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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	11372/22
Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on sustainable and accessible sports infrastructure - <i>Revised Presidency text</i>

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In view of the meeting of the Working Party on Sport on 30 September 2022, delegations will find attached the draft Council conclusions on the abovementioned subject, as prepared by the Presidency.

Changes compared to document 11372/22 are in **bold** for new text and in [...] for deletion.

Any written comments from delegations should be sent to the Presidency

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and to the General Secretariat of the Council (eycs@consilium.europa.eu;

DELETED@consilium.europa.eu) before **30 September 2022**.

Draft Council conclusions on ‘Sustainable and accessible sports infrastructure’

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

RECALLING THAT:

1. **The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of December 2006 promotes taking actions to enable persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in sporting activities and invites States Parties to take appropriate measures to allow such possibilities.**
2. The July 2007 White Paper on Sport calls for using the potential of sport for social inclusion, integration and equal opportunities and invites Member States and sports organisations to adapt sports infrastructure [...] **in line with** to the needs of people with disabilities.
3. The Council conclusions of June 2018 on promoting the common values of the EU through sport stress that ‘all people should be free to practise sport and to feel part of society, and different sectors related to sport can do what is in their capacity to foster integration as well as to provide equal opportunities to engage in sport and avoid discrimination and social exclusion’.
4. In the key findings of the December 2018 report to the European Commission entitled ‘Mapping on Access to Sport for People with Disabilities’, **good personal health, individual development and social well-being are listed as** benefits of sport participation for people with disabilities[...].

5. The Council conclusions of June 2019 on access to sport for persons with disabilities emphasise that [...] **persons** with disabilities have a higher probability of being subject to socioeconomic disadvantages and invite Member States to ‘take action to ensure access of persons with and without disabilities to sports infrastructure, including attendance at sports events, training or participation in sports’.
6. The Council Resolution of December 2020 on the European Union Work Plan for Sport for the period from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2024 includes, as a guiding objective, awareness of the important contribution that sport can [...] **make to** Europe’s socially and environmentally sustainable growth.
7. The Council of Europe Revised European Sports Charter of [...] **October** 2021 calls for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable behaviour in the responsible practice of indoor and outdoor sports activities. Owners of sports infrastructure are called on ‘to act proactively to identify the effects and consequences of their facilities, avoid potential damage to nature and, where necessary, take counter- and protective measures against such risks’.
8. The Council conclusions of December 2021 on lifelong physical activity emphasise that ‘disadvantaged groups¹ across all age groups are often insufficiently physically active due to fewer opportunities and limited access’.
9. The Council conclusions of April 2022 on sport and physical activity, a promising lever to transform behaviour for sustainable development, highlight the importance of minimising ‘the negative impact of all types of sports activities on biodiversity, the environment, and the dynamics of the ongoing process of climate change’ and the need ‘to ensure that the sports sector makes its contribution to the European Union’s climate and environmental objectives, as set out in the European Green Deal’.

¹ Definition according to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE): ‘groups of persons that experience a higher risk of poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and violence than the general population, including, but not limited to, ethnic minorities, migrants, people with disabilities, isolated elderly people and children’.

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT:

10. Sports infrastructure, as a place for practicing sports **and physical** activities, **can** contribute to enabling the **United Nations** Sustainable Development Goals² in various areas. **These include** environmental, social and economic sustainability goals[...].
11. **Sport and sports infrastructure affect and are also affected by** climate change [...]in places where sport is practised. The effects of climate change can lead to damage to buildings and other sports infrastructure owing to phenomena such as violent storms, floods, damage to playing surfaces caused by extreme weather conditions, coastal erosion, or lack of snow as a result of rising temperatures associated with global warming. This leads to a decrease in the number of locations for sports practice³ and a reduced availability of remaining sports infrastructure.
12. The construction, reconstruction, maintenance and use of sports infrastructure can and does, in turn, contribute to climate change and to the deterioration of the environment by directly or indirectly generating greenhouse gas emissions over its entire lifecycle⁴. The overall sustainability of sports infrastructure can be most affected by [...]planning⁵.
13. The planning process for sustainable and accessible sports infrastructure should comprise the [...]construction of new sports infrastructure, the use and renovation of existing buildings, the maintenance, operation and reuse or recycling of materials and equipment and planning barrier-free access. These considerations should primarily reflect ways to improve the efficient use of the existing sports infrastructure. Multi-purpose buildings, infrastructure with year-round use, particularly outdoor sports infrastructure, brownfield redevelopment and the conversion of existing non-sports buildings **into** sports infrastructure should be preferred.

