

**Michal Krejza, Head of Sport Unit, European Commission**

**Progress Report on the White Paper on Sport**

The White Paper on Sport includes 53 concrete actions, which are also known as the "Pierre de Coubertin" Action Plan. We have been moving swiftly to implement these actions.

As of today, implementation of 38 actions – or 2/3 of all actions in the Action Plan – has started, and some of them have already been concluded. This good result has been made possible by good cooperation from stakeholders, including sport organisations and the Member States.

Thanks to the White Paper, we have also achieved better mainstreaming of sport-related projects into existing EU programmes. More sport-related projects have recently received support from, for example, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Public Health Programme, and the Youth and Citizenship Programmes.

I will briefly present a number of actions foreseen in the "Pierre de Coubertin" Action Plan, where progress has been particularly good.

**Action 1 – Physical Activity Guidelines**

- The very first action that the Commission committed itself to in the White Paper was the development of EU Physical Activity Guidelines, together with the Member States, by the end of 2008. The project forms part of policies against overweight and obesity and related illnesses.
- EU Sport Ministers had invited our EU Working Group on Sport & Health to do the job. The Working Group, which consists of Government representatives, appointed an Expert Group of 22 outstanding academics from many Member States. The Expert Group produced a draft by the summer of 2008, which was then reworked by the Working Group and which was cleared by Member State Sport Directors in October 2008 in Versailles.
- We have attempted to create a balanced document that reflects the linkage between health, physical activity and sport. Sport is an important part of the guidelines, and the sport movement can have a catalyser function. But physical activity is of course a much wider concept than sport. That's why you also find such themes as transport, education and urban planning in the Guidelines.
- The key question is how we can get more people to become more physically active. All sectors – public and private, European, national, local – should contribute. I am pleased that we have already received many positive reactions to this text since we made it public a month ago. But the implementation phase is only starting now, and we need to have the sport movement on board.

**Action 5 – Fight against doping**

- A few words about doping. Sport organisations are asking for a level playing field for their athletes, and the fight against doping is an important part of this.
- Action 5 of the White Paper foresees that the Commission will facilitate a coordinated EU approach in the fight against doping, e.g. by supporting a network of national anti-doping

organisations. On this basis we set up an EU Working Group on Anti-Doping in the spring of 2008.

- I think that it works well and Member States seem to appreciate it. We have had one meeting in June 2008 and will have the next one in January 2009. We publish reports on our website and we try to focus on practical matters. At the first meeting we discussed data protection, transportation of samples by air, and criminalisation of trade in doping substances.
- The Council of Europe is invited to these meetings and we are invited to theirs. We do all we can to avoid duplication and our cooperation has been excellent.

#### **Action 7 – EQF and ECVET**

- In the sphere of education, and thanks to the active approach from stakeholders, sport is a pilot sector for the implementation of EQF, the European Qualification Framework, and ECVET, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training. Substantial assistance has been provided over the past two years through the Leonardo da Vinci Programme for projects that concern the fitness industry, outdoor animators and sports professionals.
- Details will be provided later this afternoon, in two presentations on professional qualifications.

#### **Action 9 – Locally trained players**

- Regarding UEFA's rules on home-grown players, we reached the conclusion that these rules seem to be compatible with the Treaty provisions on the free movement of workers on the basis of the results of an independent study which helped us finalise our analysis of UEFA's rules. The rules will be further examined in 2012, when they will have been fully enforced for several years.
- This issue will be discussed in more detail during the panel on specificity of sport tomorrow.

#### **Action 10 – Non-profit sport organisations, and action 14 – Study on volunteering in sport**

- To identify challenges facing non-profit sport organisations in an EU context, we have created an EU Working Group on Non-Profit Sport Organisations, which has so far met three times. Member States experts and the Commission have discussed EU policy developments with a possible impact on non-profit sport organisations in areas such as State aid, free movement of services, freedom of establishment, public procurement and taxation.
- Interestingly, when we looked at certain issues in more detail, many of the perceived challenges for non-profit sport organisations in an EU context actually turned out to derive from the national law of certain Member States. The results of the Working Group are therefore not spectacular, but useful to calm down certain actors. You can find summary reports on our website.
- A study on volunteering in sport foreseen in the White Paper has been combined with a wider Commission study on volunteering in the EU. The tendering process has been concluded and the study will be launched in early 2009. Results can be expected in late 2009. The social, economic and legal aspects of volunteering in sport will be addressed within a specific part of this study. The Commission encourages sport stakeholders to participate in the study process in order to ensure good outcomes.

### **Actions 25 and 26 – Sport as a tool in the EU's external relations**

- Sport is increasingly taken into account within EU external assistance programmes because of its positive role in promoting education, health, inter-cultural dialogue, development and peace, and is also becoming an element of dialogue with partner countries such as the Ukraine and South Africa.
- In this context, allow me to call your attention to a successful project of the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, which was created a few years ago by the UNDP and was managed by Right to Play. The Working Group, in which the Commission participated, published its final report, including policy recommendations for Governments, during the Beijing Olympics. We think that these are good-quality guidelines on how to use sport more effectively as a development tool.

### **Action 33 – European statistical method for measuring the economic impact of sport**

- In the area of economic data on the sport sector, interested Member States and the Commission are running an EU Working Group on Sport and Economics. The Group has met five times and has made considerable progress in developing a common method for illustrating the economic importance of sport. Experts from the Member States have agreed on a harmonised statistical definition of sport, the so-called "Vilnius definition of Sport", and some Member States have now started the process of data collection based on that definition.
- For the next years it will be crucial to secure the financing of the necessary research activities for obtaining the data and to ensure support for the work from national statistical authorities and EUROSTAT.

### **Actions 39 and 40 – Combat discrimination based on nationality**

- A permanent priority for the Commission is to combat discrimination based on nationality in all sports. The White Paper says that we should do this through political dialogue, recommendations, structured dialogue with stakeholders and, if necessary, infringement procedures. A number of cases involving potential infringements of free movement rules are being studied regarding some Member States. We are open to discussion with Member States and sports organisations to solve any potential problems in this respect.
- A study on access to individual competitions for non-nationals will be launched in 2009 and will contribute to shed light on this complex issue, which will be further discussed tomorrow.

### **Action 41 – Impact assessment on players' agents**

- The White Paper announces that the Commission will carry out an impact assessment to provide a clear overview of the activities of players' agents in the EU and an evaluation of whether action at EU level is necessary, which will also analyse the different possible options.
- As a first – and very important – step in the impact assessment process, an independent study will be launched by the Commission in January 2009 for a period of 9 months.
- Good cooperation of all involved stakeholders with the chosen contractor will be essential to ensure the quality of the study.

### **Action 47 – Conference on licensing systems in football**

- The Commission plans to organise a conference on best practices in the field of licensing systems for professional football clubs. Apart from involving all football stakeholders, we intend to also invite representatives of other interested sports, as well as representatives of the Member States. The target for this conference is June 2009.

- This issue will be debated during tomorrow's panel.

**Action 53 – European Social Dialogue**

- Finally, the White Paper states that the Commission will encourage efforts leading to the establishment of European Social Dialogue Committees in the sport sector, and support employers and employees in this respect.
- Good progress has been achieved. A European Social Dialogue Committee for Professional Football was launched earlier this year. This is the first time that European social dialogue could be extended to the sport sector. Several other sports, such as basketball and cycling, have expressed interest in social dialogue at European level. The next interventions will provide you with more details.

I hope that I have been able to place today's and tomorrow's discussions in the wider context of the implementation of the White Paper on Sport, and I thank you for your attention.