

## Tweets of the month



### EOC EU Office

@TNavracsicsEU Jan 30

Pleased that we have today put forward steps to protect #ErasmusPlus participants in case the UK leaves the EU without a deal. More information here: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-19-743\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-743_en.htm) ... #Brexit

### EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice Jan 28

@EPCulture has adopted their opinion on future Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument #NDICI for 2021-2027 <https://bit.ly/2UoQ5EU>. Following our work with MEPs, we are happy to see several amendments on #sport! Next step is @EP\_ForeignAff vote.

### EOC EU Office

@EOCEUOffice Jan 24

The Board of the @EOCEUOffice met today in Lausanne to discuss among other things the implementation of the activities of 2018, as well as the Work Plan of 2019. @EOCmedia @DOSB @COV\_MEDIA @iocmedia

### EU Sport

@EuSport Dec 4

The latest #ErasmusPlus Annual Report has just been released! In 2017, 162 #EU sport projects were funded, among them 68 large scale projects in the areas of #SocialInclusion, #BeActive campaign, education in/through #sport and #SportIntegrity. Full report: [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/statistics\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/statistics_en) ...

## The House of European Sport

Editorial 2

### EUROPEAN UNION AND SPORT

EOC EU Office discuss priorities of EU Sport Policy 2019-2020 with partner organisations 3

The European Parliament adopts its position on the recast of the Visa Code 5

Brexit - Uncertainty in and around the world of sport 6

### FUNDING PROGRAMMES AND STUDIES

EOC EU Office's active work with Parliament brings sport closer to full recognition in future EU funding programmes 7

New study on access to sport for people with disabilities released by European Commission 8

### INTERNAL AND VISITS

EOC EU Office Board meets in Lausanne 9

EOC EU Office welcomes German regional sport associations 10

### PARTNER'S CORNER

DOSB presents position on virtual sports and eGaming 11

### NEXT MONTH

Dates in February 13

## *The House of European Sport*

### EDITORIAL

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Dear readers,

I would like to take this opportunity to send you my best wishes for 2019. Even though we are facing a non-Olympic year, I am convinced that it will offer more than enough sporting highlights - the start of the year marked by a successful Handball World Championship in Germany and Denmark has certainly increased the appetite for more.

Contrary to that, the appetite of the European Union and the United Kingdom to continue the negotiations on the best Brexit deal are quite limited. The regular inquiries we receive at our office regarding Brexit's effects on sport in Europe, cannot be answered at least at present. For this to happen, we would have to be able to see into the future, in particular, to know whether it will be orderly or disorderly. Even the European Commission itself is not providing any information at this stage regarding the conditions that sports federations and other applicants from the United Kingdom will have to face within the forthcoming calls for proposals for the Erasmus+ Sport programme. This uncertainty is already having a concrete impact on the plans of many applicants, who do not know whether their British partners will be regarded as a third country in the future and whose involvement will require special justifications in the application form.

Nor is the impact on professional sport fully understood, in particular the employment of EU players in the Premier League who have benefited from the free movement of workers. This uncertainty gives hope to competing leagues that the Premier League will lose at least some of its dominant position. Again, it remains to be seen whether the pressure from clubs will be strong enough, at the end of the day, to make British authorities issue working papers to keep players in the country.

Furthermore, in view of 2019 and the upcoming elections in the European Parliament, the EOC EU Office and its partner organisations have defined priorities in the field of sport (see separate article). This document is available on the [website](#) of the EOC EU Office and we encourage it to be used also for sport policy discussions at the national level.

However, a major focus of the year will also have to be to build good working relations with the newly elected Members of the European Parliament and the new EU Commission. The good contacts with the current Parliament have proved to be very helpful in recent weeks. A number of amendments by parliamentarians to the new EU funding programmes from 2021 onwards have incorporated the proposals put forward by the EOC EU Office. The task now is to obtain the necessary support from the Council so that these can also be applied in the trilogue negotiations.

