



European Union and Sport



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Belgium Presidency – Outcome of the 1st Structured Dialogue meeting on sport

On 6 December 2010, the Belgian EU-Presidency, led by Flemish Minister for Sport Philippe Muyters, brought together representatives of the EU-institutions and the sports movement. This was done for the first time within the framework of the new Sport Council following the adoption by the Sports Ministers of a resolution on structured dialogue on 18 November 2010.

The European institutions were represented in the Council by the Team Presidency (Spain, Belgium, and Hungary) and Poland as a member of the next Team Presidency. The European Commission was represented by Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou and the European Parliament by MEP Emma McClarkin.

For the sport movement, the Belgian Presidency opted to invite the European Olympic Committees (represented by Marc Theisen, president of the COSL and member of the executive committee of the EOC, and Folker Hellmund, director of the EOC EU Office), the Association of European Team Sports /UEFA, the European Paralympic Committee, ENGSO and ISCA Europe.

During this informal meeting, the participants discussed the future EU-collaboration in the area of sport."

Together with the Commission and Parliament, we have decided to conduct a regular dialogue with stakeholders from the sports world", says Philippe Muyters.

The exchange of input focused on the results of the Council Meeting, the future of the structured EU-dialogue and topical aspects such as social inclusion, financing for sport by the EU, sports betting, governance, and giving shape to the future EU-sport actions.

One year after sport became a formal EU-competency, the Council is now sending a clear signal to stakeholders from the world of sport that their opinions are valued. "After all, they know best what is happening in the field", explains Muyters. "We need to collaborate in order to bring sport a step further in the EU and to seize this new opportunity for the benefit of EU-citizens."

The next EU Structured dialogue meeting on sport is scheduled during the Hungarian presidency, probably around the Sport Council meeting on 19 May 2011. The discussions will probably focus on the follow-up of the European Commission Communication on sport.



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Hungary takes over the rotating EU Presidency

On 1 January Hungary succeeded Belgium as the head of the Council of the European Union for the next six months.

Regarding to sport, priorities have already been defined such as:

- Discuss the forthcoming European Commission communication
- Debate the direction and objectives of the European sports policy in particular sports cooperation
- Represent interests of member States in the anti-doping struggle at the international level

These topics as well as "Sport for Senior Citizens" will be discussed during the Informal Sports Ministers' Meeting on 23 January.

On 25 January these guidelines will be detailed when the Hungarian Ministers for Education, Sport, Culture and Social Policy

present their work programmes for the Presidency.

Most important dates of the Presidency concerning sport are the following:

- 21-22 February : European Sport Forum in Budapest
- 22-23 February : Informal Sports Ministers' Meeting in Budapest and Gödöllő (Hungary)
- 19 May : Formal Sports Ministers' Meeting in Brussels
- 27-28 June : Informal Sport Directors' Meeting (Hungary)

More information is available on the official website of the Presidency:

<http://www.eu2011.hu/>

European Commission: Publication of the Communication on Sport

After several postponements, the Communication on Sport of the European Commission entitled "The Lisbon Treaty – Developing the European dimension of sport" has finally been published on 18 January 2011.

The Communication follows a public consultation towards sports actors which took place during the first semester 2010.

It aims to take into account the Lisbon Treaty provisions on sport which created a new competence of the EU in the field of sport and to further clarify how the European Commission intends to deal with sport issues the coming years. It comes in addition to the White Paper on Sport in 2007, which

action plan has still to be implemented until 2012.

Following the framework proposed in 2007, the European Commission proposals cover three main areas. Each chapter proposes actions to be carried out by the European Commission and the Member States, which are highlighted in the press release published by the European Commission:

1) The societal role of sport

This part covers the fight against doping, education, training and qualifications in sport (dual careers), prevention and fight against violence and intolerance, enhancing health

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through sport, social inclusion in and through sport.

The most important issue from the Commission's point of view in this part seems to be the fight against doping. The European Commission proposes the "accession of the EU to the Anti-Doping Convention of the Council of Europe", which shows the ambition of the EU in this field. The European Commission also wishes to develop guidelines on dual careers and on EU physical activity.

2) The economic dimension of sport

The economic dimension of sport covers sustainable financing of sport, application of EU state aid rules to sport and regional development and employability.

In order to ensure sustainable financing of sport, the European Commission supports the collective selling of media rights and puts more focus on sport-related intellectual property rights. The sports organisations already welcomed these announcements.