² **United Nations, Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, A/RES/70/1 [21252030 Agenda for Sustainable Development web.pdf \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/development/desa/2030agenda/)**

³ UN Sports for Climate Action Framework, [UNITED NATIONS \(unfccc.int\)](https://unfccc.int/un-sports-for-climate-action-framework)

⁴ Notably construction, operation, maintenance and also demolition of infrastructures

⁵ Guidelines for Sustainable Sports Facility Construction, [Leitfaden_Nachhaltigkeit_ENGLISCH.pdf \(bisp-sportinfrastruktur.de\)](https://www.bisp-sportinfrastruktur.de/Leitfaden_Nachhaltigkeit_ENGLISCH.pdf).

14. As only 12 % of materials used in construction in the EU are currently recycled⁶, support for the reuse of materials is needed. Sports infrastructure is a major consumer of energy and other resources and building and renovating modern high energy-efficient sports infrastructure not only contributes to the conservation of resources but can lead to economic savings as a potential positive side effect, **Furthermore, this can be crucial to facilitating sport in periods of high energy prices.**
15. Owing to construction costs or the cost of renovating sports infrastructure, multi-source financing can support [...] **building sports** infrastructure to [...] **update it for** the needs of the 21st century, in particular with regard to **environmental** sustainability and the protection of resources[...]. EU funds can contribute to funding the construction or reconstruction of sports infrastructure [...] **through** fulfilling the objectives of [...] **EU** programmes – notably the ERDF, ESF+ and RRF – as part of a ‘greener, low-carbon Europe’.
16. The accessibility of sports infrastructure [...] **is a key factor for** providing equal and inclusive access to physical activity. Physical activity and sport can lead to a wide range of benefits for individuals, communities and society at large by contributing to participants’ physical literacy, well-being, mental and physical health and the ability to develop social skills, and by improving [...] **people’s** role in society. It brings benefits not only to individuals but also to society as a whole⁷[...].
17. Non-discriminatory access to sports infrastructure and the practice of physical activity and sport is a fundamental right irrespective of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or any other basis.

⁶ EUROSTAT (2019), Record recycling rates and use of recycled materials in the EU.

⁷ UNESCO, The International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, [International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org/en/physical-education/physical-activity-and-sport)

18. [...] **The** accessibility of sports infrastructure may be restricted [...] **for** athletes, coaches, fans and other visitors to use sports infrastructure **without** the help of a third party. This should be addressed by relevant policies and criteria: accessibility policies and criteria need to be formulated by stakeholders involved in the process, such as local, regional and national public authorities, as well as the sports movement, to ensure that all persons with disabilities have equal opportunities and equal access to participate in society and the economy⁸.
19. The location of sports infrastructure plays a vital role in terms of accessibility. Lack of sports infrastructure and information about sports practice possibilities act as barriers to sports practice.⁹ People living in rural areas may have fewer opportunities to practise sports owing to a limited offer of sports infrastructure compared with urban areas. Placement should be planned based on the needs **and demand** of society [...], the suitability of a location **and its accessibility by means of public transport, foot or bicycle**.

HIGHLIGHTING THE FOLLOWING:

20. In view of the ambitious goals set in the European Green Deal and UN Agenda 2030, it is necessary to ensure that sport and sports infrastructure contribute to social and environmental sustainability, social interaction and inclusion. To achieve these goals, cross-sectoral cooperation **and consultation with relevant stakeholders such as persons with disabilities through their representative organisations** is needed, together with common action and responsibility taken by all relevant stakeholders, when planning, constructing, renovating, maintaining and using sports infrastructure.

⁸ European Commission, Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, 2021.

⁹ European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture Mapping of innovative practices in the EU to promote sport outside of traditional structures. final report to the European Commission, Publications Office, 2021.

21. A key [...]goal in improving the sustainability of sports infrastructure is to reduce the negative impact on the environment and biodiversity during all phases of its lifecycle.
22. Faced with the need of modernising sports infrastructure and implementing sustainable, energy efficient **and low-carbon** solutions and accessibility measures, it is necessary to identify [...]sources for funding **sustainable** sports infrastructure construction and renovation. **The promotion of the benefits of implementing sustainable solutions can generate motivation and momentum for these changes.** Multi-source funding, including the use of EU funds, can be an effective way of contributing to these [...]objectives.
23. Ensuring access to sports infrastructure can act as a measure for the inclusion of [...]persons with disabilities and from different backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, [...]persons with a different sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin and[...] **can also create a sense of community.**
24. It is important to enable **barrier-free** access to sports infrastructure and participation in sporting and physical activities, in particular for [...]persons with disabilities or **persons with** fewer opportunities, so that [...]as many people as possible can enjoy the benefits offered by sport.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES TO:

25. [...]Support **equal** access for all citizens to sustainable, aesthetic and inclusive sports infrastructure to serve sports activities [...]and also communities and society as mentioned in the core values of the Commission's New European Bauhaus initiative.