Enjoy your read,



Folker Hellmund  
Director

## EUROPEAN UNION AND SPORT

### EOC EU Office discuss priorities of EU Sport Policy 2019-2020 with partner organisations

The EOC EU Office has published its Priorities regarding the EU Sport Policy for 2019-2020. This document has been drafted together with the partners of the Office, which represent broadly the organised sport. The Priorities document lists crucial topics for the next two years to be discussed at the European level on sport. Taking into account the importance of 2019 with the upcoming EU elections in May and the appointment of new Commissioners, the Office wants to raise awareness of the future MEPs and Commissioner on the following topics:

- **Organisation of sport in Europe** – *Acknowledge the European Model of sport and recognise its specificities*

The unique role of the organised sport in Europe, based on solidarity, inclusivity and voluntary engagement, and its benefits to society need to be safeguarded. The key components of the European Sport Model, including the role of federations and National Olympic Committees, should be recognised and supported by the EU institutions. Furthermore, to ensure that sport organisations can govern their sport effectively, the specific nature of sport in Europe must be fully recognised. In addition, when developing and implementing its policies, the EU should take into account the geographical organisation of sport in Europe, as it is organised on continental basis, and not only including EU Member States.

- **Integrity of sport** – *Enable sport organisations to strengthen their governance and support clean athletes and competitions effectively*

A successful fight against threats to the integrity of sport (including doping and match-fixing) is key

and should be strengthened for the sake of athletes, coaches, volunteers and all stakeholders involved in sport. In this regard, the coordination between sport organisations, public authorities and other actors in the EU and at international level should be enhanced. Regarding good governance, which is a pre-condition for the autonomy of sport, sport organisations welcome an in-depth dialogue with the EU institutions to promote good governance. The EU should acknowledge the ongoing developments in different sport organisations and support the use of developed tools. Moreover, the EU should continue to support e.g. through funding programmes, the activities of the sport movement to advance gender equality as well as fight against harassment, abuse and gender stereotypes in sport. A follow-up for the EU “Gender Equality in Sport – Proposal for Strategic Actions 2014-2020” should be planned.

- **EU Funding** – *Increase the participation of sport organisations to the Erasmus+ and other EU programmes*

The access of organised sport to the Erasmus+ should be facilitated in order to improve the impact and sustainability of the programme. Furthermore, the mainstreaming of sport into other relevant EU funding programmes, such as European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), should be implemented, e.g. by encouraging investment in sport infrastructures. Sport has a substantial impact on societies, e.g. in terms of economy, health and social inclusion, as well as disease prevention, so the mainstreaming of sport would help to achieve the objectives of these programmes. Furthermore, the EU should facilitate the access of non-EU countries to the EU

## *The House of European Sport*

funding as sport in Europe is organised on continental basis.

- **Sport as a health-enhancing physical activity** – *Promote sport as the most efficient and cost-effective means to improve public health*

Globally, more than 1.4 billion adults are at risk of disease due to insufficient physical activity (WHO study, 2018). EU should promote access to sport for all EU citizens, and sport should be fully recognised as a preventive tool. Moreover, collaboration between schools and sport clubs should be strengthened and physical activity in schools should be increased. In addition, the membership in the sport clubs should be promoted by the EU and the Member States as efficient and cost-effective means for physical activity.

- **Societal Role of Sport** – *acknowledge the contribution of sport to society*

EU should continue to promote sport as an important enabler of sustainable development. The role of sport to contribute for the Sustainable Development Goals is also recognised by the UN. Furthermore, the EU should better acknowledge the societal role of sport by supporting the various initiatives already undertaken by sport organisations (e.g. on the inclusion of the refugees, migrants and persons with disabilities). In addition, the non-profit nature of grassroots sport should be taken into account in the EU legislation and judgements, e.g. in taxation, to safeguard the future of sports clubs in Europe. Last but not least, the EU should encourage

initiatives to guarantee the sustainable financing of sport, including maintaining the possibility of exemptions or reduced VAT rates for sport.

