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INFORMATION NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sport <i>- Information from the Presidency on the state of play</i>

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Presidency on the above subject, which has been put on the agenda under 'Any other business' for the upcoming Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 17-18 May 2021.

AOB Sport – Background Note**Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Sport**

The pandemic has had a serious impact on the Sport sector in general, with a particular focus on professional sport, sporting events and grassroots sport. Major national and international sporting events have simply been cancelled or postponed, which has also had a serious impact on all related activities. In the same regard, restrictions on mobility – some still in force today – have seriously limited the conducting of events and their very sustainability.

This situation not only affects the current functioning of sports federations. Professional clubs have suffered losses of revenue from player transfers, TV rights, marketing, tickets and other sources of income from professional sporting activities. There have also been long-term consequences regarding the system of competition, qualification and preparation of athletes.

In the EU, in order to limit the spread of COVID-19 and its impact, Member States have taken different specific measures concerning sport. Loss of income, lack of unemployment benefits, the extremely precarious situation of athletes, coaches and other sport professionals and their families, loss of physical attributes, demotivation and depression of athletes, as well as the risk of bankruptcy and disappearance of small sports clubs and gyms, are just a few elements which depict the plight of the EU Sport sector, which has been heavily affected by the suspension of events, competition and training.

While in recent months the positive evolution of the pandemic has led governments to start de-escalating confinement rules and, in some cases, training and some competitions have resumed, the situation is not expected to return to normal before the end of the vaccination campaign, and restrictive measures could be extended in the event of a new wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this regard, the EU plays an important role, namely by sharing experience, disseminating knowledge and coordinating a European response to the crisis.

Since the outbreak of the crisis, Members States have been underlining the importance of information sharing and exchange of best practices regarding the impact of the pandemic on the Sport sector.

After more than a year after, the Portuguese Presidency cannot overlook the impact of such a crisis. We recognise the importance of promoting information sharing and best practices. Therefore, building on what we have learned since the pandemic broke out, the Portuguese Presidency has set up an online platform for data collection and information sharing on the impact of COVID-19 on the Sport sector.
