

ENGSO RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NEW EUROPEAN UNION WORK PLAN FOR SPORT 2017-2020



ENGSO IS OF THE OPINION THAT THE NEXT EU WORK PLAN SHALL BE DRIVEN BY **TWO KEY PRINCIPLES: PRACTICALITY AND FLEXIBILITY**, AND THE FOCUS SHALL BE GIVEN TO PROMOTING GRASSROOTS SPORT.

ENGSO SUGGESTS THE FOLLOWING **PRIORITY AREAS** AND **KEY TOPICS** TO BE ON THE AGENDA:

- **SPORT AND SOCIETY:** SOCIAL INCLUSION, VOLUNTEERING, SPORT DIPLOMACY, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
- **ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF SPORT:** SECURING THE CONDITIONS OF SPORT CLUBS AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL
- **INTEGRITY OF SPORT AND GOOD GOVERNANCE:** DIVERSITY IN SPORT ORGANISATIONS, GENDER EQUALITY, THE SAFETY AND QUALITY OF GRASSROOTS SPORT
- **FLEXIBLE PRIORITIES:** HAVING THE POSSIBILITY TO ADD TOPICS/PRIORITIES ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS AND CHANGES IN SPORT AND SOCIETY

REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION, ENGSO RECOMMENDS **FLEXIBLE WORKING STRUCTURES**.

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The second European Union Work Plan for Sport 2014-2017 was a broad document covering many policy topics in three priority areas: integrity of sport, economic dimension of sport, as well as sport and society. Building on the achievements of the previous Work Plans, ENGSO would like to recommend key topics and working structures for the upcoming European Union Work Plan for Sport 2017-2020 (EU Work Plan).

ENGSO is of the opinion that the next EU Work Plan shall be driven by **two key principles: practicality and flexibility**, and the **focus** shall be given to promoting **grassroots sport**. In general, there should be a balanced-approach and the topics of the Work Plan and the Expert Groups should not forget the questions related to grassroots. Furthermore, the momentum, created by Commissioner Navracsics' High Level Group on Grassroots Sport, should be used as their excellent recommendations need a follow-up. More importantly there is a clear need to focus especially on topics like social inclusion or securing the conditions of sport clubs at grassroots level.

In the Work Plan, the **key priority areas** shall remain similar to the ones of the previous Work Plan. In addition, there should be a possibility to complete the key priority areas with additional topics, if needed, enabling ad-hoc working structures that are more adaptive to real-time challenges.

Within the priority areas, there should be a shift in focus towards other **key topics** that lead to more **practical** approaches and actions that have real added value at European level. Based on the above mentioned, ENGSO suggests the following priority areas and key topics to be on the agenda:

- **Sport and society:** social inclusion, volunteering, sport diplomacy, environment and sustainability
- **Economic dimension of sport:** securing the conditions of sport clubs at grassroots level
- **Integrity of sport and good governance:** diversity in sport organisations, gender equality, the safety and quality of grassroots sport
- **Flexible priorities:** having the possibility to add topics/priorities according to the needs and changes in sport and society

Regarding the implementation of the EU Work Plan, ENGSO recommends **flexible working structures** that builds on sound division of tasks and studies, and ensures structural representation. We also propose the setting up of quality criteria for nomination of participants to Expert Groups and the establishment of an Erasmus+ discussion platform for sport organisations that enables feedback on and the suggestions for improvements of the Erasmus+ Sport Programme.

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KEY TOPICS IN THE PRIORITY AREA “SPORT AND SOCIETY”

SOCIAL INCLUSION

ENGSO is unequivocally in favour of taking action to promote social inclusion in and through sport. In the light of the well-known migrant and refugee crisis, as well as some other challenges that Europe is facing, i.e. youth unemployment and radicalisation, ENGSO strongly recommends including the topic into the next EU Work Plan, and having an Expert Group dedicated to this topic. We recommend actions to find ways to:

- **Supporting sport clubs and organisations in social inclusion**, e.g. with creation of recommendations for the **better use of the European instruments, such as the structural funds, and the inclusion of sport therein**, or finding other ways to support sport in this work.
- **Identifying innovative ways** to make sport more inclusive for all and exploring ways to **increase equal opportunities for sports participation and the use of sport as a tool for social inclusion** of people in risk of exclusion, especially migrants and refugees, people with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities, especially minorities and those who are in risk of poverty or radicalisation, and people with disabilities.

