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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE  
COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE  
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**on the implementation and relevance of the European Union  
Work Plan for Sport 2017-2020**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Sport has gained a solid place amongst EU policies in the last years given its increasing role in today's economy and society thus contributing to meeting the EU's overarching economic and social challenges. Sport has the unique power not only to improve people's health and well-being but also to build strong and cohesive communities, to address challenges related to migration and social exclusion, as well as to foster economic growth and job creation. By transcending social barriers and languages, sport can promote common values and create a sense of belonging in society, particularly amongst young people. It can help to tackle growing concerns related to the lack of physical activity. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted sport severely, has highlighted the major contribution of sport to health and its potential in terms of prevention. However, beyond the many challenges that it is posing to sport from the grassroots to the elite level, the pandemic has underlined even more the importance of sport for our societies as a factor fostering health, well-being and unity through challenging times.

Following the inclusion of sport in the Lisbon Treaty and in line with Article 165 of TFEU, the EU institutions and the Member States have strengthened their cooperation and further developed the European dimension of sport. The EU cooperation has particularly focused on areas where the EU can add value to the activities carried out by Member States and support their actions. In this context, the EU Work Plan for Sport has become one of the main tools to foster cooperation at EU level.

Since 2011, there have been three EU Work Plans for Sport. Their main goal has been to promote and develop cooperation in sport policy between EU institutions, Member States and sport stakeholders, focusing on a specific number of activities with a clear EU added-value.

The third EU Work Plan for Sport has covered the period 1 July 2017-31 December 2020<sup>1</sup>. Its implementation has contributed to the overarching priorities set in the Europe 2020 Strategy<sup>2</sup> and in the Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change<sup>3</sup>. It was supported by

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 189/02, 15.6.2017

<sup>2</sup> COM(2010) 2020 of 3 March 2010.

<sup>3</sup> The political guidelines set by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, on 15 July 2014.

the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020)<sup>4</sup>, thus ensuring complementarity and greater impact of activities in the field of sport. It has maintained the focus on the same priority themes as its predecessor, namely on:

- Integrity of sport
- Economic dimension of sport
- Sport and society

In terms of structure and general working arrangements, the third EU Work Plan for Sport has maintained the main features of the previous one with some improvements and new developments.

The present report is in response to the Commission's obligation to make an assessment of the implementation and relevance of the EU Work Plan for Sport during the first half of 2020, and it will serve as a basis for the preparation of a possible fourth EU Work Plan for Sport during the second half of 2020<sup>5</sup>.

The report of the Commission has two main aims: on the one hand, to provide an assessment on the implementation and the broader policy impact of the EU Work Plan for Sport, and on the other hand, to put forward recommendations for future actions in the field of sport. The Commission's assessment takes into account various inputs, including written contributions submitted by the Member States, as well as the opinions of experts and observers participating in the working structures.

## **B) EVALUATION**

As in previous editions, the evaluation of the third EU Work Plan for Sport by the Commission followed a consultation process with various stakeholders. The Commission organised two meetings, one with the Member States and one with sport organisations, to collect their views on the implementation of the Work Plan, including on lessons learned, and get recommendations for the future. These meetings were complemented by an online questionnaire<sup>6</sup>, which allowed the Commission to also gather useful evidence and statistical data from Member States as well as experts and observers participating in the working structures.

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<sup>4</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 18 of 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), (2017/C 189/2), OJ C 189/5, 15.6.2017

<sup>6</sup> The questionnaire was sent to Member States and observers participating in the expert groups. It included questions on the implementation, work arrangements, relevance and results of the EU Work Plan, and offered the possibility to make suggestions for the future. The Commission received a total of 32 contributions, 15 from Member States and 17 from Observers.

The analysis of the information received has shown that the implementation of the third EU Work Plan for Sport has met the overall expectations and objectives. However, despite its good achievements and efficient delivery, the third EU Work Plan for Sport can benefit from further improvements and integrate new areas of action in the future.

## **1. Working methods and structures**

The evaluation of the established working methods and structures is an important aspect, as they are key for the efficient delivery on the priorities and objectives of the EU Work Plan for Sport. The current EU Work Plan for Sport has largely updated and diversified the working methods. Beyond expert groups, new working methods have been introduced and actively used. Furthermore, the EU Work Plan for Sport has also become an efficient tool to plan the Presidency and Council's work.

