



REPORT
of the
WORKSHOP ON SOCIETY
Project EU:SPORT:FUTURE
15 September 2009
Danubius Hotel Arena
Ifjusag utja 1-3
H-1148 Budapest





Participants:

Group 1 Team Leader Michael Trinker		
Last Name	First Name	Nationality
Berta	Márton	Hungary
De Wint	Steve	UK
Dobrai	Attila	Hungary
Féher	Janos	Hungary
Féher	Judit	Hungary
Garan	Éva	Hungary
Greis	Andrea	Germany
Ilver	Priit	Estonia
Kisgyörgy	Judit	Hungary
Klenova	Lyuba	Bulgaria
Lénárt	András	Hungary
Pancheva	Denitza	Bulgaria
Trinker	Michael	Austria
Group 2 Team Leader Sophie Christ		
Last Name	First Name	Nationality
Cheminade	Denis	France
Christ	Sophie	France
Dimitrova	Veneta	Bulgaria
Farkas	Judit	Hungary
Felber	Orsolya	Hungary
Gavazov	Emil	Bulgaria
Gönter	Krisztina	Hungary
Grundmann	Béla	Hungary
Jakab	Péter	Hungary
Kozsla	Tibor	Hungary
Madlencnik	Werner	Austria
Petai	Madis	Estonia
Pignitzky	Dorottya	Hungary
Vlaev	Adrey	Bulgaria
Vass	Henriett	Hungary
Veress	Réka	Hungary
Szelsi	Oksolya	Hungary



Introduction

The workshop on sport and society was held on the 15th September 2009. Prior to the workshop, presentations on the topic "Sport and the Europe for citizens Programme" as well as best practice examples in the field of society were aimed at introducing the issue of the workshop and giving food for thought for discussions.

After the introductory presentations, the participants were divided up into two groups one was led by Sophie Christ (CNOSF) and the other by Michael Trinker (BSO). The discussions of the workshops 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 society workshops came from different backgrounds and countries making the discussions diverse and thus very interesting.

The workshop leaders structured the discussions in the workshops 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

Ad 1) Analysis of present situation

In a brainstorm session, the workshop participants were asked to point out keywords they connect with sport and society.

The keywords were the following:

community/get together/social activity	self-control / improvement, development
participation	solidarity
definition of sport	democracy
cohesion	informal education
inclusion / integration	sustainable development
simplify relationships / roles	understanding
equal chances	appreciation
tolerance / respect	respect of rules
health improvement & prevention	double nature of sport: goal and tool
team play / team work	schools
well-being / pleasure	accessibility to infrastructure
leisure-time pursuit / recreation	fair-play
responsibility (social and individual)	sport reduces violence



The three keywords mentioned the most are:

- the health dimension of sport
- sport as a get together
- the development of oneself through sport.

After the brainstorming of keywords, the participants discussed the problems and challenges in the field of sport and society as well as best practices and positive aspects.

The participants were asked to focus their deliberations on the societal role of sport and not to start discussions on volunteering, health, education and employment, as citizen panels have been organised on these very topics previously.

A very positive aspect is that sport brings people together in a natural way. Not just in sport clubs but also in other social settings. This feeling of community in and around sport fosters social cohesion and well-being.

There are several examples of community-building projects through sports. For example, in London a football league was formed by different international teams at grassroots level. Another example is Nordic Walking. This sport can be done virtually around the clock, with everybody, almost everywhere in an informal way or in sport clubs.

Another way of the community-building power of sport is, when people, who might usually not be interested in sport, meet others to watch big sport events (such as European and international championships) in public viewing locations.

Besides from cultural activities sport is the most popular leisure activity. Recreation through sport can improve one's well-being and health. Participants noticed that in the UK the promotion of the recreational aspect of sport is much more advanced in comparison to Hungary, for example, where promoting an active/recreational lifestyle is not well developed yet.

Participants also often referred to sport as a school for life. Sport offers a safe platform where an individual can learn how to take on responsibility and become more self-aware about his own actions. One example is the direct and immediate feedback to individual behaviour by referees.

In contrast to this positive societal role of sport, is anti-social behaviour in sport such as racism. A small minority of sport spectators use sport events to display this abominable, anti-social behaviour. These incidents have to be wiped out via adequate countermeasures.

