

**MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE "THE EU & SPORT: MATCHING EXPECTATIONS"
BRUSSELS, 27-28 NOVEMBER 2006**

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

The Ministerial Conference "The EU & Sport: Matching expectations" was organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the Finnish EU Presidency in Brussels on 27-28 November 2006.

EU Sport Ministers:

1. Emphasised the importance of sport, taking into account the 2000 Declaration on the Special Characteristics of Sport and its Social Function in Europe (Nice Declaration).
2. Unanimously welcomed the Commission's intention to launch a policy initiative on the role of sport in Europe, which could take the form of a White Paper, as a response to the Sport Ministers' wish to give sport a higher profile in European and national policy making
3. Noted with interest that the White Paper intends to address, in addition to the intrinsic value of sport, the societal and economic dimensions of sport and promote its specific organisational features across Europe. Ministers agreed that, more specifically, the White Paper should aim at
 - a. ensuring that European policies increasingly take into account the added value of sport and its potential for achieving the EU's strategic objectives in the social and economic fields;
 - b. further developing and implementing the "specificity of sport" in line with the Council's Nice Declaration, in full compliance with European and national laws and recognising the subsidiarity principle;
 - c. facilitating the relations between the EU and sport with the aim to give guidance and achieve more clarity for sport stakeholders.
4. Called on the Commission to identify and focus on priority areas relating to the three main sections of the White Paper.
5. Made the following suggestions regarding the societal role of sport:
 - a. define and promote the social and educational roles of sport in the framework of the EU's cohesion policy, as well as the status of non-profit sport organisations based on volunteering;
 - b. find ways to integrate the concept of health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) with the concept of the societal role of sport, especially in relation to achieving the objectives of the recommendations adopted at the informal meeting of Member State Sport Ministers in Luxembourg (April 2005) and the work of the Working Group Sport and Health under its extended mandate;
 - c. mobilise the policy instruments and programmes of the EU to use sport as a tool for strengthening economic development, social cohesion, education, health and active citizenship.

6. Made the following suggestions regarding the economic dimension of sport:
 - a. improve the understanding and raise the visibility of the macro-economic impact of sport, in particular its growth and job creation potentials, by enhancing work at EU level on common data and statistical definitions;
 - b. link the economic potential of sport to the achievement of the EU Lisbon goals;
 - c. launch a reflection on the need to put funding for sport on a more secure footing.
7. Having listened to presentations by Mr José Luís Arnaut, based on the Independent European Sport Review, and Mr Kai Holm, on behalf of the International Olympic Committee, made the following suggestions regarding the organisation of sport:
 - a. address the challenges posed by the interaction between the specificity of sport and the application of EU law to sport;
 - b. continue the dialogue with the sport movement, in respect of the latter's autonomy, to address these challenges at the European level;
 - c. encourage this process by facilitating the exchange of information, data and best practice in the field of the organisation of sport.
8. Confirmed their commitment to putting the aims set out in the Nice Declaration in practice, thus ensuring that necessary work at European level can be continued.
9. Expressed the need for the Commission to maintain an open and transparent White Paper consultation process and expressed the wish to remain closely involved in that process. To this end, EU sport ministers will establish a working group during the German Presidency, in cooperation with the Commission, with the objective to help the Commission in preparing the White Paper.

The European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, in charge of sport:

10. Confirmed his intention to draft a White Paper on the role of sport in Europe as a means to give sport a higher profile in European policy making.
11. Took note of the suggestions of EU Sport Ministers and set out to take them into account in the future White Paper.

EU Sport Ministers and the European Commissioner:

Sport & Health

12. Confirmed that health-enhancing physical activity over the whole lifespan should be integrated into different policy sectors through cross-sectoral cooperation both at EU level and in the Member States.
13. Recommended that the priorities of the Working Group on Sport and Health be extended to include the exchange of best practices between all EU Member States; research to develop good practice and projects undertaken together with sports organisations; and the drafting of common European guidelines for health-enhancing physical activity, in cooperation with the Commission's Platform on Nutrition, Health and Physical Activity and other relevant European expert bodies.

Non-profit sport organisations

14. Confirmed the establishment of a Working Group to review the status of non-profit sport organisations in relation to Community law, to be chaired by the European Commission.
15. Recognised the specific nature of non-profit sports organisations and affirmed that the difference between voluntary non-profit sports organisations and profit-seeking business enterprises should be taken into consideration in Community policies.

Fight against doping

16. Expressed their appreciation of having been able to speak with one voice in WADA elections; congratulated Mr Jean-François Lamour, French Minister for Youth, Sports and Associations for his election as WADA Vice-Chair and Mr Brian Mikkelsen, Danish Minister for Culture, for his election to the European seat on the WADA Executive Committee.
17. Underlined the importance of the World Conference on Doping in Sport, to be held in Madrid on 15-17 November 2007; agreed to have the preparation of the conference, including its priorities, on the agendas of the upcoming EU sport ministers meetings.
18. Expressed their strong commitment to the ratification and implementation of the Unesco International Convention against Doping in Sport and conducted a preliminary discussion on the aims to be set for the first Conference of the parties to the Convention.

General

19. Welcomed the declaration by the European Youth and Sport Forum 2006.
20. Took note of the next Informal Sport Ministers Meeting to be organised during the German Presidency in Stuttgart on 12-13 March 2007, and of the possibility to link this event with Stuttgart's role as European Capital of Sport during the same year.