During the previous EU Work Plans for Sport, *expert groups* were the main working method. In the past, there have been six expert groups for the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014 and five for 2014-2017. The Commission took a more targeted approach, setting up only two expert groups<sup>7</sup> for the 2017-2020 period. These two groups were chaired by the Commission and composed of Member States' representatives<sup>8</sup>. Interested stakeholders could also be invited to participate as observers on an ad-hoc basis (see the Annex). The two expert groups started their activities in early 2018. Both groups have been working towards delivering the outputs foreseen in the EU Work Plan for Sport. The main goal of the expert groups was to exchange best practices in the selected policy areas, to encourage cooperation amongst Member States and to contribute to policy developments at the national and European level.

The implementation of previous EU Work Plans for Sport has shown that the structures and working methods could be further extended to efficiently achieve the objectives of the document and allow for more active involvement of other international partners and stakeholders. Some of these structures are Presidency conferences, meetings of Sport Ministers and Directors as well as Commission conferences, seminars and studies. During the third EU Work Plan for Sport, two new tools were introduced, namely, the *groups of interested Member States*, which allowed Member States to meet and discuss a specific topic covered in the EU Work Plan for Sport, and the *cluster meetings*, which foster exchanges on policy-relevant outcomes of EU funded projects.

In the period 2017-2019 four meetings of interested Member States took place to discuss particular issues of their concern, such as sustainability, evidence based health-enhancing physical activity as well as different aspects of good governance and match-fixing. To support Member States and create stronger links between policy and programme, the Commission put in place a dedicated financial mechanism. It allows obtaining EU co-funding

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<sup>7</sup> Expert Group on Integrity and Expert Group on Skills and Human Resources Development in Sport.

<sup>8</sup> This was done in accordance with the Commission Decision C(2016) 3301 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups.

for Member States-driven initiatives aiming at promoting peer learning activities amongst at least seven of them.

Furthermore, by the end of 2019, four cluster meetings have been organised, in cooperation with EACEA (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency), on: encouraging participation in sport and physical activity (December 2017), the economic benefits of sport (April 2018), the integrity of sport (December 2018) and the role of sport in education (December 2019). Another cluster meeting on social inclusion through sport will be organised in December 2020.

In addition, for the period 2017-2019 a large number of high level meetings and conferences have taken place (for example an informal meeting of Sport Ministers, ten Presidency events and conferences and five Sport Directors' meetings). As envisaged in the EU Work Plan for Sport, all these meetings have contributed to further strengthening the cooperation between Member States, the EU institutions and sport stakeholders. They have allowed to improve EU coordination, to have exchanges on national experiences, to share good practices and to ensure that sport stakeholders have a say in the shaping and implementation of the EU sport agenda.

Sport federations, associations and other stakeholders have a central role in implementing sport policy. Therefore, it is of major importance to ensure that their views are known and taken into account during policy discussions. In terms of widening cooperation, concrete efforts were made to more closely involve sport organisations and stakeholders in EU activities, including in the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport. In particular, an enhanced dialogue with sport organisations was established and maintained in the framework of different meetings and events in compliance with the Council Resolution on further developing the EU Structured dialogue in sport<sup>9</sup>. The sport movement took an active part in the annual EU Sport Forums and meetings organised in the margin of the Council or Sport Directors' meetings.

## 2. Outputs

The third EU Work Plan for Sport defines 31 concrete deliverables which are different in nature. They cover sport in all its dimensions: social, economic or organisational, and have a specific implementation structure. Most of the deliverables have been completed or are in the process of being accomplished<sup>10</sup>. Only three<sup>11</sup> of them have not been implemented, given that EU Council Presidencies and Member States had the flexibility to adapt their priorities in the course of the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport.

The two expert groups remained at the core of the EU Work Plan for Sport activities:

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<sup>9</sup> 2017/C 425/01

<sup>10</sup> The Annex attached to this report outlines the status of each of these deliverables.

<sup>11</sup> Group of interested Member States on "*EU law in relation to sport and sport organisations*"; Presidency seminar on "*The benefits and challenges of the digital single market for a better funding and commercialisation of sport*"; Council conclusions on the "*Role and influence of media in sport*".

