

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

COUNCIL

Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on promoting cross-sectoral cooperation for the benefit of sport and physical activity in society

(2020/C 419/08)

THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES, MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,

RECALLING THAT:

1. The Council Recommendation of 26 November 2013 on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors (¹) recommends, *inter alia*, that Member States work towards effective HEPA (²) policies by developing a cross-sectoral approach involving policy areas including sport, health, education, environment and transport, as well as other relevant sectors and in accordance with national specificities (³).
2. The Council Conclusions of 15 December 2015 on promotion of motor skills, physical and sport activities for children call on Member States to consider implementing cross-sectoral policies, with the education, youth and health sectors among others, to promote physical activities and motor skills in early childhood (⁴).
3. The Council Conclusions of 9 December 2017 on the role of coaches in society stress the need to add international and cross-sectoral dimensions to coaching education by integrating good examples and useful working methods from youth work such as non-formal and informal learning, work with people with special needs and entrepreneurship (⁵).
4. The Council Conclusions of 13 December 2018 on the economic dimension of sport and its socioeconomic benefits invite Member States to support and disseminate the idea of extending the representation of the economic dimension of sport by including socioeconomic aspects, especially volunteering, health economic aspects and innovation, on the European and national level and by enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation (⁶).
5. The Council Conclusions of 11 June 2020 on empowering coaches by enhancing opportunities to acquire skills and competences invite the sport movement to enhance, in collaboration with relevant institutions at the EU, national, regional or local level, cross-sectoral cooperation in order to apply new insights and methods in everyday work, and involve the research and innovation sector in developing education and training programmes for coaches (⁷).

(¹) All references mentioned in this document are listed in the Annex.

(²) Health-enhancing physical activity.

(³) See recommendation 1.

(⁴) See paragraph 13.

(⁵) See paragraph 14(h).

(⁶) See paragraph 23.

(⁷) See paragraph 40.

6. The Council Conclusions of 29 June 2020 on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery of the sport sector call on Member States to promote cross-sectoral cooperation and consultations in areas that are relevant to sport at all levels, including with the sport movement, the sport-related business sector and other relevant stakeholders, in order to effectively address the challenges that the sport sector is facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen the position of sport in society ⁽⁸⁾.
7. The European Union Work Plan for Sport 2017-2020 recognises that sport plays a positive role in the cross-sectoral cooperation at EU level and thereby helps to ensure sustainable development and to adequately tackle the overarching socioeconomic and security-related challenges the EU faces ⁽⁹⁾.
8. The Council of Europe's European Sports Charter underlines the importance of coordination between different policy areas to ensure that sport is an integral part of socio-cultural development ⁽¹⁰⁾.
9. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development enshrines the role of sport as an important enabler for sustainable development, and its growing contribution to, *inter alia*, health, education and social inclusion objectives ⁽¹¹⁾.

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT:

10. Sport and physical activity promote, when practised responsibly and adjusted to each one's characteristics, the health and well-being of people of all generations, while at the same time help to reduce the burden on the health system ⁽¹²⁾.
11. Practising sport in the community, especially in sport clubs, can strengthen social cohesion and social participation and thus promote integration and inclusion.
12. Voluntary work in the field of sport provides the opportunity to acquire additional skills and make an active contribution to the development of local communities.
13. In the field of transportation, physical activity in the form of walking and cycling is an important part of environmental and climate protection.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT:

14. According to recent statistical surveys, the proportion of people taking part in sport or physical activity is showing a tendency to stagnate or even decline in several Member States ⁽¹³⁾.
15. In addition, sports organisations seem to have increasing difficulties in attracting people for voluntary work, especially for long-term voluntary engagements, in sports clubs.
16. The COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent measures and restrictions put in place to prevent the spread of the virus, have to a large extent affected the practise of sports and physical activity, especially as regards collective and organised sport in sport centres.

HIGHLIGHTING THAT:

17. Sport and physical activity are more than a leisure activity for the individual. Due to their positive impacts ⁽¹⁴⁾, there is a public interest in promoting sport and physical activity among all citizens.
18. Local conditions have a considerable influence on the individual's decision to pursue an active and healthy lifestyle, as well as to engage in voluntary work in sports. Affordable and easy access to sports, as well as to sports facilities and public spaces that encourage physical activity in a safe environment, are particularly important. The same applies to a sustainable transport infrastructure and urban planning that is adapted to the needs and safety conditions of pedestrians and cyclists.
19. Such local conditions enhance the overall quality of life in a municipality or region, and thus also its competitiveness and attractiveness. The positive effects therefore go beyond the field of sports and physical activity.

⁽⁸⁾ See paragraph 25.

⁽⁹⁾ See paragraph 5.

⁽¹⁰⁾ See Article 13(1).

⁽¹¹⁾ See in particular paragraph 37.

⁽¹²⁾ The cost of physical inactivity in the EU is estimated at EUR 84 billion (Link: <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/science-update/european-public-health-week-jrc-publishes-overview-physical-activity>).

⁽¹³⁾ Special Eurobarometer 472, Sport and Physical Activity, March 2018 (Link: https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2164_88_4_472_ENG).

⁽¹⁴⁾ See for example paragraphs 10–13.