- **Further challenges**

There are also some further challenges raised in the document, such as the commercial exploitation of the sport events and the fight against their illegal use, establishment of sport satellite accounts, which should be facilitated, as well as the hosting of major sport events, where public authorities and sport organisations should effectively cooperate to ensure their sustainability. Regarding the sustainability, EU should support the activities of sport organisations through its funding programmes, mainly Erasmus+ and Life. In addition, the EU should better cooperate with Athletes' Commissions, which are democratically elected bodies and which represent athletes from the organised sport movement. Regarding the athletes, the EU together with the Member States should continue to support their dual career.

The document will be circulated to the political parties and candidates of the EU elections. In addition, after the elections the Priorities will be raised with the newly-elected MEPs. The EOC EU Office encourages its partners and other sport organisations, and especially the NOCs to use the document as an inspiration at the national level, when meeting potential candidates.

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### FURTHER INFORMATION

[Priorities of the EOC EU Office regarding the EU Sport Policy 2019-2020](#)

## The House of European Sport

### The European Parliament adopts its position on the recast of the Visa Code

Since 2014, the EU Commission is pushing for an update of the EU Visa policy which was adopted in 2009.

On 14 March 2018, the European Commission has started again discussions on the reform of the EU's common visa policy. The overarching ambition is to facilitate, for legitimate travellers, the obtaining of a Visa for entering the Schengen area (for personal or professional activities) while preventing irregular migration risks.

Since then, the European Parliament (EP) – via the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) Committee – and the Council of the EU are negotiating their respective positions.

In December, the EP adopted their proposal to review the Visa Code. The MEPs took into account the opinion of the Transport and Tourism (TRAN) Committee which recalled the previous commitment of the EP to facilitate the access to VISA for sport people, artists and their entourage.

The EOC EU Office regrets that the length of short-stay visas remain a maximum of 90 days during any 180-day period as this limited time-period creates difficulties for athletes who need to train and compete for a longer period within the Schengen area. However, the office welcomes the following provisions facilitating the stay of sport people from third countries to the Schengen area:

- *Article 1: "Sport and Culture Professionals (will be able to receive a Visa) **for up to one***

*year without staying more than 90 days in any 180-day period in any single Member State"*

- *Article 16: Despite the general increase of the fee up to EUR 80 "Applicants which form part of a group travelling for sports, cultural or educational purposes **shall pay a visa fee of EUR 60**".*

In addition, since 2009, specific procedures facilitating the issuing of visas for Olympic and Paralympic Games have been established. The EP decided to enlarge the scope of events covered by these specific procedures to high-level international sporting competitions: "*Member States hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games **and other high-level international sporting competitions** shall apply the specific procedures and conditions facilitating the issuing of visas set out in Annex XI.*"

The ball is now on the Council's court before the start of trilogue negotiations between the three institutions.

The EOC EU Office is closely following the file and will keep you informed regarding the next developments.

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#### FURTHER INFORMATION

[Legislative file](#)

## *The House of European Sport*

### Brexit - Uncertainty in and around the world of sport

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January 2019 has been marked by insecurities regarding the upcoming Brexit deadline on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March. With the date fast approaching, the EU and the world keep watching nervously as the UK continues to try to unify its government's position on the matter. Uncertainty is still at large and whatever outcome shall take place, it will have a significant impact, both on society and on sport.

The sport industry and European sport federations and organisations continue to suffer silently, as the outcome of the Brexit saga will largely determine elements all across the entailing sectors, briefly outlined in the following paragraphs.

