



X ème Forum Européen du sport

L'UE et le sport: les défis de l'intégration européenne Dr Jacques Rogge – Président CIO

Madame la Commissaire,
Monsieur le Ministre,
Mesdames et Messieurs les Députés européens,
Chers amis sportifs,

La décennie de relations entre le mouvement sportif et les institutions européennes au travers du Forum européen du sport octroie le recul nécessaire pour évaluer le chemin parcouru, les obstacles franchis et les résultats atteints. Cette réflexion permet aussi d'envisager le futur et d'entamer le débat sur l'avenir du sport dans le cadre de l'Union européenne, alors que celle-ci se trouve au devant de nouveaux défis.

Une telle réflexion est rendue d'autant plus actuelle par les événements récents qui ont secoué le monde. Quel secteur autre que le sport est-il mieux à même de contribuer à l'entente entre les peuples. Ceci est particulièrement vrai dans le cadre de l'intégration européenne et de l'objectif déclaré du Traité de l'Union européenne « ...d'union sans cesse plus étroite de ses peuples... ». Une telle contribution du sport devrait pouvoir être envisagée dans le cadre des relations extérieures et de la politique de développement de l'UE où le sport devrait pouvoir à l'avenir jouer un rôle moins confidentiel que jusqu'à présent. Dans ses conclusions, le Conseil Européen de Nice a souligné la Déclaration du Millénaire de l'ONU relative à la promotion de la paix et de la compréhension mutuelle grâce au sport et à la Trêve Olympique. Au vu des circonstances actuelles, j'invite les institutions européennes à réfléchir avec le CIO sur les moyens de mettre en application cette déclaration de principe.

Pour dessiner le futur, il est bon de jeter un coup d'oeil vers le passé : souvenons – nous que le Forum européen du sport a été mis sur pied à la demande du mouvement olympique à une époque où l'implication de la Communauté économique européenne se limitait à l'application de la législation européenne au sport et à l'utilisation du sport comme vecteur de communication des idéaux communautaires vers le citoyen européen. Il n'est pas exagéré d'affirmer que ces relations ont été difficiles au départ, parce que fondées sur une ignorance de la nature des institutions et des objectifs réciproques.

Le Forum européen du sport a ainsi bien rempli sa mission, à en juger le chemin parcouru : il a réussi à transformer une méfiance réciproque en un dialogue constructif mais sans concessions. Dans un premier temps, un état des lieux de

l'impact de la législation communautaire sur le sport a été réalisé : le rapport « Coopers & Lybrand » de 1993 nous a livré un état des lieux révélateur de l'importance de l'activité de l'Union européenne sur le sport.

Ensuite, ce dialogue a permis de trouver des solutions à des problèmes concrets, relevons par exemple l'évolution de la position des Commissaires successivement responsables de la politique de la concurrence sur la question de la spécificité sportive, ce qui a permis d'ouvrir la voie à des solutions aux questions relatives aux sommes de transfert ou à la gestion du sport automobile. Ce dialogue a également ouvert la voie à la déclaration sur le sport dans le traité d'Amsterdam ainsi que la récente déclaration du Conseil européen de Nice sur la spécificité du sport, qui constituent sans nul doute les points d'orgues de la reconnaissance du sport au niveau européen.

Ces déclarations consacrent en effet le rôle important du sport dans la société européenne et invitent les institutions européennes à écouter les organisations sportives là où les initiatives européennes ont un effet sur le sport, tout en respectant les caractères spécifiques du sport dans l'application de la législation européenne.

Au fil du temps, le Forum s'est élargi aux confédérations du sport, aux représentants des Ministères en charge du sport des Etats membres, des pays candidats ensuite, aux Fédérations sportives européennes et internationales ainsi que les représentants du sport pour handicapés. En observant l'illustre assemblée aujourd'hui présente, on ne peut que mesurer le chemin parcouru depuis 1991. Le Forum permet donc tant aux autorités publiques que sportives de l'UE et au-delà d'être informées de l'évolution de l'action de l'UE dans le domaine du sport et de ses répercussions. Gouverner c'est prévoir, et cette devise vaut également pour les responsables d'organisations sportives qui ont pu mieux anticiper les répercussions de l'intégration européenne sur le sport grâce aux informations dispensées au Forum. Les COE ont d'ailleurs, de concert avec le CIO et d'autres organisations sportives, créé un bureau de liaison à cet effet.

