



ISCA Europe

ISCA EUROPE position on “Developing the European Dimension in Sport”

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions.

Developing citizens’ oriented sport policy and actions towards EU 2020

Article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty opens the door for ambitious political visions and decisions. However, to develop the European Dimension in Sport we need priority for the sectors of sport and physical activity which are close to and directed at European Citizens’ daily life.

Such priority and ambitious political goals would provide valuable contribution from the sport sector to the EU 2020 strategy towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Participation is key for developing the European Dimension

Last year the European Parliament sent a strong message with its support to the grassroots sport by the “*Written declaration no 0062/2010 on increased European Union support for grassroots sports*” which was signed by a majority of Member of the European Parliament.

This was followed up by the Council at its meeting the 18th November 2010, where the Council reinforced the support to the ‘*sport for all’ principle based on equal opportunities by increasing the overall participation in sport and providing encouragement for physical activities to as many citizens as possible*’.

ISCA EUROPE strongly supports these priorities and we would encourage the Commission to more directly and explicitly reflect on these clear and precise political priorities in its Communication and within future actions in the field of sport and physical activity.

An increase of participation in sport and physical activity is fundamental to developing the European Dimension of sport.

To connect these priorities to a clear political goal ISCA EUROPE proposes the overall goal to be:

100 MILLION MORE EU CITIZENS ACTIVE IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BY 2020

The Societal Role of Sport – follow the citizens’ agenda

The 35 million volunteers (7% of the total population according to Eurobarometer 2010) in sport throughout Europe illustrate very strongly the societal role of sport. Sport and physical activity are part of society and the Europeans citizens’ life and habits due to this huge number and widespread initiatives of the non-for profit and civil society driven organizations. These organizations and their 35 million volunteers are the main providers of sport and physical activities for European citizens at the local level. Clear impact oriented priorities should assist with developing the sustainability of the non-for profit and civil society driven sport organizations, which make a difference for millions of Europeans every day.

ISCA EUROPE suggests giving health promotion, recreational and inclusion aspects the highest priority in future actions.

Such clear political priority would not only mirror the wishes of the European citizens, but would also allow cross sector cooperation at the European level including sectors of:

- Health and prevention
- Education
- Urban planning and infrastructure
- Transportation

Future priorities of the European Dimension in Sport

1. Health and recreation are on top of the citizens agenda

Health promotion and the recreational aspects should be on the top of the agenda!

The main priority of the European citizens and the main reason for doing sport and physical activity, according to recent studies (i.e. Eurobarometer 2004 and 2010), is to improve personal health and to have fun. This priority is a lifelong development which begins with the formation of young children and continuing through all life phases. This is a clear indication from the European citizens, which should lead to placing the health promotion and recreational aspects on top of any agenda developing the European Dimension on Sport.

2. Social inclusion

Support and utilize sport as tool for social inclusion

Across Europe a myriad of local projects within the field of integration through sport are being implemented. Among politicians, sport organizations and community based organizations there is a strong believe in sport as a tool to promote social integration and inclusion. This view is strongly supported by a similar opinion among European citizens. Results of a Eurobarometer (2004) analysis shows that almost three of four EU citizens (73%) view sport as a means of promoting the integration of immigrant populations. In promoting the integration of immigrant populations, sport is also perceived as a means to fight against discrimination, according to two thirds of European citizens (64%).

Inclusion of young people

Financially difficult times mean young people have increasing difficulties entering the labour market and to achieve job experiences. Volunteer leadership experiences or formalized ‘on the job training programs’ in sport clubs assists younger generation to gain important practical experiences. It provides young people with experience and network which are a useful stepping stones to improve career possibilities.



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3. Education

Support and recognize non-formal and informal education through sport

Non-formal education and lifelong learning are important elements of EU 2020 towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The sport sector, primarily based on volunteer engagement and contribution, is the most widespread civil society movement. 35 million Europeans are volunteering in sport. Learning processes take place both on and off the pitch and sport halls.

The sport sector is primarily driven by volunteers and they are supported by non-formal education at all levels. Millions of Europeans join or provide non-formal training and education in sport organizations, be it as trainers or leaders. The figures are massive and important.

The sport sector is definitely the biggest school of lifelong learning in Europe.

The economic dimension of Sport

One of the goals within the “*White Paper on Sport*” and the “*Communication - Developing a European Dimension on Sport*” is to work towards evidence based sport policies in Europe.

The economic impact of sport is significant and important arguments for developing a European Dimension on sport. Unfortunately the “*Communication - Developing a European Dimension on Sport*” does not very precisely describe the economic landscape of the sport sectors. Some of the major elements are missing and some of the minor economic elements are unfortunately overestimated and overrepresented in the Communication.

Most Valuable Player - the European Citizen

All over Europe the most important contributor to the economic impact of sport is the citizens. With a significant household spending (approximately 200€ annually per inhabitant) on sport and physical activity, the citizens’ spending is the main economic vehicle for the economy within the sport sector.

Following the citizens’ own economic contributions, local governments are the second most important financial contributor which together with the citizens’ spending create the vast majority of the demands for services and goods related to sport sector.

Thirdly, state support – in many cases as redistribution of lottery and gambling tax revenue – provide financial assistance especially to national governing bodies within the field of sport.

The so-called *financial solidarity* where the top sport sector is claimed to contribute significantly to the grassroots sport level is often mentioned and referred to, but is unfortunately quite often overestimated. These mechanisms are only in place in very few countries and in the most “successful” cases they only generate between 1-2€ per inhabitant, which should be compared with the major contributors, the citizens, local authorities and state level support systems. For comparison, in some European countries public support amounts to more than 150€ per inhabitant.



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Clear priorities and goals for the benefit of the European citizens

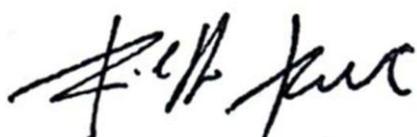
ISCA EUROPE believes that with *article 165* in place, the European citizens would benefit from higher ambitions in the field of sport and physical activity, than are directly outlined in the *Communication - Developing a European Dimension on Sport*.

ISCA EUROPE suggests clear and evidence based political goals, which raise the profile and recognition of sport and physical activity.

ISCA EUROPE supports priorities which are in line with and contribute to the EU 2020 strategy towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Namely:

100 MILLION MORE EU CITIZENS ACTIVE IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BY 2020

Best regards,



Filippo Fossati, ISCA EUROPE Chairman



Mogens Kirkeby ISCA president

ISCA EUROPE consists of the 45 European member organizations of the International Sport and Culture Association. All member organizations are oriented towards grassroots sport and physical activity. ISCA EUROPE has participated in a structured dialogue with the EU over the last decade. Our European activities have included more than 30 projects and contracts with the European Commission in the areas related to sport, health, youth, education and citizenship.

ISCA EUROPE is a member of the European Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (DG Health and Consumers) and the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning.

ISCA EUROPE is member of Steering Committee of the cross sector institution, the International Platform for Sport and Development.

See more about ISCA EUROPE at www.isca-web.org



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