



**Sport and
Cultures in
Dialogue**



Local Citizens Panel in Albania 7. – 9.5.2010



With “Sport and Cultures in Dialogue” project ISCA (International Sport and Cultures Association), CESS (European Confederation sport and Health) and project partners organize and facilitate a direct and trans-national dialogue between citizens in existing EU member countries and in candidate/potential candidate countries in South East Europe - Croatia, Macedonia and Albania. The dialogue is focused on the role of sport in developing civil societies and is highlighted current strengths and weaknesses of sport and its organizations.

Local Citizens’ Panel in Tirana, Albania, 7. – 9.5.2010

Participants in the citizens’ panel shared experiences on the role of sport and sport organisations in developing civil society and formulated input to the Sport Citizens’ Forum in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The main purpose was to facilitate a dialogue that is citizens-centred (taking Albania and sports organizations as starting points, but engaging citizens in their personal capacity), specific (relating to Albanian particular situation) and culturally sensitive (acknowledging and working inside the vastly different starting points in terms of civil society concepts and development).



Education and Culture DG

‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme

**“With the support of the “Europe for Citizens”
program of the European Union.”**

The Panel was coordinated by ISCA and CESS and organized by one of Sport and Cultures in Dialogue project partner: **"Intelektualet e rinj, Shprese" (IRSH)/ Albanian Youth Parliament**



The Panel participants were:

- persons represented the leadership or management level of the involved civil society organizations
- citizens who are active in civil society debate or organizations at the grass-root level,
- local authorities and organizations,
- citizens' groups,
- civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations,
- educational institutions (universities, institutes)
- organizations active in the field of voluntary work



Citizens Panel in Albania gave the opportunity:

- to increase knowledge and awareness of the societal role of sport and sport organizations, including the content of the White Paper on Sport,
- to train the civic competences such as openness and receptiveness towards other people's views and various methods of reaching decisions through deliberations, compromise and consensus,
- to meet other sports organisations and other institutional stakeholders in the field of sport and to strength intercultural competencies through the meeting.



Report of proceedings, lessons learned and best practises presented during the events

1. Introduction to the Europe for Citizens Program or How can we increase knowledge and awareness of the societal role of sport and sport organizations?,

by Artan Shyti, Director of the Institute for Scientific Research in Sport, Albania

The Citizens Panel in Albania had the following specific objectives, which should be implemented on local and national level:

- bringing together people from local communities and project partner associations to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history and to build for the future;
- fostering action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship and democracy, shared values, common history and culture through cooperation within civil society organizations on local, national and international level;
- bringing Europe closer to Albanian citizens by promoting Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past;
- encouraging interaction between citizens and civil society organizations from project partners countries, contributing to intercultural dialogue.

Artan Shyti sad:

“Our goal is to work for democracy through sport. If we build democracy trough sport we develop or country. If we work alone, we will never achieve results we want. It is important how our organizations are functioning in order to build democracy system. In sport you learn how to win and how to loose, you learn to obey the rules and you learn how to work in a team.



Tirana has only 18 sport facilities. We can not find many play grounds in school or beside schools that are open for free in the afternoon for kids doing sport. Young people would like to have more sport activities. **Lets open the schools gyms for them in the afternoon.** But we also have to look beyond limitations and alternative places to o sport: for ex. Nature.

We are different, we have different culture and history, but trough sport we all speak the same language.

I see ISCA as good environment for us to exchange good practices and to work together in the future.”

Artan Shyti, Director of the Institute for Scientific Research in Sport in Albania has closed his session with: “ **Sport is and will be, for sure, more and more important in the society. We should be ready to use this importance and not to be used from it. We must play an active role in ensuring that the sport of the future keeps growing in a positive way, preventing it from a lot of negative impacts that the modern society has the influence on it. Sport can be a very important instrument for a better society but in order to play this role, sport must develop itself in the right way. If we want to play an active and positive role in the society we should be able to develop and active and positive sport system.**

The people working in sport and people that collaborate with sport institutions must be aware of the positive impact that a healthy, democratic, modern, effective and serious sport system has on the entire society in local, national and international level. ”

Group discussion 1: Europe for Citizens program

Initiatives and future perspectives developed by participants:

- we have to show evidences of social role of sport and sport organizations by involvement of local community , local authorities (local decision makers like mayors), ministries, institutions like universities
- we need to exchange good examples from developed societies, organizations
- to increase the social role of sport by promoting the introduction of new sports
- new technologies can be used to give more visibility to sport events (like facebook, social nets...)
- media can be communication tool for increasing the public knowledge and interest on sport for all activities - we suggest to organize training for (sport) managers to get knowledge and experiences about cooperation with media and how to communicate with public authorities



We like sport because:

- it is healthy
- It gives fun
- Keeps you active
- Increase self esteem
- Sport connecting people
- Gives national identity
- It si part of the culture
- It is a tool for education
- Can lead to social integration
- Represents a common language
- It has economical and political role

How can we increase the role of sport in our society?

- by building more sport facilities
- by education volunteers and organizing the volunteers
- by raising awareness of its role and personal responsibility
- by organising exchange program (for ex. trainers, instructions)

SPORT.IS.LIFE

- EU citizenship gives the opportunity to meet and to exchange our experiences
- meetings give us opportunities to know more about different sport and culture strategies
- SPORT.IS.LIFE foundation can be a tool for making more people more active

Albania does not have national strategy on sport and health. We suggest that national promotion on physical activity is developed by Ministry of tourism, youth, culture and sport in cooperation with national sport for all association and in international partnership.



2. Presentation on the EU White paper on sport

"The civil society and it's role in the European Union policy" by Toni Llop, CESS President



"As soon as the political leaders understand their role to serve the society, the civil society will develop its self.", said Toni Llop.

Civil dialogue "is the ongoing and structured conversation that policy-makers maintain with the organisations of civil society".

European Union and Civil Society: interested parties are consulted through different tools, such as Green and White Papers, communications, consultation documents, advisory committees, expert groups, ad-hoc

consultations and consultation via the Internet is also common practice. Often, consultation is a combination of different tools and takes place in several phases during the preparation of the proposal.

Sport is a growing **social and economic phenomenon** which makes an important contribution to the European Union's strategic objectives of solidarity and prosperity.

The European institutions have recognised the specificity of the role sport plays in European society, based on volunteer-driven structures, in terms of health, education, social integration, and culture.

Societal role of sport:

- Enhancing public health through physical activity
- Joining forces in the fight against doping
- Enhancing the role of sport in education and training
- Promoting volunteering and active citizenship through sport
- Using the potential of sport for social inclusion integration and equal opportunities
- Strengthening the prevention of and fight against racism and violence
- Sharing our values with other parts of the world
- Supporting sustainable development

The economic role of sport:

- Sport is a dynamic and fast-growing sector with an underestimated macro-economic impact, and can contribute to the Lisbon objectives of growth and job creation. It can serve as a tool for local and regional development, urban regeneration or rural development. Sport has synergies with tourism and can stimulate the upgrading of infrastructure and the emergence of new partnerships for financing sport and leisure facilities.
- A study presented during the Austrian Presidency in 2006 suggested that sport in a broader sense generated value-added of 407 billion euros in 2004, accounting for 3.7% of EU GDP, and employment for 15 million people or 5.4% of the labour force. This contribution of sport should be made more visible and promoted in EU policies
- Sports financing (fess, gambling, merchandising, rights...

Weaknesses of civil society in sport:

- Financing (self financing)
- Decision making process
- Innovation: activities and management model
- Social chances: sedentary habits
- Apparition of competitors (open market)
- Communication skills (technologies, social net...)



Opportunities of civil society in sport:

- EU Legal framework (Lisbon Treaty, White Paper on sport, ...)
- Social chances and new demand of services: demographic, cultural...
- Development of the social demand
- Potential alliances and partnership (public and private sector)

2. Framework for group discussion on White paper on sport:

- By promoting the physical and sports activities, we develop the taste and culture of a balanced practice through physical pleasure. What is the situation on the national level? What good practice we know? What is the future perspective? Who are our co-partners in development of promotion of sport and physical activity for all generations?
- What partnerships/activities do you feel are necessary within your national project/country that would help further the efforts of your Association in providing increased and more comprehensive services for national organizations in the Health/health promotion activities?
- Within your specific national project and geographic location (country), what are the most important issues for Physical Activity in Europe to address in order to better the health status, health promotion and sport/health activities?
- Through its role in formal and non-formal education, sport reinforces Europe's human capital. The values conveyed through sport help develop knowledge, motivation, skills and readiness for personal effort. Time spent in sport activities at school and at university produces health and education benefits which need to be enhanced. What is the status on non-formal education in your country and in your Association?
- Volunteering in sport organisations provides many occasions for non-formal education which



need to be recognised and enhanced. Sport also provides active possibilities for young people's engagement and involvement in society and may have a beneficial effect in helping people steer away from delinquency. How does your Association promote volunteering and active citizenship through sport?