The aspect currently drawing most media attention because of its direct impact on popular sports such as football, rugby and cricket, is freedom of movement. The current withdrawal agreement indicates that the current right to freedom of movement shall be guaranteed during the transitional period. In a no-deal scenario however, this shall no longer be so, as UK citizens would be classed as non-EEA nationals. The Kolpak ruling, which enables citizens of a country that signed EU Association agreements to work and move freely within the EU, would have to rely on new Association agreements signed between the EU and UK. Currently, 41% of the English Premier League's player base consists of EU nationals - the future of the UK's recruitment allowance of young players is therefore in muddy waters and could affect both the UK player base in Europe and vice-versa.

Worries have also been stated in regard to travel and hosting. Increased travel complexity due to new visa and travel policies, as well as new bilateral travel arrangements for flights, trains and buses, will hinder the transport of players, staff, workers and equipment and also hamper international away fixtures. Frequent movement is paramount to most athletes but especially seasonal athletes competing in sea- and snow sports.

Funding for and by Erasmus+ is another question mark. At the moment, it is still unclear whether the UK will be able to continue to participate in Erasmus+ projects, or whether it will have to draft a new participation agreement with the EU. The European Commission however, adopted a final set of no-deal contingency measures, both financial and residential, which entails reassurances for participants.

Final arrangements will have to be made in regards to EU-UK data transfer within the meaning of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), since the UK will, again, be considered a third country in case of a no-deal outcome.

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#### FURTHER INFORMATION

[Brexit negotiations with the European Commission](#)

[Brexit negotiations with the European Parliament](#)

[Consequences of a no-deal scenario on transport](#)

["No-Deal" Contingency Measures for Erasmus+ students](#)

## FUNDING PROGRAMMES AND STUDIES

### EOC EU Office's active work with Parliament brings sport closer to full recognition in future EU funding programmes

In view of the adoption of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027, the EOC EU Office has carried out intense work with MEPs over the last months; some of which has already yielded positive results. On 16 January, the European Parliament adopted its position on the new European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) programmes, both of which now include sport-related amendments.

The European Social Fund is the EU programme aimed at investing in citizens. It promotes social inclusion, job opportunities, education, skills and the employability of young people, contributes to fighting poverty, and contributes to better living conditions, health and fairer societies. It is well known that sport can contribute to the achievement of most of the objectives listed above. For this reason, the EOC EU Office has focused its work on the areas of employment, skills and education, social inclusion and health. Out of a total of 4 amendments proposed by the EOC EU Office, the European Parliament took on board 3, namely:

- A new recital on supporting actions using sport and physical activity to drive social inclusion, fight youth unemployment, and improve health promotion and disease prevention;
- Two proposals falling under the health strand, especially regarding health promotion and disease prevention.

Interreg is one of the instruments of the EU to support cooperation across borders through

project funding. It seeks to jointly tackle challenges in areas including health, environment, research, education, transport, and sustainable energy. Interreg has three types of programmes: Cross-border cooperation programmes; Transnational cooperation programmes; and Interregional programmes. The EOC EU Office has given full support to the sport-related amendment proposed by the European Committee of the Regions which falls under the cross-border cooperation programmes, people-to-people and small-scale projects.

Although these two legislative texts are not a definitive legislation yet — they still have to go through trilogue negotiations among the Council of the EU, the Parliament and the Commission — the fact that the Parliament has adopted sport amendments in its position on both ESF+ and Interreg programmes is already an important step. If such amendments are agreed in the trilogue, sport projects will be eligible for funding under ESF+ and Interreg programmes.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

[Amendments adopted by the European Parliament on the proposal for a regulation on specific provisions for Interreg.](#)

[Amendments adopted by the European Parliament on the proposal for a regulation on the ESF+.](#)

[Information about Interreg.](#)

[Press release on Parliament's adoption of ESF+.](#)

## The House of European Sport

### New study on access to sport for people with disabilities released by European Commission

As it was foreseen in the third EU Work Plan for Sport (2017-2020), a study on access to sport for people with disabilities was released by the European Commission last December 2018. The third EU Work Plan for Sport contains a series of key topics and themes organised in three main priorities:

- Integrity of sport, in particular promoting good governance, combating corruption and match fixing and fighting doping, among others;
- The economic dimension of sport, including innovation in sport as well as sport and the digital single market;
- Sport and society, in particular social inclusion, the role of coaches, education in and through sport, sport and health, sport and environment, sport and media and sport diplomacy.