C'est ainsi dans le cadre de ce Forum qu'ont été débattues les conséquences de l'arrêt Bosman, qu'ont été esquissées les solutions possibles quant à l'application des règles de concurrence au sport et qu'a pu être débattue la question de la prise en compte du sport dans le traité sur l'UE. Le Forum a également permis aux responsables sportifs d'expliquer le sport sous toutes ses facettes aux institutions européennes. Dans cette mesure, une meilleure prise en compte du sport et de sa dimension sociale dans les politiques de l'Union européenne a pu être obtenue.

Le Forum a donc démontré son utilité durant cette décennie de rencontres et il était utile de revenir à ses origines et ses réalisations.

Est-ce à dire qu'il a rempli toutes ses missions et que par conséquent il n'a plus de rôle futur à jouer ?

Ladies and Gentleman,

important decisions lay ahead in the EU integration process and it is therefore also crucial for sports to look into the future. The EU enlargement, the revision of the EU

Treaty in 2004, the role of the EU citizen in tomorrow's Europe are issues that are also interpellating sports organisation.

The year 2004 will indeed be very important for both European Union and sports. The Olympic games will come back to their place of origin, Greece and Athens, and we expect Greece to organise excellent games in the cradle of democracy. Meanwhile, the EU will debate on the future shape of its Treaty and we very much hope that the Olympic spirit will inspire EU governments.

The International Olympic Committee is also confronted with challenges for the future: the IOC has to pursue the reform process started with the IOC 2000 reform, to think about the size and the structure of Olympic games in the future, to promote the Olympic ideals not only in sports, but also outside. Many of these challenges are linked to issues discussed at EU level.

In Europe, the development of sports has shown the limits of existing sports regulations and statutes with economic operators or others being interested at taking over the commercially interesting aspects of sports at expense of the cohesion of the sports movement. One has only to follow recent developments in football and basketball to understand that the role of governing bodies is increasingly challenged. But also stakeholders in sports are showing the limits of structures that were designed at a time where sport had another dimension. In Europe, one sports man (JM Bosman) succeeded in defeating one of the world's most powerful federation and its regulations, paving the way for others to challenge structures or regulations which are no more in tune with their time.

The commercialisation of sports is not an evil as such. The Olympic movement, the IF's and the NOC's have benefited from the extraordinary interest for sports. Problems arise when governing bodies in sports do not adapt their structures to new realities. This is also the message the EU institutions have sent to sports organisations, mainly through the Nice declaration.

I can tell you the message has been very well received. In the EU context, the European Olympic Committees (EOC) together with the Fédération internationale de l'automobile (FIA) have started to answer to this question by launching a reflection on the governance in sports. The result of that effort are statement of good governance principles for sports governing bodies, which the IOC have started to implement through its reform process. The IOC will hold an extraordinary session in Mexico in November 2002 to review the IOC 2000 reforms.

Of course, these efforts cannot be one way sided. We expect from the EU governments, which have linked the recognition of the specificity of sports to an improvement of the governance in sports, to improve the promotion of sports in the EU context as well as to stand for the protection of sports interests as stated in the Amsterdam and Nice declarations.