- The **Expert Group on Integrity in Sport** met five times in 2018-2020. It was composed of 27 Member States and 22 observers. It focused specifically on the fight against corruption, match fixing and doping, as well as promoting integrity and safeguarding children in sport. To support the work of this expert group, the Commission financed two studies. The first mapped corruption in sport in Europe while the second identified measures to safeguard children in sport.
- The **Expert Group on Skills and Human Resources Development in Sport** met five times in 2018-2020. The group was composed of 26 Member States and 8 Observers. It focused on the education of coaches, dual careers and professional qualifications and skills in sport. The expert group was tasked to draft Guidelines regarding the minimum requirements in skills and competences for coaches<sup>12</sup>. This document was finalised in February 2020 and disseminated in all Member States for implementation.

In addition, amongst the various outcomes of the current EU Work Plan for Sport, the following ones can be highlighted:

- The **seminar on the Specificity of Sport** took place in December 2019. Its aim was to deepen the discussion amongst key stakeholders, including practitioners, on autonomy of sport and the applicability of EU law to sport matters.
- The **cluster meetings** represented a success both in terms of diversity of perspectives and the subjects of discussion. In particular, they brought together a broad range of actors in the field of sport such as Member States, public authorities, universities, sport organisations, etc. They allowed open dialogue between policy makers and entities implementing projects at grassroots level covering priority issues such as health-enhancing physical activity, education in and through sport, integrity in sport and the economic dimension of sport. In addition, cluster meetings were a unique opportunity for identifying policy-relevant outcomes of Erasmus+ sport projects as well as for exchanging ideas on their impact on decision-making.
- The newly created format of “**groups of interested Member States**” generated a strong interest since it corresponded to the initial expectations of working together by interested and volunteering countries on a given subject without the need to create a specific Commission’s expert group. The new method proved to be particularly flexible and useful to address emerging needs and priorities and has the potential to be used more often in the future.

<sup>12</sup>

EU Bookshop NC-02-20-217-EN-N; <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8f28e3a0-6f11-11ea-b735-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-122543310>

### 3. Stakeholder's feedback on the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport

The Commission, the Member States and most of the stakeholders generally considered the first and second EU Work Plans for Sport successful. The overall message from the online consultation of stakeholders was that the activities carried out under the current EU Work Plan for Sport led to good results in the defined priority areas. The vast majority of respondents agreed that the document focused on the right priorities (91%), and that it improved coordination in the area of sport at EU level (72%). 78% of respondents agreed that the EU Work Plan for Sport introduced appropriate structures and working methods. A large number of stakeholders also found that the EU Work Plan for Sport led to fruitful outcomes in terms of policy process.

However, while the third EU Work Plan for Sport ensured continuity in terms of priorities, it also brought some substantial changes in several respects. In particular, it diversified the working methods and introduced a major rationalisation of the expert groups, which were reduced from five to two. Furthermore, the three-and-a-half year planning of the activities helped to build momentum and deliver quality results for each of the activities. The planning, for instance, supported the work of the EU Council and included the preparation of Council conclusions and Presidency conferences and events. The implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport was shared between the EU Council Presidencies, the European Commission and the Member States. There was also a clear wish to avoid the excessive production of guidelines, reports or written documents by the expert groups. At the same time, sport organisations and stakeholders were closely associated to those meetings and participated with great interest and commitment to many other activities such as the cluster meetings.

There a major improvement on two points compared to the second EU Work Plan for Sport.

- 1) Firstly, the third EU Work Plan for Sport strengthened the cooperation between the EU and the sport organisations according to 80% of respondents. This figure was 69% in the evaluation of the second EU Work Plan for Sport.
- 2) Secondly, 62% of the respondents agreed that the third EU Work Plan for Sport enhanced cooperation between Member States and the sport movement at national level, compared to only 46% in the evaluation of the second EU Work Plan for Sport. This increase shows that the efforts to support openness in the working methods and strengthen cooperation went in the right direction.

Based on the written comments of Member States, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The **format** of the EU Work Plan for Sport is appropriate as it provides possibilities for Member States and sport organisations but also to academy and industry to be closely involved. Many respondents affirmed that this type of collaboration was very fruitful since the mix of various types of stakeholders and different perspectives generated lively and insightful debates leading to the expected outputs.
- The **expert groups** were generally considered to be working well. However, several respondents suggested that the topics discussed in the meetings were too broad. In

particular, several comments suggested that having a more focused approach within the expert groups would have helped to have more productive and useful discussions. The representativeness of some observers was also questioned.

