



CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE PROGRAMME IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING (2014-2020)

Introduction

Sport is the largest social activity in Europe. Developments in sport affect more people across the continent than in any other movement. 40% of European citizens participate in sporting activities at least once a week, and 60 million Europeans are members of sport clubs¹.

The European Union has repeatedly recognised the importance of sport and its links with education. The Lisbon Treaty, article 165 (2), specifically states that the European Union shall take account of the social and educational function of sport while contributing to the promotion of European sporting issues. The Commission's White Paper on Sport (2007) also mentions the various ways in which sport and physical activity can be supported through the Lifelong Learning Programme.

The European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO) is the European umbrella body for the National Sport Confederations and National Olympic Committees and thus represents the movement in its broadest sense – from children and youth sport, to sport-for-all activities up to elite sports. In 2009, ENGSO implemented an EU-wide citizens project EU:SPORT:FUTURE, which gathered the input of more than 1000 Europeans through online contributions, workshops and conferences. One of the five areas discussed as part of this project was sport and education, and the results of these discussions are incorporated in this document.

As a response to the public consultation on the future programme in the field of education and training, in the following paragraphs, ENGSO would like to highlight some key aspects related to sport, education and training.

Objectives and activities of the programme

The European Year of Education through Sport in 2004 highlighted the benefits sport can deliver in education and fostered partnerships between educational institutions and sports organisations. School sport plays a crucial role in inducing young people to be physically active, which is especially important as sedentary lifestyles amongst school children are increasing. ICT in physical education and other new and innovative methods remain unexploited. Therefore, ENGSO highlights that:

1. The future programme should support increasing cooperation between educational institutions and sport clubs.
2. New and innovative methods, such as using ICT in physical education, and networks facilitating cooperation in the area should be supported.

The sporting career of a high-level athlete is often short, and the transitions between a sport career and a second professional career are faced with several challenges. Athletes lack support both in academic education and in vocational training. ENGSO is currently taking part in the project "Athletes2Business", which aims at tackling the above issues, and in light of this experience, it is important to follow and to develop the whole process in both EU and non-EU countries in order to promote the mobility of athletes and to ensure successful dual careers. Therefore, ENGSO emphasises that:

3. The programme should support the development of existing networks and the creation of new networks in order to share knowledge and exchange good practices in the field of sport and education, namely on the issue of dual careers.

¹ Special Eurobarometer 334, Sport and Physical Activity 2010



4. Developing programmes and support mechanisms for combining on the one hand a sporting career and on the other hand preparations for a second professional career through education and training should be supported.

Competent coaches, teachers and other educators working in the field of sport play a key role in educating young people. Many of the people engaged in the sports sector are volunteers, whose sufficient competences are equally important. Beside the formal education sector, sport is an important tool for non-formal learning, contributing to more cohesive and inclusive societies. Therefore, ENGSO highlights that:

5. Actions promoting capacity development of teachers, coaches and other educators, including volunteers, should be supported.
6. Actions using sport as a tool by means of non-formal education, e.g. civic education through sport, should be supported.

The mobility of people engaged in the field of sport is hindered by shortcomings in the systems of recognising qualifications and other obstacles. Therefore, ENGSO underlines that:

7. European projects in the sector of recognition of qualifications, including those acquired in non-formal settings, should be supported.
8. The programme should contribute to encouraging Member States to implement a common sport qualification framework.
9. The mobility of athletes, volunteers, officials and other people engaged in the sports sector should be supported to increase their learning mobility.

Scope of the programme

While education and training activities touch many areas, including sports, ENGSO underlines the necessity of making the future EU programme more accessible for sport and education. Furthermore, sport is an international activity, and sporting activities in Europe are not limited to the European Union. Therefore, ENGSO highlights that:

1. Sport should be included as an annual priority in the programme guide and as a funding priority in relevant work programmes and calls for proposals. This would ensure that the potential of sport in contributing to the EU education and training goals and the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy is realised through sport-related projects and actions, and reflect the increased importance of sport at Community level after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.
2. The future EU programme in the field of education and training should be open to the participation of non-EU countries.

Conclusion

To conclude, ENGSO highlights the necessity of having a substantial programme for promoting education and training in Europe, with a budget at least equivalent to the current financial framework.

Following the above remarks on the future EU programme in the field of education and training, ENGSO encourages the Commission to take these suggestions into account when preparing the programme proposal. Accordingly, ENGSO wishes to offer its active support for the practical implementation of the future programme, and would take appropriate measures to inform sport organisations about existing opportunities, and to encourage their participation thus contributing to ensuring a steady flow of good quality project proposals to the programme.