Council of the European Union

Brussels, 20 November 2026
(OR. en)

15598/26

SPORT 50
CULT 140

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on traditional sports and games (TSGs) as a living expression of Europe's cultural heritage and a driver of inclusive participation in physical activity

Delegations will find attached the abovementioned conclusions approved by the Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) at its sesssion on 20 November 2026.

ANNEX

Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on traditional sports and games (TSGs) as a living expression of Europe's cultural heritage and a driver of inclusive participation in physical activity

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

CONSIDERING THAT, FOR THE PURPOSES OF THESE CONCLUSIONS:

1. Traditional sports and games (TSGs) can be understood as physical, competitive or non-competitive activities and recreational activities that form part of the diversity of intangible cultural heritage; they are practised individually or collectively, rooted in regional or local communities and identities, passed down from generation to generation, and are based on rules accepted by the practising community.

2. TSGs are dynamic, contributing to cultural continuity and identity, shared values and social cohesion. Their access and availability to younger generations is essential for their sustainability and transmission as living cultural and sporting practices.

RECALLING:

3. Article 6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which provides that the European Union has the competence to carry out actions in the area of sport to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States. Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in accordance with which the Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational functions. Article 167 TFEU provides that the Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States while respecting their national and regional diversity and bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.

4. The European Union Work Plan for Sport 2024–2027, which highlights traditional sports under the priority area relating to integrity and values in sport.

5. The inscription of certain traditional sports on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the existence of national inventories of intangible cultural heritage, which include certain TSGs.

6. The political context set out in the Annex to these conclusions.

EMPHASISING THAT:

7. Given their grassroots and community-based organisation, TSGs can play an important role in promoting lifelong physical activity for all and active ageing, contributing to their continued practice within local communities. They can also provide important physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits to individuals involved in TSGs.

8. Organisations involved in TSGs are often volunteer-led structures that contribute to social and community resilience.

9. Participation in TSGs can foster, for example, social cohesion and resilience, intergenerational participation and exchange, environmental awareness, education, tourism, regional development, the vitality of rural and remote areas, the preservation of local traditions and cultural heritage, and active citizenship.

10. TSGs can contribute to the diversity of ways in which people move, play and interact. Participation in TSGs can contribute to laying the foundation for healthy lifestyle habits among children and young people that can last a lifetime, including by promoting opportunities for daily physical activity.

11. TSGs can play a role in reinforcing the key features of a European Sport Model, since they embody many of its core values, such as inclusiveness, sports integrity, gender equality, community engagement and cultural diversity, which underpin this model.

12. Research undertaken by the European Commission[1] on TSGs shows the challenges faced by TSGs in attracting new participants due to, *inter alia*, urbanisation, a lack of financial and human resources, and limited visibility beyond their areas of origin.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES, AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVELS, TO:

13. Promote awareness of TSGs as part of Europe's sporting diversity and intangible cultural heritage, including, for example, by mapping TSGs at both national and regional scale, or acknowledging, where appropriate and in accordance with national circumstances, their contribution to national sport and cultural policies.

14. Facilitate exchanges of information and good practices concerning the recognition of TSGs, while fully respecting national competences and procedures, thereby contributing to the safeguarding and promotion of Europe's shared cultural heritage.

15. Support volunteering and community-based governance structures that sustain, safeguard and transmit TSGs, without creating unnecessary administrative burdens.

16. Support initiatives aimed at raising awareness and expanding the pool of potential practitioners of TSGs among children and young people, including, where appropriate and in accordance with national education systems, through education, youth organisations and community-based activities, thereby highlighting the value of intergenerational transmission.

[1] European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Mapping of traditional sports and games (TSG) in Europe – Final report, Publications Office of the European Union, 2016*.

17. Encourage inclusive participation in and access to TSGs in line with the non-discrimination grounds set out in Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which provides that any discrimination based on any grounds such as, in particular on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinions, membership in a national minority, property, birth, disability, age, or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.

18. Consider, where appropriate and in accordance with national legislation and procedures, the inclusion of TSGs in national inventories of intangible cultural heritage.

19. Encourage cooperation initiatives, on a voluntary basis, including cross-border exchanges of good practices, digital platforms and festivals, relating to TSGs as well as, where appropriate and in accordance with national procedures, note the existence and natural development of other European TSGs on national territory. Similar or related forms of traditional sports and games can be found across different Member States and regions, demonstrating historical and cultural connections across Europe and offering opportunities for cross-border exchange, learning and cooperation.