With regards to a future EU funding program for sport, the Communication does not contain unfortunately any reference despite some announcements made in 2010. Concerning the mainstreaming of EU funding programs for sports, the European Commission recommends the "full exploitation of sport-related aspects of the Structural Funds" which is a step forward.

3) The organisation of sport

The chapter on the organisation of sport includes the promotion of good governance in sport, the specific nature of sport, free movement and nationality of sportspeople, transfer rules and activities of sports agents, integrity of sporting competitions and European social dialogue in the sports sector. Regarding the free movement issue, the European Commission intends to issue

guidance on "how to reconcile EU rules on the free movement of citizens with the organisation of competitions in individual sports on a national basis". A working document is annexed to the communication.

Next steps : The Communication is now in the hands of the Council of the EU and the European Parliament. The Sports Ministers of the EU will most probably adopt a resolution on the communication during their next formal meeting on 19 May in Brussels. The European Parliament will draft a report in the course of the year 2011. The sport movement will have the opportunity very quickly to comment the initiative to the EU Institutions and the Member States during the next EU Sports Forum which will take place in Budapest on 21 and 22 February.

For further information:

The Communication (in all EU languages) and its annexes (only in English so far) are available on EUR-LEX website:
http://ec.europa.eu/prelex/detail_dossier_real.cfm?CL=en&DosId=200080

The press release of the European Commission "Commission strengthens the European dimension of sport" (IP 11/43) and FAQ (MEMO 11/24) are available in all EU languages on Europa - RAPID website:
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/43&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>



The Olympic and Sports Movement meets with Commissioner Vassiliou

On 27 January 2011, the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) met with Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne.

The IOC delegation was composed of Denis Oswald, IOC Executive Board Member and President of ASOIF (Olympic Summer Sports); René Fasel, IOC Executive Board Member and President of AIOWF (Olympic Winter Sports); Hein Verbruggen, IOC Honorary Member and President of SportAccord; Patrick Baumann, IOC member and Secretary General of FIBA; Guy Drut, IOC Member; Raffaele Pagnozzi, Secretary General of the European Olympic Committees; Bernard Lapasset, IRB President; Jérôme Valcke, FIFA Secretary General; Andrew Ryan, Director of ASOIF, Christophe De Kepper, IOC Chief of Staff and Folker Hellmund, director of the EOC EU Office.

The aim of the meeting was to exchange views about the new communication on sport "Developing the European Dimension in Sport".

The representatives of the Olympic Movement attending the meeting welcomed the Commission's support for the collective selling of media rights as a means to ensure financial solidarity and redistribution mechanisms within sport. They also praised the Commission's approach to the protection of intellectual property rights owned by sports organisations, which are an important revenue source for sport. In addition, support was expressed for the Commission's intention to further define the specific nature of sport.

Whilst the communication paper clearly recognises sport as a tool for social inclusion, the representatives of the Olympic

Movement expressed concern that a new dedicated EU funding programme for sport has been put on hold. The importance of a specific budget line for the promotion of the social role of sport, especially at grassroots level, was stressed by the participants.

The IOC President took the opportunity to update Commissioner Vassiliou on the Olympic Movement's latest initiatives in the fields of good governance, irregular betting and athletes' career management – areas that are also addressed in the EU communication paper.



After the meeting, the IOC President said: "With the Lisbon Treaty and an article on sport in force, it is now time to make sure that the role of sport in Europe is further strengthened. Today's meeting with Commissioner Vassiliou was very productive and gave us the opportunity to discuss how we can mainstream the social role of sport in various fields, and, at the same time fight the threats to sport's integrity, such as doping and irregular betting. I am looking forward to continuing the dialogue with the Commissioner in the future."

Commissioner Vassiliou said: "The IOC is clearly a very important stakeholder for us, and I would like to thank the IOC President and the Olympic Movement representatives for their valuable feedback on how we can move things forward. The measures that we have formulated in our recent communication paper highlight sport's



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contribution to our society and outline a number of challenges which we want to

tackle in close coordination with the member states and the world of sport."

EU-policy matters

EU Working Group „Education and Training in Sport“ discusses the European Qualification Framework

On 7 - 8 December 2010 the EU working group on education and training in sport met in Ghent, Belgium, to have in-depth discussions on the European Qualification Framework (EQF). The objective of the EQF is to link formal, non-formal and informal qualifications of different countries together. It acts as a translation interface to make qualifications easier to understand in the EU for an ever more mobile workforce. Sport organisations offer a variety of educational programmes, the participation in non-formal education and sport activities in general has a learning impact on informal learning. The European Commission recommends that sport organisations should engage in these discussions as well and approach their respective ministries.