- The **working methods** were considered appropriate to deliver on the EU Work Plan for Sport. In particular, respondents highlighted that the cluster meetings and the groups of interested Member States were very useful structures given their flexibility to discuss new topics.

The current **duration** of the EU Work Plan for Sport was supported. Most answers indicated that the 3 to 4 year duration is appropriate. However, several answers suggest that the EU Work Plans for Sport should integrate more flexibility measures to adapt to developments in the field of sport.

#### **4. Views of the European Commission on the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport**

The Commission's assessment confirms in many regards the main views expressed by stakeholders during the consultation process. The Commission considers that the third EU Work Plan for Sport has been successful taking into account that the vast majority of the outputs have been delivered and the feedback from the participants has shown that they were of good quality. The working methods proved to be efficient in generating a permanent dialogue on key issues between Member States, the Commission and sport organisations. A strong increase in interest and participation has been observed in particular with regard to the EU Presidency conferences and cluster meetings since they have become useful platforms for exchange of views and good practices on key issues, as well as for communicating and networking. The expert groups remained a valuable tool for enhancing and strengthening cooperation on key issues such as education in and through sport or good governance between Member States and sport organisations as well as with the Commission.

The Commission considers that the scope of the mandates given to the two expert groups could be discussed since the current ones were seen by some sport organisations and Member States as too broad and leading to heterogeneous composition and expertise.

In addition, the Commission is of the opinion that observers have generally brought added value in terms of specific knowledge and level of expertise.

The Commission appreciates the optimisation of the working methods and considers that their diversification (by creating cluster meetings and the groups of interested Member States) had a positive effect and contributed to better an implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport. More specifically, these new formats extended the possibilities for cooperation amongst Member States and allowed for a more focused approach on topics of major importance.

Furthermore, the Commission welcomes the contribution of the EU Work Plan for Sport to the planning of the EU Council's activities (conclusions, conferences and seminars) as it ensures increased coordination and coherence of activities at EU level.



Regarding the results of the EU Work Plan for Sport, in general terms, a cooperative and concerted approach amongst Member States and the Commission has been applied. In addition, where appropriate, the sport movement and other relevant stakeholders were also actively involved in its implementation. Being a flexible roadmap, the EU Work Plan for Sport thus helped effectively address transnational challenges and contributed to the overarching priorities of the EU economic and social policy agenda.

In the field of integrity of sport, stronger cooperation aimed at safeguarding children in sport, which is an emerging concern, has been ensured both at political and expert level. As a result, concrete measures have been implemented at national level<sup>13</sup>. Innovation in sport has been particularly relevant for the *Economic dimension of sport*. Awareness has been raised concerning the benefits and challenges related to the ongoing rapid technological development through various discussions and events. Building on previous activities, new concrete initiatives and measures related to innovation and sport can be implemented at local, national and European level under a new EU Work Plan for Sport. The priority *Sport and society* has also been largely explored during the last years. Works of different EU Council Presidencies and the Commission have led to the preparation of Guidelines regarding the minimum requirements in skills and competences for coaches<sup>14</sup>. This document proposes a common minimum set of competences for coaches in Europe, including development of soft skills, and suggest improvements in the education/training modules and courses for coaches. The purpose is to better prepare them to answer the needs of changing society given the growing social aspect of their everyday work.

## **C) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

Based on previous experience and on its assessment of the implementation of the third EU Work Plan for Sport, the Commission is of the view that some improvements could be considered to further reinforce a future EU Work Plan for Sport and make it even more efficient and impactful.

The recommendations outlined below refer to the format and nature of the EU Work Plan for Sport, its duration, priorities and working methods. In addition, the need for wider dissemination and more efficient use of the results of Erasmus+<sup>15</sup>, Sport projects in policy-making should be particularly highlighted.

### **1. Format and nature of the EU Work Plan for Sport**

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<sup>13</sup> Example: 1) Establishment of a dedicated online support tool for young athletes, families, coaches and other stakeholders; awareness raising campaigns delivered by NOC together with National Centre for Integrity in Sport (Finland). 2) Integrity policy included as a grant condition for sport federations in Flanders (Belgium).

