



Council of the
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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Towards a new Work Plan in the field of sport

Delegations will find attached a Presidency paper on the above subject in preparation for the Working Party on Sport meeting on 23 January 2017.

Written comments are welcome already before the meeting and, at the latest, by 19 January 2017 midday.

Discussion paper

Towards a new Work Plan in the field of sport

Background

The first EU Work Plan for Sport was adopted by the Council in its Resolution of 20 May 2011. The second and the current EU Work Plan for Sport (2014-2017) was adopted by the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 21 May 2014.

The current Work Plan established three priority themes: integrity of sport, the economic dimension of sport and sport and society. In order to address these priority themes Member States and the Commission established five Expert Groups: Match-Fixing, Good Governance, Economic Dimension, HEPA and Human Resources Development in Sport. It also included a provision for Directors General for Sport to exchange best practices in prevention of doping in recreational sport based on the recommendations by Expert Group from the First Work Plan for Sport. The participation to these expert groups is voluntary. Expert Groups were composed of representatives appointed by Member States and other interested stakeholders who were accepted upon approval of Member States representatives in the expert groups. The approved stakeholders were given an observer role and at times they were given the floor to address the expert group. However, they often played quite active role in the expert groups.

Evaluation

The implementation of the current Work Plan will be evaluated by the Council on the basis of a report by the Commission, which is scheduled for adoption in January 2017. This evaluation is based on a questionnaire sent to Member States, Member States' experts and observers who participated in the Expert Groups. Other contributions include inputs from various stakeholder meetings and events as well as other spontaneous inputs.

During the Working Party on Sport meeting held on the 5 December 2016, the Commission presented a preliminary report of this evaluation. The evaluation focused on 5 main areas; (a) the duration of the Work Plan, (b) the arrangements related to the Expert Groups, (c) the participation of observers in the Expert Groups, (d) the outputs from the expert groups, (e) the form of the structured dialogue. Following this presentation, a number of Member State representatives expressed their initial reactions.

The current Work Plan for Sport can be considered a success where the 16 outputs have been delivered on time with the exception of The Report on State of Play Concerning the Implementation of EU Guidelines on Dual Careers which is due in the first half of 2017 by the HR Expert Group. Preliminary findings and an extract of the results based on the questionnaire by the Commission sent analysing quality of methods used; outcomes and impact, as presented in the Working Party on Sport mentioned above were as follows:

1. 91% agreed that it focused on the **right priorities**;
2. 70% agreed it introduced **appropriate structure and working methods**;
3. 69% agreed that it **improved political coordination** on sport at EU level;
4. 69% agreed that it **improved cooperation** on between the EU level and sport movement;
5. 61% agreed it led to **fruitful outcomes for policy process**;
6. 46% agreed it has **improved cooperation** between Member States and the sport movement at national level.

The Commission has suggested the following structure as a basis for the future EU Work Plan for sport.

General Principles

1. Clear duration
2. More flexibility
3. Increased interaction with other policy fields
4. Synergies with Erasmus+ Sport Programme

Priorities

5. Better link with political priorities set out by the European Union
6. Continuity of priorities previously defined.
7. Stronger focus on implementing the practical outcomes and already existing results

Working Methods

8. Different working methods
9. Reduce the number of written documents
10. Mainstreaming of sport in relevant EU policy areas
11. Possible annual stakeholders meetings, platforms
12. Better EU structured dialogues with sport organisations

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Against this background the Presidency thinks it would be useful to address the following questions:

General principles

1. The previous two EU Work Plans for Sport had a 3-year term duration. Is a 3-year period ideal?
2. Should outside stakeholders and observers be involved and if so, to what extent?

Priorities

1. What are the main issues in the field of sport for which co-operation at the EU level can bring added value?
2. Are there any sport issues that can contribute to the high level priorities of the EU (in particular the European Council and the Commission priorities)?

Working methods

1. During the previous two Work Plans, deliverables for the priorities were mainly produced by means of Expert Groups. Many argue that these working methods were not effective enough. A number of alternative ideas such as expert seminars, multi stakeholder conferences, smaller groups of focussed experts, studies etc. have been suggested. How do you view these suggestions?
2. Are there other possibilities?
