

Attila Czene

Madam Commissioner, Ministers, Presidents, Ladies and gentlemen, Colleagues from sport administration and sport life,

It is an honour for me to be the first in this panel to react to the Communication adopted by the European Commission on 18 January about „Developing the European dimension in sport” and it is a pleasure to do so at the joint session of the EU Sport Forum and the informal meeting of EU sport ministers.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have gathered here today, governmental and non-governmental representatives, to take steps towards the development of the European dimension of sport, as the title of the Communication says. As you know, since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, this document is the first and most relevant EU initiative which can pave the way for the work in sport field in the EU. We, sportspeople, people defending sport’s interests, we have to be aware of what we can expect and what we can do to promote sport’s situation in Europe.

All of us are aware that sport falls under member state competence. EU does not and can not impose to Member States any sport strategy or sport activity.

At the same time there are fields of actions aimed at supporting, coordinating or supplementing measures, which can help sport to strengthen its position in society and which exceed the borders of countries. We can mention here global challenges, building international links, mutual learning.

Dear sport colleagues,

We have gathered here today, coming from different national, European and international sport organizations, to discuss about the future of European sport.

Allow me to say thanks to the European Commission for adopting – although a little bit later than expected – the Communication about sport, which is a clear evidence that joint action is possible in a lot of fields.

The Communications, which is known as the updated and developed version of the White Paper on Sport 2007, is a strategic document for us, on which basis we can develop with our colleagues from other Member States a European agenda for sport in the framework of the work in the Council. In the Council Working Party on Sport my colleagues are working on the preparation of a Work Plan, which provides guidance for the next coming 3 years. It is of course a not easy to find the challenges which interest all the 27 member states at the same time, but we are trying to do so.

The Commission’s Communication, similarly to the White Paper on Sport consists of 3 main thematic chapters. These are: the societal role of sport; The economic dimension of sport and The organisation of sport. Following this structure, let me stress some topics within these chapters which we consider outstanding:

Within the chapter of societal role of sport, enhancing health through sport is an essential theme for us because the whole society as such is involved in this matter. All ages are concerned but I would like to raise the attention on the sport of senior citizens, which is also on the agenda of the Informal Meeting of EU Sport Ministers tomorrow, in Gödöllő.

Regarding the economic dimension of sport, we welcome and also underline the part of the Communication which refers on grassroots sport. We also hope that this topic can be part and got supported from a future Sport Programme. The future of sport funding in the EU is also one of the main topics of the tomorrow’s meeting.

Concerning the organization of sport we think that the question of free movement and nationality of sportspeople is essential, in which issue sport organizations and member states are also interested. We are looking forward to seeing the future international developments in this field.

I truly believe that this kind of structured dialogue between governmental and non-governmental organizations contributes to the discovery and establishment of the future common fields of action. These fields can be the previously mentioned ones and also further topics. Our aim is to reach as many European citizens as we can and sport should be a real opportunity for everybody in all days life.