An excellent best practice example in the field of sport and society is implemented in Hungary similar to the moonlight basketball matches in the U.S. The Hungarian Association of Midnight Championships organises table-tennis matches at weekend nights to keep the youth busy and motivate them to do leisure activity instead of hanging around on streets, being bored or even engaged in criminal activities. Kids



do not need money or equipment to take part and get free food and drinks. However, they have to accept rules like the prohibition of cigarettes, alcohol or drugs during these events.

Similar projects have been also implemented in several other countries but not enough all over Europe.

Besides from these positive aspects, the participants also pointed out several problems and challenges in the field of sport and society.

A problem often mentioned is the accessibility to sport facilities. Either the access is limited to certain persons, or facilities and equipment are lacking. According to the participants especially in Bulgaria the lack of sport facilities is problematic. There are not enough facilities and possibilities to do sport not only in rural regions but also in smaller cities.

The citizens discussed the situation of "sport for all" versus professional sport as well. They are in agreement that professional sport is supported very much but "sport for all" is no priority and therefore receives little or much less support from authorities. The lacking support is not just a financial one but connected to the standing of sport in the public as well.

Another problem is the lack of equal chances regarding the access to sport. Often the participation in sport depends on family income or if facilities are near your home or work.

Another field where chances are not equal is gender. Still much more male persons are supported e.g. by their families to do sports but not the females. Girls should be much more encouraged to be active and do sports. Therefore various obstacles like religious or cultural attitudes have to be overcome.

Another field where unequal chances have to be faced is the integration of foreigners. Very often foreigners have difficulty to become a member in a sports club because of "closed doors".

Disabled sportspersons have to face a more technical discrimination. Often the facilities are not accessible for handicapped people, or they have to travel long distances to an adequate facility.

A challenge for most people is to find time opportunities to do sports and solve the dilemma of double or even triple workload such as work/study, family/friends and sports. How can I organise my free-time and yet lead an active lifestyle?

People know about the positive effects of sport such as the promotion of health and well-being, but often do not do as much physical activity, as they would like to. This is often due to the lack of motivation. In this context, to find time opportunities is not a challenge but an excuse not to be active and justify the own inactivity.

To fight against inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle, sport organisations have developed PA programmes. However, there are still not enough programmes



implemented in the EU, and financial means are missing to do so. Participants reported that e.g. in Bulgaria only a few sport organisations implement PA programmes and mostly focus on the development of their respective sport discipline.

Furthermore, the financial support through sponsors is difficult because of the non-transparent legal situation. In general sponsors would like to support sport organisations but without clear guidelines they are not willing to give support. A well-known fact is the lack of money for sport from the ministries all over Europe. The constant cuts in public expenditures do not allow to improve the situation for sport and even worsen it.

Workshop participants also noted that environmental aspects have also to be taken more into consideration in particular in connection with big sport events. Greening sport events is the key issue by realising selective garbage collection and by implementing climate-friendly and/or CO₂ neutral concepts for instance. A special "green" label could identify sport clubs/organisations acting in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way. Also the equipment used in sport could be assessed environmentally.

Ad 2) Definition of ideal situation/ objectives

– European Charter on Sports

A succinct, short, European charta on sport, to be adopted by the EU institutions, should identify the values, objectives and measures.

– Information work/ Campaigns

The beneficial aspects of sport in general and for society in particular have to be highlighted by implementing information campaigns. The campaign for sport shall be used to underline the different functions of sport for society and thus increase its standing in public.

Regarding good practices:

In Austria, the sport movement organises a big event "Der Tag des Sports" (The Day of Sport – a big performance show of sport) once a year in Vienna. There are usually more than 150.000 visitors who are offered the chance to try out different sport disciplines and to inform themselves about sport opportunities.

A similar event is organised in Hungary. In the UK, there is no national event taking place but similar local initiatives instead.

– Plenty of opportunities to practice sports

Sport facilities:

Sport facilities should be easily accessible for men and women as well as for handicapped. Good practices such as the "open gate" programme in Hungary or Tallinn should be promoted throughout Europe.



In Hungary, the “open gate” programme allows the use of sport facilities, which municipalities own, at Friday nights or weekends.

In Tallinn, sport facilities owned by local authorities can be used first by sport clubs whose members are less than 19 years old (→ promotion of youth sport), after 20:00 hours it can be used by companies, professional teams etc.

The respective governments cover the costs incurred by these initiatives.