20. Sport and physical activity have numerous links with other policy sectors such as education, health, youth, social affairs, infrastructure, public space (i.e. parks), urban and rural development, transportation, environment, research, innovation, digitalisation, culture, economy, employment, tourism and international cooperation, including their respective funding instruments.
21. Cross-sectoral cooperation can play an important role to create or optimise the conditions for an active and healthy lifestyle, and therefore to activate the positive social potential of sport and physical activity, as well as to stimulate innovation and the economic dimension of sport. Coordinated actions at multiple levels can be more effective than single interventions.
22. With the involvement of the sport sector, cross-sectoral cooperation can expand the positive impact that sport and physical activity may have on other policy sectors (15).
23. While pursuing their own goals, the different actors of the sport sector (16) can make an important contribution to the success of cross-sectoral cooperation and to achieving overall political goals at the respective levels (17).
24. The long-term success of such cross-sectoral cooperation depends not least on the promotion and support of the political and administrative decision-makers, and therefore ultimately on the mutual benefit for all stakeholders involved and their sectoral policy objectives.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES, AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVELS AND WHILST TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO:

25. Develop and monitor, where appropriate, together with the relevant stakeholders, mutual strategies with a clear division of responsibilities to increase citizens' participation in sport and physical activity in the short, mid and long term, and in this regard pay particular attention to cross-sectoral cooperation.
26. Identify, where appropriate, at all levels, those policy and administrative areas that are relevant to sport and physical activity, and encourage the sectoral decision-makers to take greater account of the benefits that sport and physical activity can generate in their respective policies.
27. Promote and encourage long-term cross-sectoral cooperation on different levels, *inter alia*, through sharing best practices, and facilitate and support it through appropriate measures.
28. Involve, where appropriate, all stakeholders from the sport sector, especially the sport movement, in cross-sectoral cooperation.
29. Inform stakeholders about relevant EU funding programmes to support cross-sectoral projects related to sports and physical activity and/or make use of such programmes as appropriate (18).

INVITE THE COMMISSION TO:

30. Promote cross-sectoral cooperation for the benefit of sport, physical activity and social cohesion through appropriate initiatives (19) and support the exchange of best practices in this regard, involving as appropriate the HEPA focal points network (20).
31. Organize meetings with representatives of the sports sector and other relevant stakeholders to develop, document and monitor shared goals and strategies at the European level, in order to increase citizens' participation in sport and physical activity in the short, mid and long terms, and in this regard pay particular attention to cross-sectoral cooperation.
32. Consider supporting the cross-sectoral approach to the promotion of projects related to sport and physical activity in the implementation of relevant EU funding programmes.

(15) See for example paragraphs 10–13.

(16) See definition in the Annex.

(17) For example, promoting cooperation of local sports clubs with schools (e.g. offering sports groups in the afternoon) could lead to the sports clubs getting more members.

(18) For instance, the Erasmus+ programme, the Cohesion Policy Funds, or the Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

(19) Such initiatives could be the European Week of Sport, the EU Sport Forum, the Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle as well as the SHARE initiative.

(20) Council Recommendation of 26 November 2013 on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors, in particular recommendation 3.

33. Inform Member States, the sport movement and other relevant stakeholders about relevant EU funding programmes and initiatives that can be used to support cross-sectoral projects related to sport and physical activity and to promote a healthy lifestyle.
34. Identify those policy and administrative areas at EU level that are relevant to sport and physical activity, and encourage greater consideration of the positive impact of sport and physical activity in other policy sectors' planning and programmes and in achieving the overall political priorities of the EU.
35. Contribute to the better knowledge of the sector, e.g. by providing studies and analysis to support the positive impact of sport and physical activity, including financial benefits that sport and physical activity may have on other sectors.

INVITE THE SPORT MOVEMENT AND OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS TO:

36. Actively engage in the development of strategies to increase citizens' participation in sport and physical activity.
37. Consider becoming part of a cross-sectoral cooperation initiative on all levels in order to promote the important role that sport and physical activity can play in a healthy lifestyle, in personal and social development, social cohesion and social inclusion.

ANNEX

References

- Council Recommendation of 26 November 2013 on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors (OJ C 354, 4.12.2013, p. 1).
- Council Conclusions of 15 December 2015 on promotion of motor skills, physical and sport activities for children (OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 46).
- Council Conclusions of 9 December 2017 on the role of coaches in society (OJ C 423, 9.12.2017, p. 6).
- Council Conclusions of 13 December 2018 on the economic dimension of sport and its socioeconomic benefits (OJ C 449, 13.12.2018, p. 1).
- Council Conclusions of 11 June 2020 on empowering coaches by enhancing opportunities to acquire skills and competences (OJ C 196, 11.6.2020, p. 1).
- Council Conclusions of 29 June 2020 on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery of the sport sector (OJ C 214 I, 29.6.2020, p. 1).
- Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (1 July 2017 – 31 December 2020) (OJ C 189, 15.6.2017, p. 5).
- Council of Europe Recommendation No R (92) 13 REV of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the revised European Sports Charter
- Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNGA Resolution A/RES/70/1 of 25 September 2015)

Definition

For the purpose of these Conclusions, the 'sport sector' consists of sports federations, sports clubs and other stakeholders focused on sport-related activities, as well as sport-related public authorities and institutions at various levels.