26. Consider establishing [...] **policy frameworks, guidelines, roadmaps and incentives to ensure that private and public national sport infrastructures become sustainable and remain accessible to everybody.**
27. [...] **Develop** environmental criteria systems for monitoring the impact of climate on sports infrastructure during its life cycle while respecting the scale of each **piece of** sports infrastructure.
28. **Aim to** include environmental and accessibility criteria as positive criteria for accessing public funding for the planning, building, renovation and reuse of sports infrastructure and support measures for the use and reuse of existing infrastructure, resources and circular economy solutions to limit the use of new materials and increase their recycling within the economy.
29. Promote cooperation between sports stakeholders and public authorities, including the managing authorities of decentralised EU funds, to support the construction and renovation of sports infrastructure and explore options to co-finance this construction and renovation, **particularly at regional and local level.**
30. Include parameters¹⁰ for adequate physical accessibility to sports infrastructure in policies in order to provide **barrier-free** access to sports for citizens with special physical accessibility requirements.
31. Contribute to the mapping of sports infrastructure by supporting sports infrastructure databases and building sports infrastructure passports in order to gather information about existing sports infrastructure in the Member States and its characteristics as well as to support the planning and location of sports infrastructure and to maximise its use.

¹⁰ Such as the parameters mentioned in the International Paralympic Committee Accessibility Guide.

32. Contribute to the establishment of crisis management schemes for sports infrastructure to prevent operational limitations owing to unexpected events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or natural disasters, and to the implementation of safety guidelines to protect all users of or visitors to sports infrastructure.
33. Support the identification and elimination of access barriers to sports infrastructure and [...] **promote** non-discriminatory access for all, regardless of disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion or national or social origin, **and share best practices with other Member States about sustainable measures.**

INVITE THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO:

34. Promote the sharing of knowledge and best practices, foster innovation research to support the implementation of sustainable solutions throughout the lifecycle of sports infrastructure through the Erasmus+ programme and continue support for existing initiatives such as the Expert Group on Green Sport or the SHARE Initiative.
35. Support the exchange of best practices and promote initiatives addressing inclusion and equal opportunities when accessing sports infrastructure.

36. Facilitate exploring opportunities for the [...]use of EU funding [...]for sports **infrastructure**. Regularly inform Member States and relevant stakeholders about potential EU funding opportunities for sports infrastructure to facilitate its construction, renovation and accessibility.
37. Explore the possibility of contributing to the development of sports databases and registers **in the Member States with other relevant actors through best practice and knowledge exchange** and data sharing data[...], including data on environmental impact, usage, size **and** accessibility[...].
38. Take into account **equal** accessibility to sports infrastructure [...]in accordance with Articles 9 and 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRDP)¹¹ **and the UN Agenda 2030**.

INVITE THE SPORTS MOVEMENT [...]AND [...]OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS TO:

39. Take into account sustainability criteria¹² for the construction, renovation, maintenance and use of sports infrastructure while respecting its various forms, together with the needs of society and the environment and the requirements of each location.
40. Use, **where possible**, tools to carry out an environmental impact assessment to evaluate the impact of the construction, renovation and operation of sports infrastructure on the environment. Assess the building costs of sports infrastructure based on the outlook for its life-cycle.

¹¹ United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

¹² **The ‘sustainability criteria‘ would entail the following indicators: ecological quality, sociocultural and functional quality, economic quality, technical quality, process quality, location quality and sports functional quality.**

41. Wherever possible, consider reusing existing infrastructure and resources and using circular economy solutions to limit the use of new materials and increase their recycling within the economy.
42. Use the potential of sports infrastructure and its multi-purpose characteristics to maximise its utilisation for sports [...]and also to serve communities.
43. [...]Promote barrier-free accessibility to sports infrastructure via various modes of transport in cooperation with public authorities, e.g. by foot, bicycle or public transport.
44. Promote sustainable and short supply chains and sustainable criteria in tenders for suppliers to construct, renovate and maintain sports infrastructure.
45. Protect people, fauna and flora and the soil in the vicinity of construction sites and ensure basic human and labour rights for all workers concerned.
46. Consider incorporating resource and waste management systems to lower the consumption of water, energy and other resources [...], encourage sustainable and responsible consumption and reduce expenses. Educate users, staff and visitors [...]about the responsible use of sports infrastructure to extend its lifespan and spare natural resources. Promote the benefits of implemented sustainability measures and the correlation between saving resources and its impact on natural resources.
47. Contribute to the establishment of crisis management schemes for sports infrastructure to prevent operational limitations owing to unexpected events such as the COVID-19 pandemic or natural disasters and the implementation of safety guidelines to ensure the safety of all visitors to sports infrastructure.

48. Act responsibly in the use of **sports infrastructure and** event-related infrastructure when organising sports events in **indoor and** outdoor settings and restore any damage to the environment as a result of the organisation of such events.
49. Facilitate the accessibility of sports infrastructure for [...] **persons** with disabilities and follow relevant national and international guidelines and recommendations.
50. **Where appropriate**, actively use and contribute to sports databases to provide and obtain relevant data on the characteristics and location of sports infrastructure.

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