<sup>14</sup> Refer to footnote 12

<sup>15</sup> Refer to footnote 4

The EU Work Plan for Sport has proved to be a flexible framework and an efficient instrument for cooperation between Member States, the Commission and stakeholders at EU level. Its diverse working methods allow and facilitate the exchange of good practices, the long-term planning of EU Council's activities and the prioritisation of areas for cooperation. However, the EU Work Plan for Sport is a non-binding document. As such, it is implemented in compliance with the competence assigned to the European Union in the field of sport, where action at EU level should support, coordinate and supplement the actions of Member States. It is also complementary and respectful to actions, initiatives and policies put in place by all actors in the field of sport such as public authorities, sport organisations and stakeholders. In this context, the title "EU Work Plan for Sport" does not properly reflect the nature of the document and its revision could be considered in the future. Changes to the title should take into account that the overarching purpose of the document is to enhance and strengthen cooperation in the field of sport at EU level. The new framework of the document could better reflect its strategic character and more effectively embrace all the involved in the implementation actors. With regard to sport stakeholders, they have a major role to play in shaping and implementing sport policies and their involvement could be further enhanced in the next EU Work Plan for Sport. Steps in that direction would reflect the spirit of the Council Resolution on further developing the EU Structured Dialogue on sport.

## **2. Duration**

The extension of the duration of the EU Work Plan for Sport from three to three-and-a-half years, thus covering the period until end 2020, has proved appropriate as it ensured alignment with the timing and priorities set in the EU Multi-Annual Financial Framework<sup>16</sup> (MFF) and Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020<sup>17</sup>.

In this respect, the Commission proposes to keep the duration of the Work Plan to three-and-a-half years. This would allow sufficient time to implement its actions and deliver on its objectives, as well as to evaluate the implementation of the Work Plan and negotiate a new one. A three-and-a-half year duration would ensure alignment with the duration of the EU MFF<sup>18</sup> as it would coincide with its mid-term evaluation.

## **3. Priorities**

Competences in the area of sport lie with the Member States and EU action is limited to supporting, coordinating and supplementing the actions of Member States. Future priorities of the EU Work Plan for Sport should be identified taking closely into consideration the potential benefit of cooperation at EU level in a specific area or on concrete subjects.

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<sup>16</sup> Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020

<sup>17</sup> Refer to footnote 4

<sup>18</sup> Refer to footnote 16

Furthermore, the role that the EU could play to contribute to address existing challenges in sport should be decisive when selecting priority themes and key topics.

In addition, to ensure coherence and efficiency of EU actions in the field of sport, links to the key political priorities of the European Commission<sup>19</sup> such as the Green Deal, the Cancer Action Plan and the promotion of the European Way of life should be considered. Sport has the potential to contribute efficiently to all these challenges. Furthermore, the new priorities should also address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the recovery of the sport sector at all levels after the crisis.

Green sport should be promoted from grassroots sport to the highest level. Major sport events have to be sustainable and pay attention to their legacy. The practice of sport and physical activity, while contributing to a healthy lifestyle, can play a role in cancer prevention. Furthermore, sport, its governance and its forms of practice, is clearly a part of our European Way of Life. In this context, sport should be developed both as a policy field in itself, but its contribution to other key areas should be recognised and more actively promoted.

Given the relevance and importance of EU cooperation in the field of sport in the priority areas identified in the third EU Work Plan for Sport, a future document should consider continuity and evolution. In particular, to make a step ahead, past priorities could be mainstreamed with a view to reinforce the importance and contribution of sport to social inclusion, economic and social development: 1) sport as a tool for the promotion of values and inclusion 2) the economic dimension of sport and 3) sport as a tool to promote healthy lifestyle. These priority areas would allow to address key aspects of sport such as the integrity of sport, including its governance, the development of sport and physical activity for all, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, the development of education and skills in and through sport, the economic dimension of sport and the inclusion of people with disabilities and from other disadvantaged groups.

