



EU Work Plan
for Sport

2011-
2014

Expert Group "Sport, Health and Participation"

Report from the 1st meeting (27 September 2011)

**PARTICIPANTS:**

- Experts from the following Member States: AT, BE (Flemish and German Communities), BG, CY, CZ, DE (Federal and Länder levels), DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HU, IR, LT, LU, NL, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK (England and Scotland)
- European Commission: DG EAC, DG SANCO
- Other participants: Council Secretariat

1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission (COM) welcomed the members of the Expert Group "Sport, Health and Participation" (XG SHP), which was created by the Council in adopting its European Union Work Plan for Sport for 2011-2014. It built on and replaced the former informal EU Working Group on Sport & Health. The new Expert Group reported to the Council. It was expected to perform its work in accordance with the Work Plan, as a general framework, and a Work Schedule, which would be adopted by the Expert Group itself. The new Expert Group was expected to elect its own chairperson. COM noted that 23 Member States (MS) had appointed experts for this XG, of which 21 MS were present. Furthermore, COM recapitulated the relevant sections, including actions, for health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) in the EU Work Plan and in the Communication on sport.

The XG adopted the draft agenda without comments.

2. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

COM informed that one Member State (France) had submitted its candidature for the chairmanship of the XG SHP and referred to the CV of Mr Jean-François Toussaint that had been distributed to the XG prior to the meeting. Noting his valuable experience in the field, the XG unanimously elected Mr Toussaint as the group's chairman. There was general agreement that the chairmanship would cover the entire period during which the XG would function, i.e. until a new EU Work Plan for Sport would replace the current one.

3. ADOPTION OF THE WORK SCHEDULE

The chairman invited the COM to present its proposal regarding the Work Schedule for the XG SHP. COM noted that the EU Work Plan for Sport identified the social values of sport, in particular health (...) as a priority theme for EU level cooperation in sport. Annex I specified the action based on this priority, which was to "Explore ways to promote health-enhancing physical activity and participation in grassroots sport". The XG SHP had been tasked to identify respective measures by mid-2013. COM presented the draft Work Schedule which recalled the main achievements in the field of sport and health in recent years, identified five main deliverables for the XG SHP and outlined, for each deliverable, a concrete task schedule to be achieved in five meetings until mid-2013. In the COM's view, to ensure progress, the work on each deliverable should be coordinated by a lead expert from a MS, who would work closely with the chairman and the COM. The outcomes of the work on these five deliverables would be successively presented to the Council Working Party on Sport (WPS) by a specific target date. The deliverables should pave the way for possible future EU level activities in the field of HEPA. All deliverables would feed into the Commission's final report on the implementation of the EU Work Plan to be



submitted by the end of 2013.

The group was of the view that the notion of "participation in grassroots sport" and related work in the XG should also cover people with a disability. On a proposal from CY, the group discussed whether the suggested dates in the work schedule of the second and third meetings could be advanced. COM explained the choice of the dates, notably the opportunity to combine the second XG meeting with the expert seminar in the framework of the ongoing "Study to support a Commission proposal in the field of health-enhancing physical activity". It was decided to agree on a possible shift of the third meeting (from September to June/July 2012) at the second meeting.

Regarding the choice of a lead expert per deliverable, the XG agreed the following:

1. Input for the Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation in the field of HEPA building on the EU PA GL – Cyprus (CY)
2. Guidance for strengthened cooperation between the sport and health insurance sectors – Germany (DE)
3. Common principles for active and healthy ageing (Council input on the European Year 2012) – Hungary (HU)
4. Input in the form of questions for the next Eurobarometer on sport (HEPA / participation) – Commission (COM)
5. Proposals for future EU level work in the field of HEPA promotion with a bearing on the sport sector – Tbc.

The final Work Schedule would be distributed with the minutes and would take account of the changes agreed at the meeting.

4. DECISION ON OBSERVERS

The chairman introduced the discussion on the role and possible participation of "other participants" – in line with the annex of the EU Work Plan for Sport. COM presented a list of 6 organisations/entities that had specifically expressed their interest in participating as observers in meetings of the XG SHP.

The XG had a detailed discussion about each organisation on the list. MS thought that, in general, the meeting should not be closed for observers, while also noting that the meetings should remain efficient. Some MS found that other competent organisations active in this field should also be given the opportunity to attend. All MS agreed that, in principle, only European-level organisations should participate in the XG, not those organised at national, regional or local levels. There was also agreement that, depending on the topic, experts/organisations could be invited on an ad-hoc basis. "Other participants" could, however, not take the lead on a deliverable.

The XG decided that a list of criteria should be drawn up regarding "other participants" (conditions, limits, scope) and be endorsed at the next meeting. NL volunteered to draft this document, which would then help the group take an ad-hoc decision on possible requests for participation from interested organisations.



From those organisations that had expressed their interest in participating in the XG SHP, the XG agreed to grant observer status to the following organisations:

- European Olympic Committees (EOC) EU Office;
- European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO);
- International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA);
- European Physical Education Association (EUPEA);
- HEPA Europe – EU contact group.

The XG decided against an observer role for a regional authority.

