

# RECOMMENDATIONS

---

on the role of sports associations in promoting active  
Youth Participation and enhancing Intercultural Dialogue

European Youth Centre Strasbourg

8 – 12 November 2009

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

On the occasion of the seminar “***The role of sport associations in promoting active Youth Participation and enhancing Intercultural Dialogue***” organized by the Directorate of Youth and Sport (DYS) of the Council of Europe, a group of 33 youth representatives from the youth and sport sector met in Strasbourg from the 8th November to the 12th November 2009.

- With reference to the Council of Europe’s “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue - Living Together As Equals in Dignity” underlining the unique position of *youth and sport organisations, together with religious communities, to advance intercultural dialogue in a non-formal education context*, the seminar acknowledges *Sport as an important potential arena for intercultural dialogue, which connects it directly to everyday life*.
- Considering the declaration of the 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth held on the 10-11 October 2008 in Kyiv, Ukraine adopting the *AGENDA 2020 - The future of the Council of Europe youth policy*;
- Recalling the stipulations of the *Revised European Charter on The Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life - Proceedings, Krakow, March 2002*
- Bearing in mind the outcomes of the Council of Europe’s conference on *The Contribution Of Sport To Inter-Cultural Dialogue Istanbul, Turkey, 9-10 September 2004*;
- Recalling the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on *Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace*;
- Bearing in mind the provisions of the *European Sports Charter*, as well as numerous texts showing the contribution of sport to modern society;

The participants of the Council of Europe’s Seminar on “*The role of sport associations in promoting active Youth Participation and enhancing Intercultural Dialogue*” emphasize the undeniable will of young people to contribute to an active and inclusive ‘Europe in dialogue’.

At a time when both sport and youth is increasingly discussed in Europe, the seminar encourages the Council of Europe in a combined effort with the NGO sector to further develop their work within Youth and Sport across Europe and include the seminar’s recommendations in their work strategy and working priorities.

## THE SOCIETAL ROLE OF SPORT

---

In the framework of the above-mentioned seminar sport was understood in its broadest context, ultimately referring to any physical, recreational and intellectual activity that can improve social, physical and mental health. Sport in itself does not determine the learning of young people, neither their values; it is much more the educational function we attribute to a sport activity that will have a lasting imprint on the life of young people.

Accordingly, the seminar conveys it is essential to use the great experience of the youth sector and sport sector with respect to Youth Participation and Intercultural Dialogue in order to successfully use sport for social change. Hence, the seminar underlined the importance of sport with a broader educational objective.

Why sport? Sport is universal and is the number one leisure activity throughout Europe including a large community of practitioners and volunteers. But most importantly sport is attractive and fun. The interaction and enjoyment gained from participating in a sport activity often includes non-formal learning experiences based on cooperation, rules and communication. In this respect, the seminar underlines that sport has the ability to strengthen human rights values, social skills and facilitate Intercultural Dialogue processes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AND THROUGH SPORT

---

With respect to the use of sport regarding Youth Participation the seminar recommends to the Council of Europe, its Member States and civil society organizations:

1. To increase the role of sport as a tool for Youth Participation in international activities.
2. To ensure the sustainability of projects fostering Youth Participation.
3. To facilitate the access of young people with fewer opportunities to sports activities.
4. To improve the access of young people with disabilities to sports activities.
5. To engage in Europe wide campaigns linking sport and Youth Participation.
6. To promote incentives to increase the motivation of young volunteers and professionals in the youth sector and sport sector through the recognition of youth needs, the promotion of role models, the mentoring within youth and sport organisations and the recognition of ownerships.
7. To involve young people in all the steps of decision making with regard to project implementation.
8. To organize trainings of experts and multipliers on the use of sport as a tool for Youth Participation.

9. To involve local communities in the exploitation and management of new sport infrastructures.
10. To strengthen the financial support for local youth organisations.
11. To support innovative approaches towards Youth Participation based on cooperative and social sports.
12. To promote *Fair Play* values beyond sport and into the classroom as a philosophy of life.
13. To enforce *Fair Play* rules in competitive and cooperative sports and sport activities to highlight the democratic values of sport.
14. To enhance a culture of appreciation for personal initiatives through genuine opportunities of participation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN AND THROUGH SPORT

---

With respect to the use of sport regarding Intercultural Dialogue the seminar recommends to the Council of Europe, its Member States and civil society organizations:

1. To increase the role of sport in youth activities promoting Intercultural Dialogue.
2. To ensure the sustainability of intercultural programmes.
3. To bring attention and support to local and traditional sports in order to maintain a European cultural diversity.
4. To provide programs for joint participation of young persons with disabilities and young persons without disabilities.
5. To provide programs for participation of young persons originating from disadvantaged communities.
6. To encourage the enforced inclusion of cultural programs into sport events.
7. To assist the learning process of young people in order to better know themselves and thereby facilitate the process of getting to know the other.
8. To support the education and training of coaches with respect to the work with minority groups.
9. To promote school twinning between all European countries by emphasizing physical activity as an educational tool.
10. To organize trainings of experts and multipliers on the use of sport as a tool for Intercultural Dialogue.
11. To engage in Europe wide campaigns linking sport and Intercultural Dialogue.
12. To create valuable private-public partnerships in the promotion of Intercultural Dialogue through sport.
13. To strengthen the financial support for local youth organisations.

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

---

With respect to sport as a tool for social change the seminar recommends to the Council of Europe, its Member States and civil society organizations:

1. To draft guidelines for governments and Council of Europe member states on the use of sport as a tool for social change.
2. To provide training opportunities for youth and sport organizations with respect to fundraising.
3. To invest in sport infrastructure in developing countries taking into consideration local needs and realities.
4. To provide grants and scholarships available for local communities that promote Youth Participation and Intercultural Dialogue through sports.
5. To improve the accessibility of information regarding available programs and funding.
6. To improve the use of new media in the communication with key stakeholders, such as schools, universities, youth NGOs, sport associations and public authorities, while consolidating the number of web platforms providing information on youth and sport activities.
7. To stress the formal and non-formal educational approach within sport activities.
8. To actively use the social dimension of sport in schools from early childhood.
9. To include high profile athletes as ambassadors for the promotion of education through sport activities.
10. To collaborate with international networks and umbrella organizations in order to enrich international cooperation.
11. To stimulate international youth and sport umbrella organizations to engage in close cooperation and take advantage of synergies.
12. To emphasise the role of sport as a valuable tool to work against racism, discrimination and violence.

## FINAL REMARKS

---

The outlined recommendations were formulated by the participants of the seminar ***“The role of sport associations in promoting active Youth Participation and enhancing Intercultural Dialogue”*** organized by the Directorate of Youth and Sport (DYS) of the Council of Europe.

It is important to stress these recommendations are not the only outcomes of the seminar. The attendees additionally, exchanged numerous examples of good practice, ideas and solutions of inspiring projects developed by and for young people while using sport as a tool for social change. Further information regarding the specific discussions, examples and outcomes of the seminar will be available from the ‘final report’ of the seminar.

This document reflects the experiences, beliefs and desires of young people directly involved in sport and are designed to assist in the development of future policies within the Directorate of Youth and Sport (DYS) of the Council of Europe.