



Position Paper on EU Sport Programme

The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF) call upon the European Union (EU) to include the following values, structure, thematic priorities and focal point for the co-operation with third countries, in the future EU Sport Programme:

I) Values

European sport is for all. European sport is local.

Important values in European sports are:

Volunteering, Joy, Equality, Honesty (Fair Play), Democracy, Unity, Health and Loyalty

II) Structure

It is important to remember that the structure of the programme reflects the values and thematic priorities in European sport. If only big organisations with employees have the resources to send an application, the volunteering base of European sport is not being recognised. The local character of European sport makes it crucial that the application procedure is well known on a national and local level.

The programme should:

- be applicable for sporting organisations with headquarter in EFTA countries, as well as in EU states
- be open for the participation of Russian organisations as partners in projects
- be applicable for European, national, regional and local sport organisations
- be applicable for sport organisations, which do not have full-time employees in order to recognise the volunteering character of European sport
- be as decentralised as possible, due to the reality that sport is locally based; An EU financed position as Information Officer in each participating state should be a minimum. He/she should preferably be based at the office of the National Umbrella Organisation(s) of Sport.

III) Thematic Priorities

Sport is the largest social activity in Europe. Developments in sport affect more people across the continent than in any other movement. More volunteers are active in sport than in any other area and more people participate in sport than in any other activity. The White Paper on Sport points out that "Voluntary sport organisations provide the backbone of the entire sport structure". It is therefore crucial that the sport programme does not undermine the volunteering character of sport through making the programme only applicable for professional and commercial actors. The issue of volunteering should be recognised in the projects that are selected for funding.

According to the UN, sport and physical education is a “fundamental right for all” (UNESCO 1978). Minorities and people with different backgrounds, beliefs and cultures contribute strongly to develop new sporting activities in Europe and in developing an active and competitive Europe. EU should therefore front the rights of minorities. The issues of different sexual orientation is still a tabu in Europe and especially in the world of the sports. The sport programme is a great opportunity to include the rights of people with differing sexual orientation in the work the Union is carrying out in this area. In addition the programme ought to emphasise the importance of including people with disabilities in European sport.

The programme should support projects that:

- focus on sport as an activity for all
- acknowledge the intrinsic value of sport promoting a healthier lifestyle
- focus on volunteering as an essential prerequisite of the sport movement
- prioritise activities that promote sport as a tool for democracy and a social responsibility of the individual
- prioritise integration of minority groups that are not always well included in the work of sport organisations, such as: migrants, people with disabilities and different sexual orientation
- focus on recruitment of female leaders
- focus on elite sport, education and employment (dual career)
- place emphasis on co-operation between sport organisations, schools, health care system and companies.

IV) Foster Co-operation with Third Countries

Russia is Europe’s biggest neighbour. EU has in the Northern Dimension Policy agreed to “provide a common framework for the promotion of dialogue and concrete cooperation, strengthen stability and well-being, intensify economic cooperation, promote economic integration, competitiveness and sustainable development in Northern Europe” (ND policy 1999). It is therefore crucial to include Russian actors as potential partners in order to build the bridge between EU Sport Programme and EU foreign policy.

The programme should prioritise:

- co-operation in the EU Northern Dimension (EU, Nordic EFTA states, and Russia) as a part of EU’s foreign and security policy to increase dialogue, co-operation with Russian Federation, the Baltic states and EFTA states.