Sports, as earlier mentioned has manifold dimensions. Sports governing bodies should be protected by EU institutions whenever applying EU legislation to sports, provided those governing bodies fulfil certain criteria of transparency, democracy and

accountability in managing their sports. However, it would be far too restrictive to limit the EU role in sports to that of a distant watchdog of the application of the Treaty to sports;

Sports indeed stands for values that are widespread over the EU territory and its applicant countries. Organised sports represent by far the largest organised group of EU citizens in all sectors compared. The organisation of sports should remain in the hand of sports organisations, and public hand support should occur at the level where it is the most efficient, that means the local, regional and national level. Obviously, sports has also a cross border dimension and this dimension deserves to be supported by the EU. The European Council of Feira in June 2000 has asked "...the Commission and the Council to take account of the specific characteristics of sport in Europe and its social function in managing common policies..."

To illustrate the way in which sports and EU can co-operate, the IOC and the European Commission have launched a co-operation to foster the educational values of sports in schools. This pilot project will be extended to all EU member countries until 2003-2004 and will hopefully pave the way for a wider implication of sports in the EU educational actions. But this is only a beginning.

Ladies and gentlemen,

the fight against doping is a fight for the credibility of sports and the values it is standing for. In this fight, sports bodies and public authorities are challenged in their respective competence fields. Sports organisations have to secure the health of the athletes, the credibility of competitions and fair play. Governments are standing for pursuing the traffic in doping substances and penalties for those who are misleading athletes. Sports and governments are asked to act on national and international level and there is definitely a role for the EU to play.

The IOC answered to those challenges by setting up the world doping agency, in the vision that the fight against doping should be led by an independent organisation in which sports and governments can co-operate. WADA's goal is to promote and co-ordinate at international level the fight against doping in sport in all its forms. The Agency's principal task is to co-ordinate a comprehensive anti-doping programme at international level, laying down common, effective, minimum standards compatible with those of internationally recognised quality standards for doping controls, particularly with regard to out-of-competition controls and seeking equity for all athletes in all sports (including professional sports) and in all countries.

It becomes quite clear from those missions that the EU has a particularly important role to play, because doping is by nature a cross border phenomenon and because the EU has gained experience in dealing with cross border issues. We are particularly pleased that EU governments and the European Commission have taken an active part in setting up WADA and in financing its activities. I hope that this co-operation will offer WADA a reliable basis for its future work.

The example of doping illustrates that in certain well defined fields, there is a need of an EU action in sports. The EU competence in the field of youth, education, environment, development co-operation and regional policy are especially interesting for a co-operation with sports. Positive experiences have already been made in those fields, however without a comprehensive overall approach. This is certainly an objective for the future.

The past decade has also shown through the European Sports Forum that the European construction is affecting sports and that sports can contribute to the edification of Europe. The European Commission has with Viviane Reding largely contributed to change the perception of sports inside of the EU institutions, which was and still partially is a strictly economic and high level oriented perception of sports.

The European Council has decided in Nice on the revision of the EU Treaties in 2004. The IOC and leading sports organisation in Europe have in the past repeatedly approached EU governments on the need of legal bases for protecting and promoting sports in the EU.

At the European council of Laeken in December 2001, EU governments will determine the framework and issues for the next revision of the Treaties; even if I shall refrain today to express specific demands in that regard, I hope that sports will be part of the agenda of this next IGC and I take the opportunity of the presence of the Belgian presidency to express this view and wish that this point will be discussed at the next EU sports ministers meeting on November 12th.

The process of revising the EU treaty decided at the European Council of Nice should allow a debate on the role of sports in the EU context. We very much hope that the Belgian EU presidency will open that debate and the IOC will contribute to this debate.

The European Sports Forum has proven during these ten years to be really effective in building bridges between Sport and EU and also raising the profile of sports in the EU institutions. While the role of sports in EU policies should reflect its importance in European society, it is fair to say that sports profile in the EU actions has not reached yet the dimension that culture, education and youth policies, to name a few, have acquired, mainly because the relevant EU Treaties provisions have made possible EU support policies for this areas.

We can here conclude that based on past experiences, the European Sports Forum has an agenda for the ten following years. As in the past, the Olympic movement through the EOC, the national Olympic Committees and the IOC will contribute to this dialogue in order to promote the role of sports in the European construction and defend the specific characteristics of sports and its organisations.

I thank you for your attention.