A future EU Work Plan for Sport should also more clearly present the sector's contribution to the economy, including its driving role for innovation, and its beneficial effects on society. The sport world needs to be fit for the digital age and empower people with new technologies. Innovation in sport can contribute to improving the health of all generations. It can have a positive effect on grassroots sport as well as enhance training and boost the performance of elite athletes and also contribute to tackling important threats to sport, such as match-fixing or doping. To reach all those goals, cooperation between Member States, EU Institutions and sport movement is crucial.

Particular attention should be given to the social dimension of sport. Sport has a unique power to build strong, cohesive, resilient communities and to foster active citizenship. It promotes and teaches common values and creates a sense of belonging in society, particularly amongst

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<sup>19</sup> My Agenda for Europe. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf)

young people. It celebrates and supports diversity and community in an increasingly globalised world.

Therefore, while fighting against certain negative aspects of sport activities such as doping, match-fixing and violence, a future EU Work Plan for Sport should also promote the common values of sport and their advancement in society as a whole. To respond to new priorities and emerging challenges, as well as to keep up pace with the rapid progress of new technologies, support should be provided to Member States' efforts to find innovative solutions to complex phenomena such as marginalisation and exclusion, as well as to new ways of practicing sport.

#### **4. Working methods**

Given the positive experience with the working methods established under the third EU Work Plan for Sport, including the flexibility they provide with regard to emerging challenges and needs, the Commission considers of importance to maintain them in the future. This would ensure continuation but also maximise their effect and facilitate the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport.

More specifically, the existing variety of working methods should be maintained. As mentioned in Section B (evaluation), the Member States and the observers appreciated the work done by the expert groups. They showed even greater support for the cluster meetings and the groups of interested Member States. Other traditional working methods such as conferences, seminars or studies should also continue since they are decisive instruments in terms of communication, networking, exchange of good practices and knowledge-generation and sharing.

The number of written documents should remain limited in the future too. To get the best use and benefit from such documents they should clearly indicate the target audience and make links to needs identified by the sport community at large. Dissemination methods should be discussed and agreed in the next EU Work Plan for Sport.

Finally, the EU structured dialogue with sport organisations should be further developed. The central place of the EU Sport Forum should be maintained and reinforced. Furthermore, the cooperation with the sport movement should be extended and strengthened. The participation of sport organisations in the expert groups has proved useful and beneficial to the discussions and activities of the group. However, openness and participation of the sport movement in the groups should be related to the added-value and expertise that it could bring.

#### **5. Implementation and synergies**

Sport is impacted by many EU policies and strategic initiatives. This horizontal dimension of sport was already taken into account in the EU Work Plan for Sport (2017-2020). Some major Commission's initiatives and works (such as the Tartu Call for a Healthy lifestyle, the fight against doping and match-fixing, the specificity of sport) demonstrated the added-value and the need for cross-sectoral cooperation. In the same spirit, a future EU Work Plan for Sport

should actively promote cross-sectoral collaboration and encourage synergies with other sectors and policies such as freedom of movement, competition, research, media rights, employment, tourism, sustainability, data protection, education and training, health, that have strong links to sport. Cooperation and complementarity with other relevant policies are essential. Stronger focus on practical implementation of outcomes and results (e.g. EU guidelines, policy recommendations) achieved under the EU Work Plans for Sport is highly recommended. Furthermore, Member States should also ensure proper coordination at national level.

An effort should also be made to ensure wider dissemination of results amongst stakeholders at various levels. Targeted actions would be needed to increase the awareness and visibility of EU action in sport at national level.

Finally, the Commission is of the view that regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of a future EU Work Plan for Sport could be beneficial for its efficient implementation and delivery on its key priorities and objectives.

## **CONCLUSION**

The EU Work Plans for Sport have proved to be a valuable instrument of cooperation between EU institutions, Member States and sport organisations. Over the years they have contributed to enhancing and strengthening EU cooperation on key aspects of sport amongst various stakeholders.

The third EU Work Plan for Sport has achieved major results and laid the ground for the next Work Plan to make a decisive step forward. With increased visibility and recognition, sport has the opportunity to further grow and promote not only the physical activity and well-being of European citizens but also to contribute to Europe's economic and social development as well as to major societal challenges, including those related to the COVID-19 outbreak. With shared commitment and joint efforts a future EU Work Plan for Sport has the potential to become the common roadmap for sport in the European Union promoting physical activity and tackling its most pressing challenges.