



REPORT
of the
WORKSHOP ON EDUCATION
Project EU:SPORT:FUTURE
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Participants:

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Education and Culture DG

'Europe for Citizens' Programme



Introduction

The workshop on sport and education was held on 29th May 2009 and led by Mila Andreeva, Bulgarian Ski Federation. The discussions were based on the workshop leaflet, including the results of the online survey which has been distributed and presented prior to the workshop.

The participants of the education workshop came from very different backgrounds. Sport journalists, representatives of sport organisations and citizens discussed animatedly the topic sport and education. The discussions of the workshop were enriched by the participation of the top athlete Kilian Albrecht with dual citizenship – Austrian and Bulgarian. Mr Albrecht racing since 2006 for the Bulgarian skiing team is an example of a successful dual career as he holds a Masters degree in economics.

Prior to the workshop general presentations on the topic "Sport and the EU" and best practice examples in the field of education were aimed at introducing the issues of the workshops and giving food for thought for the discussions in the workshops.

The workshop leader structured the discussions in the workshop the following way:

1. Analysis of present situation (status quo, problems, challenges)
2. Definition of ideal situation/ objectives
3. Recommendations: Tools, measures to achieve ideal situation / objectives
4. Priorities, Follow up

The discussions in the workshops revolved around two topics on the one hand physical education (PE) and dual career of athletes. The answers to the open questions of the online questionnaire have been integrated in this report.

Ad 1) Analysis of present situation

Regarding the cooperation between sports organisations and educational institutions, participants stated that the practice of sport and physical activity (PA) at school is not satisfactory in Europe. There is on the one hand not enough qualified staff responsible for PE and on the other not enough PA lessons in school curricula. Sport disciplines taught at schools often depend on the preferences of PA teachers, therefore pupils do not have the possibility to get to know different sport disciplines. This fact could lead to the result that pupils are not able to discover their favorite sport.

However, some participants also noted that the key question of PE in schools is how to make pupils love and do more sports. Because there is no use of more PE lessons, if children do not like sports. It is considered that a certain affection to do sports



must be guaranteed and secured at a very early stage because later people are less likely to become interested in sports as various studies show.

Furthermore, in some school there is an over-emphasis on top sports in PE lessons. Sport for all, the joy to be physically active is more important and needs to be promoted.

It is considered that cooperations between schools and sport organisations could be improved. For instance, sport facilities of schools are not enough available for sport organisations and vice versa. Some participants complained that sport facilities were sometimes not easily available for PE classes. PE had to be held in cellars or other rooms but not in sport halls because there were not any.

Another reason for improving the cooperation between schools and sport clubs is the fact that Member States introduce more and more the all-day school model. This results in fewer kids doing sports in sport clubs, but no appropriate alternative is given in schools.

Concerning education in the sports movement (education and qualification of coaches, trainers, volunteers, sport leaders, the youth etc.), participants remarked that there could be much more European cooperation. Due to the lack of educational programmes, volunteers are not adequately qualified. There are still problems regarding the recognition of diplomas and/or professional qualifications of sport professions.

Regarding the issue of dual career, participants regret that there is no support for athletes at academic level. The transition from the sports career to professional life is not easy and could and should be more supported.

On the one hand some athletes consider it hard to start working in another field. On the other lot of promising athletes dropped their sports career and focused on their educational goals instead.

The reason for these problems is that sport is not a priority for the national governments. Competition and medals remain the main priority of governments according to the participants.

Ad 2) Definition of ideal situation/ objectives

In an ideal world the joy of doing sport, being physically active is taught at a very early stage in life. Parents play as well as the school environment a crucial role to teach a life-long culture of PA. The parents are the first to bring their children on a sports ground and in sports clubs. So, each kid learns to enjoy sport from the very beginning, and their view on PA is positive. There are enough hours of PE – preferably 2 times 90 minutes per week as 45 minutes are too short for effective PE lessons.



The PA teachers are highly qualified, constantly trained and coached and offer a poly-sport programme in schools. Pupils know about as many sport disciplines as possible from which they can choose their favorite(s). PE is designed to be a school for life experience where important values such as team play, tolerance, fair play etc. are learned.

PE and trainers are evaluated on a regular basis to guarantee the effectiveness and success of PE.

Schools have adequate sport facilities at their disposal and/or can easily access facilities nearby.

PA (programmes) is free of charge for pupils or offered at a very low cost also after school.

The cooperation between sports organisations and educational institutions is extensive and functioning well. All-day schools cooperate closely with sport clubs which offer a great variety of PA programmes.

Qualifications acquired in a sport environment are recognized at European level. The mobility of professionals working in a sport environment is thus guaranteed.

Media play also a key role in sport education and transmitting a positive image about sport. They broadcast grassroots sport events and events supporting the public image of sport.

Ad 3) Recommendations: tools, measures to achieve ideal situation / objectives

Considering the analysis of the present situation and the outlook of an ideal situation the following recommendations have been addressed to:

➤ the European Union

- The European Union shall support the creation of networks in order to share knowledge and exchange good practices in the field of sport and education. In doing so relevant measures of the Member States can be supported and complemented.
- ICT in PE and school sport is unexploited. Community action programmes like the Lifelong Learning Programme and the Youth in Action Programme shall support networks to facilitate cooperation and exchange of good practices in this field.

➤ the Member States



- Motivational programmes shall be designed to promote PA in educational institutions such as kindergartens and schools.
- The quality of PA teachers shall be improved as well as the quality of the PE lessons by providing better, more quality-oriented training and complement this training with a European perspective on PE in the EU.
- Member States shall give financial incentives to households (e.g. tax incentives) in order to ease and broaden access to sport.

➤ **the European Union and Member States**

- To create an enabling environment, Member States and the European Union have to guarantee an adequate number of modern sport facilities like play grounds which are spread equally over (urban and rural) regions. They must be accessible to all – namely for pupils – and safe to use. Utilization concepts shall guarantee that sport facilities are used to their full capacity. A sharing of good practices in this field shall spur the development of utilization concepts.
- Member States and the European Union shall give higher priority to sport issues.
- In the field of education in sport, the European Union shall implement a common qualification framework related to sport. This action has to be complemented by Member States setting up and implementing a centralised system of sport education.
- Regarding the question of dual career, the European Union shall support the exchange of good practices of national programmes to facilitate the coordination between the athletes' career and the professional career. Special programmes shall be designed according to the individual needs of athletes to be able to guarantee a dual career. Former top athletes shall be used as mentors to give advice regarding questions on dual career.

Ad 4) Priorities, Follow up

A succeeding discussion project seeking support from the Europe for Citizens' programme shall follow up on the recommendations formulated within the project EU:SPORT:FUTURE and broaden the discussion on sport at European level. The participants also proposed other funding programmes like the Lifelong Learning Programme or the Youth in Action Programme to continue and intensify the discussions on the points raised during the workshop.



Conclusion

The workshop participants discussed on the one hand sport and education in a school environment and on the other on the issue of dual careers of athletes. The participants realized that there is a vast array of different thoughts, problems and solutions on sport and education. This vast range of views might be attributed to the fact that participants came from all over Europe and from all walks of life which made the discussions in the workshops very interactive and interesting. The participants not only discussed the topic sport and the EU but also learned from each other by listening to the statements coming from all the corners of the EU. This made this workshop an interculturally appealing and valuable experience for the participants.

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