20. Foster and strengthen collaboration with European and International organisations or institutions engaged in TSGs, such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe, which promote intergovernmental cooperation in the field of sports and highlight sports as a means of promoting European heritage, culture, and history.

INVITE THE COMMISSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY AND WITHIN ITS SPHERES OF COMPETENCE, TO:

21. Support participation in TSGs through relevant Union initiatives, including the European Week of Sport and the European Sport Forum. Consider, where appropriate, options to encourage the practice and transmission of TSGs and to strengthen inter-cultural dialogue or highlight TSGs as a theme for new or existing events.

22. Facilitate the exchange of good practices through, for example, expert groups and peer learning activities, including the exchange of knowledge on the safeguarding, governance and sustainable development of TSGs.

23. Explore opportunities to strengthen cooperation at EU level between the relevant policy areas of sport, cultural heritage, intergenerational fairness, and education, while fully respecting Member States' competences.

24. Support, where appropriate, projects relating to TSGs under current relevant Union funding initiatives, including Erasmus+ Sport Actions, the European Social Fund Plus and other relevant instruments.

INVITE THE SPORTS MOVEMENT, THE TRADITIONAL SPORTS AND GAMES COMMUNITY AND OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS, WHILE RESPECTING THEIR AUTONOMY, TO:

25. Promote inclusive participation in and access to TSGs.

26. Strengthen governance, safeguarding and integrity standards within TSG structures, in cooperation with other parts of the sport sector.

27. Cooperate with public authorities in enhancing the visibility, accessibility and sustainability of TSGs, including through the use of digital and innovative communication tools and the development of documentation to support their transmission across generations.

28. Encourage cross-border networking and cooperation relating to TSGs.

CONTEXT DOCUMENTS

EU legislative and policy framework

– European Parliament resolution of 7 October 2025 on the role of EU policies in shaping the European Sport Model (2025/2035(INI)) OJ C, C/2026/1521, 15.4.2026,
ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2026/1521/oj

– Council conclusions of 27 November 2023 on developing the 2030 agenda to reach the goals: Accelerating the localisation of the SDGs (15939/23)

– Council conclusions of 21 November 2023 on a social, green and digital transition (15732/23)

– Council conclusions of 4 April 2022 on sport and physical activity, a promising lever to transform behaviour for sustainable development (OJ C 170, 25.4.2022, p. 1)

– Council resolution of 30 November 2021 on the key features of a European Sport Model (OJ C 501, 13.12.2021, p. 1)

– Council conclusions of 30 November 2021 on lifelong physical activity (OJ C 501I, 13.12.2021, p. 1)

– Council conclusions of 18 May 2021 on sport innovation (OJ C 212, 4.6.2021, p. 2)

– Council resolution of 22 November 2019 on the cultural dimension of sustainable development (OJ C 410, 6.12.2019, p. 1)

– Council conclusions of 24 May 2018 on promoting the common values of the EU through sport (OJ C 196, 8.6.2018, p. 23)

– Council conclusions of 22 November 2016 on sport diplomacy (OJ C 467, 15.12.2016, p. 12)

– European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Mapping of traditional sports and games (TSG) in Europe – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2016

– Council conclusions of 24 November 2015 on the promotion of motor skills, physical and sport activities for children (OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 46)

– Council conclusions of 19 May 2015 on maximising the role of grassroots sport in developing transversal skills, especially among young people (OJ C 172, 27.5.2015, p. 8)

– Council conclusions of 21 May 2014 on gender equality in sport (OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 39)

– Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, pp. 391–407)

Documents from other organisations

– UNESCO. *MINEPS VII Outcome Document: Fit for Life Alliance*, adopted at the Seventh International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VII), Baku, 29 June 2023.

– The Revised European Sports Charter of the Council of Europe (CM/Rec (2021)5)

– UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (2015)

– UNESCO, Final Report of the Second Collective Consultation on the Safeguarding and Promotion of Traditional Games and Sports, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 16–20 January 2009.

– Council of Europe Resolution CM/Res(2007)8, establishing the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)

– UNESCO General Conference, Resolution 33 C/21 on Traditional Games and Sports, adopted at its 33rd session, Paris, 2005.

– UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)

– UNESCO, Declaration of Punta del Este, adopted by the Third International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS III), Punta del Este, Uruguay, 30 November–3 December 1999.