- Sport can also facilitate the integration into society of migrants and persons of foreign origin as well as support inter-cultural dialogue. How does your Association and your national government use potential of sport for social inclusion, integration and equal opportunities?

Initiatives and future perspectives developed by participants:

- to make a strategy for long term process, to promote physical activity as a tool to improve personal health and lifestyle.
- to encourage interaction between citizens and civil society organizations from project partners countries to promote the right that each citizen can choose to practice in sport according to self motivation , preferences and possibilities.
- to maintain good connection with communities keeping their traditional sports and ethnic manifestation alive
- to further the efforts of our Associations in providing services for national organizations in the sport/health/health promotion activities we need partnerships with governments, schools, health sector, insurance companies, local authorities, medias, sport companies (Nike, Adidas).
- Through its role in formal and non-formal education, sport reinforces Europe's human capital. The values conveyed through sport help develop knowledge, motivation, skills and readiness for personal effort. Time spent in sport activities at school and at university produces health and education benefits which need to be enhanced. Non-formal education has to be official recognised by civil society and all authorities.

- to bring together people from local communities and project partner associations to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history and to build for the future. This is what we call non-formal education.
- by sport we enhance tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue
- sport is a tool for integration of disable people in "healthy" civil society and our associations are possibilities for them and for us for social inclusion integration and equal opportunities

Panel Summary Conclusions, prepared by "Intelektualet e rinj, Shprese" (IRSH)/ Albanian Youth Parliament and Albanian Associations participated on the Panel :

Parlament Rinor, Albania
 AEGEE, Albania
 Bashkia Shkoder, Albania
 Qendra Sportive Zmijani, Albania
 Qendra Sportive XXL, Shkoder , Albania
 Muzeu Arkeologjik, Albania
 Mesues Fiskulture, Albania
 Primary School Shkoder, Albania
 LDA, Albania
 Panorama Sport, Albania
 Bashkia Durres, Albania
 Drejtor Shejnaze Juka, Albania
 Regjisore, Albania
 Universitetit L.Gurakgi, Albania
 GISH, Albania
 Mai Tai Club, Albania
 Special Olympic Association Albania



The Citizens Panel organised in Albania to promote Sport for all activities was a wonderful opportunity to bring together citizens and key actors working in the field of sport and citizens to dialogue by bringing their experiences and sharing their realities among them. It is important to note that there is a common approach that sport is a useful tool to be promoted among citizens. Everybody recognised the important role that sport has to the health, to meet people, socialising, communicating, improving cooperation, education of citizens for democracy etc.



Most of the participants brought to the audience several problems and difficulties which sport faces to Albania. One of the main one which almost all were mentioning was lack of funds and lack of cooperation from the government to help promotion of sport. The government support was not mentioned only by financial help but even formally by improving legislation and as well encouraging sport actors to work in the field and promote their initiatives.

As a clear expression of this argument was that none of the responsible Sport authorities in Albania either in central or local government was not present in the panel. The lack of this cooperation from government, participants says mainly is coming because:

1) People who are responsible in the government mainly are nominated because of their political background rather than professional people who are connected to the field. In most of the case they are not open mind and not positive to be helpful in the promotion of sport for all activities in Albania

2) Government still do not have a clear strategy for promoting sport and as well legislation needs further improvement for encouraging development of sport. The improvement of legislation are necessary especially to encourage private sector for increasing their support toward sport activities in Albania

3) Sport and health and the relations between them is yet seen from Government as two sectors which develops together where health benefits from sport and sport should benefit from government in the support of further development of activities.



At the other side Albania is missing real actors or promoters of sport activities. There is a need that sport clubs, associations, institutions and informal groups to be developed and active at a grass-root level by increasing their capacities for better management of their resources and opportunities offered. It is noted that the sportive offer is not prepared at the right way which maybe used from citizens as an opportunity for their benefit.



