning such as language training for example, convinced the European Commission



evaluators.

This initiative is giving 100 volunteers from all over Europe the opportunity to support the sailing event of the year in Austria.



info@eu-sports-office.org