5. PREPARING AN EU INITIATIVE IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH-ENHANCING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (HEPA) – DELIVERABLE 1 OF THE WORK SCHEDULE

COM informed the XG about the state of play regarding the planned EU initiative in the field of HEPA, which, in line with the 2011 Communication on sport, could take the form of a Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation. COM explained the reasoning behind this proposal, including the achievements in the informal Working Group "Sport & Health", the preparation of EU Physical Activity Guidelines (EU PA GL), and their endorsement by EU Sport Ministers in 2008. The EU PA GL consisted of 41 guidelines of a non-binding nature recommending how policies and practices at EU, national and local levels could be used to make it easier for citizens to be physically active as part of their daily lives. Progress in implementing the EU PA GL in national strategies, policies and action plans at Member State level had been discussed in the Working Group "Sport & Health" since 2008. The implementation process had received further encouragement through the Commission's 2011 Communication "Developing the European Dimension in Sport" that acknowledges physical activity to be one of the most important health determinants in modern society and sport to be a fundamental part of any public policy approach to increase physical activity. The Communication foresaw concrete action to develop further the implementation of national physical activity guidelines, engaging the Commission and the Member States, which should, "based on the EU PA GL, continue progress toward the establishment of national guidelines, including a review and coordination process, and consider a proposal for a Council Recommendation in this field." To assist it with the preparation of such a proposal, COM had launched a call for tender earlier in 2011. The chosen contractor would carry out a study that should provide main elements for an Impact Assessment for a Commission proposal and for the proposed text of the Recommendation, in particular in relation to the envisaged monitoring and evaluation regarding the implementation of the EU PA GL in the Member States. The results of the study were expected by mid-2012. COM had agreed with the contractor that preliminary study results would be presented at the 2nd meeting of the XG.

In the discussion the question arose whether the XG would have to work on indicators with regard to the proposed monitoring mechanism. COM explained that HEPA Europe, the network representing scientific expertise in this field, would already address this issue within the framework of the study. The XG could, however, usefully discuss these proposals once they were available, i.e. most likely ahead of the 2nd XG meeting.

In the discussion, reference was also made to the 'implementation table' for the EU PA GL that had been produced and completed by the majority of MS represented in



the informal WG Sport and Health. It was agreed that this work should be completed by the remaining MS in the XG and questions could possibly be added to identify what went well and where problems existed, which partners were easy to mobilise, what budgets were available and whether there was a transversal strategy in place. COM confirmed that it might be useful to build on this information when preparing the input on deliverable 1. Most importantly, the XG should focus on outputs that had a policy use and on which the Commission and the Council's Working Party on Sport could base their work towards a Recommendation, i.e. anticipate developments in the future, illustrate the value of a Recommendation and give priority to certain topics. The Council Secretariat noted that a policy document in the Council usually would state the things that were already being done, give priority to certain elements/findings and include invitations to stakeholders, MS and the COM. It was suggested that the CY lead expert could organise additional questions around those topics (issues, challenges, solutions).

The XG agreed that the implementation table would be sent to the XG to be filled in and, as appropriate, updated by each member. A separate short questionnaire should be developed and distributed for internal use, inter alia aimed at identifying the most meaningful and important guidelines. Both the implementation table and the questionnaire would have to be finalised by the end of the year.

6. A.O.B.

- Questionnaire on cooperation with health insurers – Deliverable 2 of the Work Schedule

COM gave a short introduction to the topic which was first addressed by the informal WG at its last meeting in June 2011, mainly referring to a presentation of the German project “Deutschland bewegt sich” (Germany on the move) that was built, inter alia, on close cooperation between the sport and health insurance sectors. That initiative had been successful in Germany and the informal WG had expressed interest in further looking into the topic, especially to learn if similar cooperation existed in other MS. DE noted that there were several other initiatives involving cooperation between the two sectors in Germany. MS noted the traditionally different health (insurance) schemes in the EU, of which the questionnaire should take account. The group agreed, in principle, to address the topic from three sides, i.e. prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The questionnaire could among other things address the legal basis at national level allowing health insurers to support sport and physical activity. Best practices could usefully be collected and assessed.

- European Year of Active Ageing 2012 – Deliverable 3 of the Work Schedule

COM briefly presented the main elements of the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012) and the XG's possible contribution to it. It also referred to the publication of Decision No 940/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2011 on the Year. HU noted that objectives had not mentioned sport or physical activity among the main priorities, but that the decision referred to “living as healthy and fulfilling lives as possible”. Furthermore, the decision stated that the challenge for politicians and stakeholders would be to improve opportunities for active ageing in general and for living independently, acting in areas as diverse as employment, health care, social services, adult learning, volunteering, housing, IT services or transport. COM explained the



possible way ahead at EU level, including a planned initiative by the Commission in early 2012, and envisaged Council outcomes, possibly leading to some form of consideration by the European Council on the Year. The XG agreed to work on the topic noting that Sport Ministers in the Council could usefully contribute to this process.

- Date and place of next meeting

The XG SHP will hold its next meeting in Brussels on Wednesday, 21 March 2012.