As part the outputs foreseen for Priority 3 “Sport and society” and, more specifically, within social inclusion, a study was conducted on people with disabilities and sport during the second half of 2018. The report *Mapping on Access to Sport for People with Disabilities*, commissioned to Ecorys in July 2018, was released last December 2018.

The objective of the research study was to collect information on participation and barriers to participation in sport amongst people with disabilities, as well as to gather some good practice approaches and funding opportunities to support such actions.

Concerning methodology, literature reviews were completed covering, on the one hand the topic of sport and disability participation in different policy documents and publications and, on the other hand, an overview of data and information on programmes undertaken in different Member States. From a review of the available evidence and information on programmes for people with

disabilities in 11 countries, 7 case studies were finally presented more in detail. Case studies describing specific good practice approaches include the following countries and projects:

1. France - Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Legacy;
2. UK - Get Out Get Active;
3. Germany - National Action Plan to Implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
4. Sweden - Lift for Sport;
5. Ireland - Sport Inclusion Disability Programme;
6. Romania - Free Camps for Young People with Disabilities; and
7. The Netherlands - Active without boundaries.

The key findings of the study can be summarised in terms of:

- Benefits of sport participation for people with disabilities, namely personal health, individual development and social/environmental benefits;
- Barriers to participation in physical activities at individual, social and environmental levels;
- Participation facilitators, such as raising awareness and improving the communication on sport opportunities.

The EOC EU Office welcomes the Commission’s initiative to lead such crucial research and strongly encourages all partners to consult it!

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

EU Commission report - [Mapping on access to sport for people with disabilities](#)



## INTERNAL AND VISITS

### EOC EU Office Board meets in Lausanne

The EOC EU Office Board had its annual meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland, on 24 January 2019. In the meeting the accounts and implementation of the Work Plan for 2018 as well as budget and Work Plan for 2019, were approved. In addition, the operational guidelines of the Office were also discussed.

In 2019, many changes are happening in Brussels, since the EU elections will take place in May. Following the elections, new Commissioners will also be appointed. Both of these will keep the EOC EU Office staff busy, as it is crucial to establish good relations both with new Parliament and the new Commissioners. In addition, the discussions on the future EU funding programmes for period 2021-2027 will continue. The Office has been very active in these discussions and will

continue its work in 2019 to better mainstream sport in different funding programmes.

EOC President Janez Kocijancic thanked the EOC EU Office for its excellent work in 2018 and expressed his wish that the Office continues its work to facilitate the access of the NOCs and organised sport into the EU funding. This has been and clearly is one of the priorities of the Office's work.



## *The House of European Sport*

### EOC EU Office welcomes German regional sport associations

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On 28 and 29 January, the EOC EU Office organised its yearly seminar with the German regional sport associations (Landes-sportbünde) and youth organisations (Landes-sportjugenden).

Folker Hellmund, Director of the EOC EU Office, and Felix Schäfer, EU Policy Officer of the

German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB), gave an update on the latest developments regarding EU sport policy and funding. The subsequent discussion especially focused on current political challenges at EU Level and the future funding period from 2021, including the development of Erasmus+ and the question, how sport can be better included in the structural funds like the European Social Fund Plus and the Regional Development Funds. The use of regional funding is an important topic for all regional associations and the meeting allowed the participants to exchange on their work on the regional level as well as to present their international and European activities.