VOLUNTEERING

During the second Work Plan, the Expert Group on Human Resources Development in Sport explored ways to encourage volunteering in sport and advocate the best practices on legal and fiscal mechanisms. ENGSO recognises that volunteering is not only a crucial aspect for the existence of sport in Europe, but it also plays a key role in social cohesion and personal development. Therefore, it should stay on the agenda with a focus on:

- **Recognition of volunteers work:** The development, recognition and validation of the skills and competences of volunteers as well as informal and non-formal learning in and through sport should be supported e.g. in the European and National Qualification Frameworks or by promoting the European Skills Passport. Follow-up for the inclusion of sport to the European skills agenda is needed, as well as for the study on the contribution of sport to the employability of young people.
- **Promotion of volunteering in sport** especially through relevant EU programmes, as well as through enabling visa practices to ensure that people travelling to and within the European Union for volunteering will be able to do so.

SPORT DIPLOMACY

Following the work of the High Level Group on Sport Diplomacy, ENGSO is of the opinion that the topic should stay on the agenda, especially focusing on:

- The implementation of the recommendations, with special emphasis on sport as a tool to facilitate development policies.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

As a new topic, ENGSO would like to propose environmental issues and sustainability to be taken on board into the new Work Plan. The choices made in the area of sport, either on grassroots or high level, have a big environmental impact.

- Good practices in the area, also linking with the Sustainable Development Goals, should be mapped.

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KEY TOPICS IN THE PRIORITY ARE “ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF SPORT”

SECURING THE CONDITIONS OF SPORT CLUBS AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL

ENGSO is of the opinion that the topic of **sustainable financing of sport** should stay on the agenda of the EU Work Plan with a special focus on securing the conditions of sport clubs at grassroots level. ENGSO would especially recommend the following topics to be discussed, as many have been also highlighted by the High Level Group on Grassroots Sport:

- The **mainstreaming of sport into EU funding programmes**, focusing especially on **synergies** between sport and education, youth, health,

citizenship, infrastructural investment and competitiveness;

- The **strengthening of solidarity mechanism** within sport by **securing the ownership of sport events**;
- The **support of sport structures** based on voluntary work by defending **VAT exemptions and other tax incentives** for not-for-profit sports organisations;
- **Safeguarding the current system of public financing** of not-for-profit volunteer-based sport **through contributions from state-run lotteries and state-licensed gambling bodies**.
- Follow-up of the **Study on the funding of grassroots sports in the EU (2010)**.

KEY TOPICS IN THE PRIORITY AREA “INTEGRITY OF SPORT AND GOOD GOVERNANCE”

ENGSO believes that the current actions and developments of the sport movement to improve good governance and the integrity of sport should be further supported. However, a shift in focus towards the following topics is recommended:

DIVERSITY IN SPORT ORGANISATIONS

ENGSO emphasises the need to continue actions to **promote diversity in boards** by respecting the autonomy of sport, which would cover not only the **access of women into leadership positions in sport**, but also the **participation of young people in decision-making**.

GENDER EQUALITY

The work in the field of gender equality shall continue, exploring ways to implement the Roadmap to Gender Equality in Sport.

THE SAFETY AND QUALITY OF GRASSROOTS SPORT

ENGSO would like to propose a new topic to be discussed: “the safety and quality of grassroots sport”, which could include:

- The fight against match-fixing;
- Working towards a **safe sporting environment** by the **prevention of sexual and gender harassment and abuse in sports**;
- **Ensuring safety and quality of grassroots sport (events)**, including the protection of participants, volunteers and spectators, as well as the assurance of equality, environmental aspects, risk management, etc.

WORKING STRUCTURES

When it comes to the implementation of the EU Work Plan, ENGSO would like to highlight the need for practical and flexible cooperation among sport stakeholders, therefore we recommend to:

- Transfer the good practices of national sport structures, where well-defined roles and responsibilities are present, to European level by **sound division of tasks** among stakeholders within the next EU Work Plan;
- Explore ways to **base policy making on studies** where more evidence-base is needed;
- **Enable ad-hoc working structures** if needed that are more adaptive to real-time challenges, such as flash groups, expert workshops, seminars, etc.;
- **Ensure structural representation** in Expert Groups, with the participation of ministries of Member States and sport organisations;
- **Set up quality criteria** for Member States and observers in order to guarantee the nomination of real experts to the Expert Groups;
- **Establish an Erasmus+ discussion platform** for sport organisations which enables feedback and improvement on the Erasmus+ Sport Programme e.g. through regular meetings with beneficiaries of the Erasmus+ Sport Programme.

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