In order for the EQF to work, EU Member States have to create foremost their own National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) and link them with the EQF. EU Member States have set up working groups drafting the NQF. The progress of this work varies a lot among EU Member States. For instance, France has concluded the work on the NQF,

whereas other countries are well advanced in setting up an NQF in the formal sector; however much work has still to be done in the non-formal/ informal sector. The general problem accompanying the issue of informal learning validation is the assessment of the acquired soft skills and competences, as no examinations or measurements are particularly suited.

To promote the educational role of sport in the EU, the European Commission encourages EU Member States to include sport in the process of setting up an NQF. In addition, the European Commission aims also at including sport in the Council recommendation on the promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning, whose expected date of adoption is June 2011.

Future reform of the Value Added Tax (VAT): The European Commission launches a Green Paper and a public consultation

The European Commission launched in December 2010 a wide public consultation on how the VAT system can be strengthened and improved, to the benefit of citizens, businesses and Member States (IP 10/1633).

The aim is to give all stakeholders a chance to express their thoughts and views on the problems that currently exist with regard to VAT, and how these can be addressed. The



Commission will use the feedback from this consultation to decide the best approach in creating a more stable, robust and effective VAT system for the future.

The Green Paper on VAT entitled “**Towards a simpler, more robust and efficient VAT system**” sets out questions under a few broad headings, while keeping the consultation as open as possible to all ideas and opinions. First, it asks whether the fundamentals of the current VAT system should be overhauled, and whether goods and services should be taxed in the Member State of origin or where they are sold. Next, the Green Paper looks at specific issues which have come into question over the years. Among these are whether **reduced VAT rates are still relevant today, whether the rules on deductions are neutral enough**, whether and how the system can be made more fraud-proof, and how red tape can be cut in VAT transactions. Finally, contributors to the consultation are asked whether and how the collection of VAT could be improved in order to close the €100 billion VAT gap that currently exists in the EU. The Green Paper encourages all points of view, and the consultation is not limited to the set questions. In fact, contributors are encouraged to raise any other issues that they feel might be relevant to the future of VAT.

The Commission invites all interested to contribute to the public consultation, **which will be open until 31st May 2011**. Based on the feedback received, the Commission will present the priorities for the future VAT system in a Communication at the end of 2011.

Concerning sport, the issue is of outmost importance for grassroots sports, since some countries in the EU apply reduced VAT rates and/or deductions. This matter is in fact so important that the last European Commission Working Group on Non Profit Sport Organisations end of January 2011 had a long debate on VAT, when the recommendation n°38 of the White Paper on Sport 2007, which is still fully valid, was recalled: “*Given the important societal role of sport and its strong local anchoring, the Commission will defend maintaining the existing possibilities of reduced VAT rates for sport*”. The EOC EU Office will further discuss the issue during its next partners meeting in March 2011 and assess whether a coordinated action is required in the framework of this public consultation.

Further information on the Green Paper as well as its technical annex can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/comm_on/consultations/tax/2010_11_future_vat_en.htm

The Council of the European Union has adopted conclusions on betting and gambling

During the Competitiveness Council meeting which was held in Brussels on 10 December, “Conclusions on the framework for gambling and betting in the EU member states” were adopted.

In this document, the Council “recalls the need for a discussion on the European level gambling services and issues related to gambling services [...]”. It insists on online

gambling services because “by their very nature [they] pose global challenges”.

The role of the regulatory public authorities is also emphasized. The Member States are responsible for the regulation in their territory. Nevertheless, the necessity of cooperation between the national regulatory authorities from the different Members States of the EU is required due to the



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“cross-border nature” of gambling and betting issues.

The last issue pointed out is “the sustainable contribution of lottery and related services to society”. It recognizes that contributions from both State lotteries and charitable lotteries “play an important role for society, via for example the funding of good causes”.

The integral text is available on:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/intm/118398.pdf

Funding programs and studies

A2B workshop on educational institutions at the IOC - 28 January 2011



Approximately 30 experts, including active and retired athletes from all over Europe, met on the 26th and 27th of January 2011 at the IOC headquarter in Lausanne, Switzerland, and discussed how educational institutions can create an enabling environment and framework for dual careers.

The lack of cooperation between educational institutions and sport organizations is one of the main concerns expressed by the workshop participants. In order to improve dual career opportunities for athletes, it is vital that these two stakeholders work closely together. Agreements addressing dual career issues such as providing flexible learning and exam schedules, scholarships and structural questions could remedy this situation.

A detailed report of the workshop’s deliberations and recommendations will be published soon on the A2B website.