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## PARTNERS' CORNER

### DOSB presents position on virtual sports and eGaming



In Germany, the topic of "eSport" has experienced a strong dynamic for about a year now and is intensively discussed in sports clubs and associations. Amongst

other things, an important driver for the discussion in Germany was the reference to the topic in the coalition agreement of the Federal Government in March 2018.

Against this background, the German Olympic Sports Federation (DOSB) convened a working group on "eSport" in spring 2018 to develop recommendations for the future handling of the topic. In order to integrate different perspectives, interests and views, approximately 25 people from DOSB, member organisations, science and the "eSport" industry were invited to the working group.

As a result, the group developed four scenarios, which outlined the range of strategic handling of the topic and were to serve as a basis for argumentation and work for further use in strategy discussions.

Building on this, the Presidential Board and the Executive Board developed their own positioning, which was published in October 2018 and has since received a lot of attention.

The core elements of the positioning are the following:

The DOSB

- ...distinguishes between electronic sports simulations (virtual sports) and eGaming: When one refers to a transfer of sports into

the virtual world, one speaks of electronic sports simulations (or virtual sports for short). By eGaming, the DOSB understands the competitive play of video and computer games of all kinds according to established rules, which do not correspond to the virtual sports.

- ...recognises the importance of electronic sport simulations for the further development of sport and sports federations. It recommends the systematic elaboration of strategies for the development of sports in the virtual space and of tailor-made instruments for club counselling and development in the federations.
- ...assumes that eGaming in its entirety does not meet the central criteria for admission that constitute and shape the sports and federation system under the umbrella of the DOSB.
- ...recognises the importance of eGaming as part of a modern youth and everyday culture, but not as an independent sporting activity. The DOSB supports the development of qualifications and educational concepts for dealing with electronic sport simulations and eGaming in clubs. This will expand the range of extra-sport activities on offer and the social responsibility of clubs and federations.
- ...does not see any independent eGaming departments in clubs, meaning that for the time being DOSB does not demand any organisational and reporting obligations of clubs regarding eGaming. The DOSB however recommends that those clubs active in the field of virtual sports report their activities via their sports reports. This means that there is currently no need for one or

## *The House of European Sport*

more independent eGaming/"eSport" federations under the umbrella of the DOSB.

- ...works consistently towards ensuring that no eGaming activities are offered in clubs that do not correspond to the recognised canon of values of the DOSB sports system.
- As a non-profit sports confederation, we currently see no reason to change the tax code and to include eGaming/"eSport", an area that primarily pursues commercial exploitation interests.

An important finding from previous discussions and above all from the preparatory work of the working group was that the question of whether "eSport" constitutes a sport is not by itself decisive. Only bringing together different and at the same time relevant aspects (e.g. motor skills, ethics, business model, participation, etc.) allows us to evaluate the whole picture, which leads us to the conclusion that the large area of eGaming

does not meet the central admission criteria that characterise the sports club and sports association system under the umbrella of DOSB. At the same time, we see opportunities in the area of virtual sports, which we do want to use together with the sports associations in the future.

Over the last months, DOSB has noticed that politicians are increasingly taking up the position of the DOSB and are actively and constructively engaging with it. Within sports, the DOSB General Meeting on December 1, 2018 in Düsseldorf discussed and accepted the position. This makes it the guideline for work in the DOSB member organisations.

DOSB is looking forward to a European exchange and positioning of organised sport in the future.

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### FURTHER INFORMATION

[Positioning of the DOSB Presidential Board and Executive Board: "Dealing with electronic sport simulations, eGaming and "eSport"](#)

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## NEXT MONTH

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|----------------------|---|
| <b>5 February</b>    | Erasmus + Sport Infoday, Brussels   |
| <b>4-6 February</b>  | POINTS Seminar, Lyon  |
| <b>9-16 February</b> | European Youth Olympic Festival, Sarajevo                                     |
| <b>11 February</b>   | Sport Unit breakfast - "Is piracy a threat against European sport?", Brussels |