

# Sport Citizens' Forum adopts Declaration on grass-root sport and citizenship

*Bled, Slovenia, November 21 2010*

The declaration is signed by citizens from 33 Sport for All associations and - stakeholders from 10 countries.

## Overall European visions

### Sport Citizen Forum participants:

**Confirm** that **only together** can we foster a powerful civil society and promote dialogue between sport, culture, nature, environment and economy for development of individuals in Europe, including candidate and potential candidate countries to the EU.

**Welcome** the establishment of a **constructive dialogue** with stakeholders at the European and national level and **call** on the European Commission to further strengthen its on-going dialogue and cooperation with the sport for all sector specifically and civil society actors in general. In particular, participants **call** on the European Commission to consider and react on the fact that the vast majority of EU citizens are doing sport and physical activity at grassroots level and ensure equivalent representation of stakeholders representing this majority of Europeans.

**Suggest** a common European **vision of 100 million more Europeans active** in sport and physical activity by 2020. This should be our common goal for a healthier, active Europe.<sup>1</sup>

## Specific European visions

### Concerning European citizenship and democracy

#### Sport Citizen Forum participants:

**Confirm** that grass-root sport clubs and associations should be used as **schools of democracy**, and **call upon** all sport associations and their stakeholders to continuously push to increase transparency and improve democratic processes to this end. In particular, participants **suggest** that such democratization should be included in the accession processes to the EU of the present candidate and potential candidate countries.

**Declare** that in order to achieve European Citizenship, we need to live and breathe European values bottom-up. Grass-root sport is a sector that can embody and further values such as respect, openness, fairness, equality and human rights as a basis for citizenship and democracy in Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Today's physical activity levels within EU vary substantially (Eurobarometer, March 2010) and EU clearly has the potential to narrow this gap and increase the numbers of physically active citizens. If all European societies reached the participation level of the countries with the highest grassroots sport participation, 150 million Europeans more would be regularly active in sport.

**Confirm** that sport has the potential for bringing citizens of Europe together to develop new horizons while maintaining traditional sports and ethnic manifestations. By learning from history we build for the future and build a democratic and active Europe.

**Commit** to establish cross border and cross culture interactions between individuals and civil society organisations in the field of sport. They do so to promote the right of each citizen to practice sport according to motivation, preferences and possibilities.

#### **Concerning health enhancing physical activity**

##### **Sport Citizen Forum participants:**

**Highlight** the current challenges of obtaining political support, including financial, to the grass-root sport sector. Limited political attention constitutes a barrier to the outreach of health enhancing physical activity, and special attention must be drawn to the balance between grass-root sport and elite sport when providing access to sport facilities.

**Confirm** the need for visions and initiatives to foster dialogue and partnerships between the grass-root sport sector, the world's largest civil society community, and the health sector in increasing the access to sport and physical activity for the millions of European citizens who are not yet regularly physically active.

**Encourage** the development of national strategies on health enhancing physical activity and to involve actors from the governmental (incl. Ministry of Health), intergovernmental (incl. WHO), private, and grass-root sport sector in the process.

#### **Concerning education, training and volunteering in sport**

Volunteering is an essential element in active citizenship. Grass-root sport associations are the framework for volunteers' services in local communities and play an active role in civil society.

##### **Sport citizen Forum participants:**

**Confirm** that 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 produces health and education benefits which need to be enhanced.

**Reaffirm** that values of grass root sport has the potential of developing knowledge, motivation, skills and readiness for personal development. Sport has the capacity to build Europe's human capital through formal and non-formal education. Non-formal education should be recognized by civil society and all relevant authorities.

**Encourage** the development of national strategies on promoting voluntarism, including not least policies on how to recruit, retain and motivate voluntarism as an acknowledged part of a vibrant civil society. The European Year of Volunteering 2011 should be directed in this direction.

#### **Concerning social inclusion and sustainable development in and through sport**

**Consider** that societies should be assessed by their ability to include marginalized groups in societal processes and empower them to take responsibility for their own lives.

**Recommend that sport's unique potential** to create societal change and engage citizens (Eurobarometer 2010) receive increased attention when seeking to reach out to socially disadvantaged groups. Special programs need to be developed, responding to the specific needs of the target group in question.