Each publicly funded sport facility including the ones of schools should be required to implement a utilisation concept guaranteeing a full use of their capacities and granting easy access for sport clubs to sport facilities.

Companies:

Large companies/corporations implement sport programmes for employees or create sport opportunities.

The Erste Bank Austria sponsors its sport club for its employees to practice sport and hires sport facilities. (The Erste Bank sport club has over 1.600 club members.)

– Support for best practices

There are many examples of good practices in Europe using the societal function of sport for the benefit of citizens. Knowledge thereover is too little and thus should be spread throughout Europe. This will prevent the “reinvention of the wheel”, provide valuable support to sport organisations and increase efficiency and productivity by implementing similar projects.

– Sport as part of Lifelong Learning

Physical activity is a cultural skill which has to be learned and adapted from childhood onwards into senior life. Adequate PA programmes have to be implemented to support a healthy lifestyle and lifelong learning in this area – not only to stay healthy but also sociable.

– Cooperation among stakeholders

Cooperation among stakeholders in the field of sport (authorities at various levels, clubs, sport organisations, health care providers and schools) should function well in order to pool strengths and find synergies. European thematic networks of relevant national stakeholders guarantee a fruitful cooperation.

– Greening sport and sport events



Big sport events are held in an environmentally friendly way by implementing climate friendly and/or CO2 neutral concepts. Sport clubs/organisations adhere to environmental standards. Best practices are shared how sport in general can be organised in a green and sustainable way.

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

➤ **European Union**

Media campaign

- implement information campaigns on sport and physical activity
- declare 2014 as the European Year of Sport and Physical Activity

EU/European Charter for Sports

- adopt a European Charter on Sport including values, objectives, measures

EU Funding/support for sport projects and relevant European thematic networks

- support the creation of thematic networks to improve cooperation of stakeholders in the field of sport to harness the positive effects of sport on society more productively and efficiently. The support could also take the shape of conferences and study visits etc.

Increase international mobility

- The development of sport would be spurred, if international mobility of employees in the sport sector would be promoted by exchanging good practices and gaining relevant European professional experience.

Sport: an important aspect of lifelong learning

- recognise sport as one important aspect of lifelong learning and fund it accordingly.

➤ **National level**

Increase accessibility to sport facilities

- develop open school programs (sport facility access) with professional coaches
- allow everybody to use school facilities (guidance and security needed)

Improve the financing of grassroots sport

- introduce VAT exemptions for sport clubs
- create tax benefits for companies supporting sport clubs



- improve sponsoring opportunities by creating tax incentives for sponsoring organisations

➤ **EU / National level**

Investment in sport infrastructure (sport facilities)

- build and improve sport facilities
- make sport facilities more accessible

➤ **Local level**

Increase cooperation

- increase co-operation among government, clubs/sport organisations, schools, communities and municipalities

Facilities

- make sport facilities more accessible by various programmes like the open gate programme in Hungary
- make private facilities also more accessible

➤ **Sport organisations**

Cooperation

- improve cooperation among stakeholders dealing with the societal role of sport like anti-racism initiatives, organisations dealing with the disabled etc.

➤ **Companies**

Promotion of sport in companies/corporations

- motivate employees to do sports by providing sport opportunities such as company owned fitness studios, company supported sport clubs, tax-free sport-vouchers etc.

Ad 4) Priorities, Follow up

The following priorities have been identified:

- Support European thematic networks to exchange good practices and learn from each other programme-wise and project-wise. European thematic networks might instigate the creation of national thematic networks.



- Improve the financial situation of sport organisations to be able to fully harness the beneficial effects of the societal role of sport by adopting a European sport funding programme and mainstreaming sport in the EU funding programmes.
- Adopt a European/EU Charter on Sport.
- Implement a media campaign about sport like declaring 2014 as the European Year of Sport and Physical Activity.

Conclusion

The workshop discussion revealed that there are many sport projects implemented to increase social cohesion and harness the positive effects of the societal role of sport. However, these good practice examples are not shared, thus many similar projects are reinvented again and again in Europe. The establishment of European networks could provide valuable support in planning and implementing projects in the field of sport and society and thus prevent the “reinvention of the wheel”.

The workshop discussions have revealed furthermore that problems are quite different from country to country. Insofar the workshops fostered discussions and debate and contributed to the promotion of intercultural dialogue.