

**FORUM ‘Work in the Council and first Council documents on sport’  
(dinsdag 22/2, VM, Boedapest)**

**Dear friends of sport,**

**Dear representatives of the European Commission and the European Parliament,**

**Dear colleagues,**

**First of all, I would like to thank the Commission for inviting me to present the work that has been done in the Council during the Belgian Presidency.**

**It is an honour for me to speak to such a large and diverse representation of the European sport movement. Structured dialogue between the sport movement and the EU institutions is extremely important. We need to act together in order to achieve the goal we have set to ourselves with the Lisbon Treaty: to develop the European dimension in sport. That is why the structured dialogue has been a key priority during the Belgian Presidency.**

**Besides structured dialogue, we have focused on the international fight against doping and social inclusion in and through sport. I would like to use this opportunity to give you an overview of the activities which have taken place in the framework of the Council during the Belgian Presidency.**

**As you might know, the first formal meeting of EU Sport Ministers has taken place during the Spanish Presidency on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2010. In that meeting we had a discussion about the priorities for future EU action in the field of sport.**

**At the start of the Belgian Presidency, it looked like we were to focus fully on a Council reaction to the Communication from the European Commission and a decision about a Sport Programme. Unfortunately, due to a combination of circumstances, this scenario was not possible.**

**Consequently, in close cooperation with the Member States and the European Commission, the Presidency has decided to start the work in the Council without the Communication. We decided to focus on three priorities: the structured dialogue with the sport movement, the international fight against doping and social inclusion in and through sport.**

**The first priority, the dialogue with sport stakeholders, was a continuation of the work done by the Spanish Presidency. Already under the Spanish Presidency, there was a consensus between the Member States to strengthen the dialogue, especially in view of Article 165. Of course, the European Commission was already engaged in a structured dialogue with the sport movement, by means of the European Sport Forum and bilateral contacts, but the Council found it important to strengthen the existing dialogue by adding a new component. Based on the discussions under the Spanish Presidency, further principles and practicalities were agreed during the Belgian Presidency. This resulted in the adoption of the Resolution on the EU structured dialogue on sport.**

**Practically, we have agreed for each Presidency of the Council to bring together sport stakeholders and representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Team Presidency in the margin of the Sport Council. The goal of this initiative is to exchange views on sport, with special emphasis on topics which are discussed in the Council.**

**The first meeting of this reinforced structured dialogue has taken place on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2010 under the Belgian Presidency. The issues which were discussed were: the outcomes of the Sport Council and topical issues which deserve common attention in the future, such as match fixing. Overall, there was a constructive atmosphere, which can form the basis for the further development of this dialogue. I am looking forward to the meeting which the Hungarian Presidency will organise in May.**

**Regarding the second priority, the fight against doping, the discussions under the Belgian Presidency resulted in Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on the role of the EU in the international fight against doping. These Conclusions foresee that “where appropriate, e.g. in the light of the EU acquis and the duty of sincere cooperation, EU and Member State positions shall be coordinated, under the responsibility of the Presidency, in good time and in efficient manner prior to meetings within WADA.”**

**Consequently, stronger EU cooperation which results from this development illustrates the commitment for taking up a more active EU role in the international fight against doping. It is equally important to strengthen the role of the European continent as a whole. In this respect, the Conclusions emphasise that close cooperation with the Council of Europe is necessary in view of having a common understanding on all items of European interest.**

**Concerning the third priority, social inclusion in and through sport, the Council has agreed on common priorities and actions on the role of sport as a source of and driver for active social inclusion. These priorities and actions following the principle of “sport for all” were formulated in Council Conclusions. We have decided to make better use of**

**the power which sport can offer to our societies, the power for social inclusion, inclusive growth, acquisition of skills, intercultural dialogue, community building and so forth. Using this power to the benefit of our society is not something which the governments of the Member States can do alone. We need the cooperation of sport stakeholders. That is why I would like to appeal directly to you, representatives of the European sport movement, to set an example for social inclusion in and through sport by linking sport to social inclusion projects. I truly believe that we can succeed in this together.**

**Besides these three main priorities which have formed the core business of the Belgian EU Presidency and which have resulted in two sets of Conclusions and one Resolution, our Presidency has also succeeded in changing the name of the Council. The Council configuration which was previously called “Education, Youth and Culture” now carries the name “Education, Youth, Culture and Sport.” Now, the new EU competence for sport is reflected in the name of the Council. That is of course only a formal detail, but it points to the will of the Council to take action on sport.**

**After the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the activities which have taken place under the Belgian Presidency have already given a first indication in which direction the Council is willing to go in the area of sport. The international fight against doping and social inclusion in and through sport will remain important priorities for the time to come. Unquestionably, the structured dialogue between the sport movement and the EU institutions will remain a highly important aspect of EU-action on sport. Further direction for future EU-actions will be prepared by the Hungarian Presidency.**

**I am looking forward to working together with all of you – colleagues, sport stakeholders and EU institutions - in strengthening the role of sport in the EU. Thank you very much for your attention.**