In that regard is really necessary:

- 1) to organize capacity building training for sportive organisations
- 2) to offer programs of assistance in management of their resources and opportunities for existing sports organisations.
- 3) to provide support for improving their sport facilities combining it as well with twining programs and exchanges with international partners of Sport for all in Europe
- 4) to support to this sportive organisations to open a dialogue with government by making

them working together and inviting as well private sector to work in plans of actions in the development of sport at their communities.

So as far as the democracy is developed on its natural move from the bottom to the top we would suggest that sport have to follow the same way. It is really important that grass-root groups working at local level become such active in cooperation with their local government in elaborating plans of action for development of sport. Together they should create a network which would allow and makes easier to have a real, concrete National strategy for development of sport which would allows Albania to become more active at European level.

In that regard trying to be more concrete we suggest to establish two centres:

1) Centre for the development of sport for all in Albania by providing assistance in capacity building for sport clubs, NGOs, informal groups etc in Albania and working to create a national network of active sport for all organisations in Albania.

This centre would provide:

- trainings
- workshops

- facilitation of the development of sport policy by establishing cooperation among sport organisations and government
- establishment of cooperation with private sector
- training of trainers, of sport educators dealing with training in the sport field
- assistance to provide sport offer to the community. Etc

This centre may be very well organised from ISCA member IRSH which would offer the facilities of the IRSH centre in the city of Shkodra. In this case its needed, together with ISCA, to define a detailed program and a working framework with necessary financial assistance.

2) Centre for sportive publications and information.

Role of this centre would be:

- Publication of researches and studies in the sport field
- Publication of methodologies for doing sport
- Policies at national level
- Promotional campaigns etc

This centre would be organised from ISCA member Institute of Sport Research leded from Mr.Artan Shyti. Further details and communications regarding the real possibilities to makes it function shall be discussed.



As closing remarks we think that the event was an important step to build a hope in the development of sport. There is participant` enthusiasm but it will be very much depended in the way which will be found to follow up. There is a need that civil society organisations like IRSH takes the necessary responsibility to combine positive energies of sport actors, potentials which exist to government, resources which are to private sector and strengthening cooperation with ISCA and its partners as important actors in the sport field, by the aim to become active part of European movement of sport for all activities. "

International Associations participated on the Panel in Albania :

International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA)
 Danish Gymnastic and Sports Association (DGI)
 Union Sportive de l'Enseignement dru Premier degree (USEP)
 European Confederation sport and Health (CESS)
 Romanian Sport for All Federation (FRSpT)
 Bulgarian Young People Federation (BYPF)
 GARD, Citizens' Association for Recreational Movement
 Sport Union of Slovenia (SUS)



Sanda Capatine from Romanian Sport for All Federation (FRSpT):

"For me this was a great experience and also a great way to interact with other cultures. We can do many great things together and sport is one of the best way to bring people together. We can do many great things through sport. We live in a world of transition. Sport evokes human experiences and independent from the changing shapes, patterns or traditions of civilization. We can be the best ambassadors of our nations in this moving world. This Panel in Albania succeeded to put together many different cultures and finally made us to speak the same language: **sport language**. I am glad that I had the opportunity to be part of this project and I hope I'll join other meetings of this kind. Thank you very much! Good luck for the next level!"

Contacts for Sports and Cultures in Dialogue project:

International Sport and Culture Association

Tietgensgade 65,
1704 Copenhagen, Denmark
Tel: + 4533298026 // Fax: + 4533298028
info@isca-web.org

Contact persons in ISCA:

ISCA Secretary General:
Jacob Schouenborg, js@isca-web.org

ISCA project managers:
Saska Benedicic Tomat, sbt@isca-web.org
Anders Tharsgaard, at@isca-web.org
Hanne Muller, hm@isca-web.org

Organizer of the Local Citizens Panel in Tirana:

**Intelektualet e rinj, Shprese" (IRSH)/AEGEE Shkoder
Coordinator of Albanian Youth Parliament**

Address:

**L:"Qemal Stafa", Rr:"Daut Borici", 874
Shkoder, ALBANIA**

Mobile: +355 682065568

Tel/Fax: +355 22 48811 / 48476

E-mail: irsh_centre@yahoo.com



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