<http://www.athletestobusiness.eu/>





Publication of the EU study on equal treatment of non-nationals in individual sports competitions

A study commissioned by the European Commission on the equal treatment of non-nationals in individual sports competitions has been conducted by the T.M.C Asser Institute and published at the beginning of January.

According to the authors of the study, "*Equal treatment requires the abolition of both direct discrimination and rules which, whilst not framed in terms of nationality, in fact lead to unequal treatment*". Based on this definition the study makes a negative assessment in matter of sport regarding to discrimination in Europe: "*[...] sport is often inherently based on nationality*".

Experts from all the Member States have been consulted. The study is organized around five parts:

- 1) Freedom of movement principles and their application to sport
- 2) Country report for each Member State
- 3) Report for each individual sport
- 4) List of the different arguments related to non-national treatment in twenty-six Olympic individual sports have been established
- 5) The last part is an analysis of the situation followed by recommendations. In this part four categories of rules have been identified and analyzed regarding their relation to EU law.

In the executive summary of the study the authors identify causes that might explain discriminations based on nationality: "*[...] many sport bodies lack the expertise and*

specialist knowledge required in order to ensure that their practices comply with EU law [...]".

The study recommends exchanging good practices in order to solve these problems. Nevertheless it also adopts a more restrictive approach saying "*[...] where national associations fail to make adjustments required by EU law and where Member States fail to protect the rights of non-nationals to access sports, it may be necessary for the Commission to consider more direct approaches such as infringement proceedings*".

The outcome of the study has to be linked with the Communication on sport. As an annex to the Communication the COM has provided an interesting staff working document on sport and free movement that refers to amateur sport as well. Indeed, indirect discriminatory rules justified by a legitimate, necessary and proportionate objective to preserve specific characteristic of sport have been reaffirmed in both documents. It might also be noticed that, for the first time, according to the study and the Communication the free movement rules apply also to amateur sport.

The study and the staff working document is available on the Sport Unit of the European Commission's website
http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/doc/f_studies/study_equal_treatment_non_nationals_final_rpt%20_dec_2010.pdf



European Year of Volunteering 2011 highlights the role of civil society across Europe

The European Commission got a head start in launching the European Year of Volunteering 2011 (EYV) on 2 December 2010 in Brussels. Vice-President Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship was joined by Jean-Marc Delizée, Belgium's federal Secretary of State for Social Affairs,

and European Parliament Member Marian Harkin at a press event in Brussels.

One of the European wide elements of the Year, the EYV Tour, was launched in Brussels

at the same time. The Tour, actually a pavilion erected at a public place, offers space for volunteer organisations to showcase



their work and to engage with policy makers and the public, and will visit each of the EU's 27 capitals during the year. Another element of the Year, the EYV Relay, was also introduced. The Relay refers to a group of 27 volunteer journalists who produce reports for the media about the activities of the year. Both actions offer opportunities for sport organisations to get involved on the national level.

The series of conferences continued on 8 January in Budapest with the first thematic conference, titled "Recognising the contribution of volunteering to economy, society and the individual – where are we

now, and where do we want to go?". This time Commissioner Reding was joined by the

Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister Tibor Navracsics for a keynote speech, after which two parallel sessions took place; one on evidence-based policy-making and the other on the recognition of skills gained through volunteering. Sport was notably visible in the second panel, where ENGSO Vice President Jan Boháč underlined the various roles and skills that volunteers in sport have, and made clear the importance of awareness and attitudes in the appropriate recognition.

Further conferences on volunteering will follow, including one on the achievements of volunteers in May, another one aimed at civil society organisations in Athens in October, as well as the closing conference in Warsaw in December. The Polish presidency is also planning a sports specific conference on volunteering in September 2011.

One of the main partners of the Commission in implementing the Year is the EYV2011 Alliance, a network of civil society organisations working in the field of volunteering. On a national level, the EYV2011 is run by National Coordinating Bodies, whose contact details can be found on the Commission's website.

More information:

Website of the EYV2011 Alliance:

<http://www.eyv2011.eu/>

Website of the Commission:

<http://europa.eu/volunteering/>

Materials from the 1st Thematic Conference:

<http://europa.eu/volunteering/en/conference/budapest-conference>



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Dates in February 2011

- 31.01.-02.02: Kick off Meeting ENGSO EU Project in Brussels
- 15.: Council Working Party on Sport
- 16.-17.: A2B Study Visit
21. – 22.: Sport Forum in Budapest
- 22.-23.: Informal Sportminister Meeting

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