



EU Work Plan  
for Sport

2011-  
2014

**Expert Group "Sport Statistics"**

**Report from the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting (18 October 2011)**

**PARTICIPANTS:**

- Experts from the following Member States: AT, BE (Flemish Community), CY, DE, DK, EE, FR, HU, IR, LT, LU, NL, PL, RO, SK, UK
- European Commission: DG EAC
- Other participants: Council Secretariat

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The Commission (COM) welcomed the members of the Expert Group on Sport Statistics (XG STAT), which was created by the Council in adopting its European Union Work Plan for Sport for 2011-2014. It builds on and replaces the former informal EU Working Group on Sport & Economics. The new Expert Group reports to the Council. It is expected to perform its work in accordance with the Work Plan, as a general framework, and a Work Schedule to be adopted by the Expert Group itself. The new Expert Group was expected to elect its chairperson. COM noted that 18 Member States (MS) had appointed experts for this XG, of which 16 MS were present. Furthermore, COM recalled the relevant sections, including actions, for sport statistics in the EU Work Plan for Sport as well as in the White Paper on Sport (2007) and the Communication on sport (2011).

The XG adopted the draft agenda without comments.

**2. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

COM informed that one MS (Austria) had submitted its candidature for the chairmanship of the XG STAT and referred to the active role of Mr Christian Helmenstein in co-chairing the former Working Group. The XG listened to Mr Helmenstein's presentation and, noting his vision for the group's work (e.g. academic robustness, tangible outputs) and his valuable experience in the field of sport economics and sport statistics, it unanimously elected Mr Helmenstein as the group's chairman. There was 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 STAT. COM noted that the EU Work Plan for Sport identified the economic aspects of sport, in particular evidence-based policy-making as a priority theme for EU level cooperation in sport. Annex I specified the action based on this priority, which was to "Recommend ways to promote data collection to measure the economic benefits of the EU sport sector in line with the Vilnius Definition and evaluate the results". The Expert Group "Sport Statistics" (XG STAT) was tasked to propose recommendations for consideration by mid-2012 and produce the evaluation of the results by end-2013. COM presented the draft Work Schedule which recalled the main achievements in the field of sport statistics and Sport Satellite Accounts in recent years, identified deliverables for the XG STAT 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. The outcomes of the work on the 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 sport statistics. 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 decided to slightly modify the description of deliverables, so as to have a strengthened focus on the work of the Council, and to reduce their number to three. Regarding deliverable 3, the XG was of the view that contributions to the study should not only cover economic aspects, but also include other areas, i.e. health and social aspects, which were considered equally important.

Regarding the exact title of the deliverables and the choice of a lead expert per deliverable, the XG agreed the following:

1. Policy recommendations based on the study on the contribution of sport to economic growth and employment in the EU, incl. analysis of results for policy development – Chair / AT
2. Preparation of a manual for national statistical offices on how to set up Sport Satellite Accounts (SSAs) – UK
3. Policy recommendations based on the study on a possible future sport monitoring function in the EU, including in particular a progress report on establishing national SSAs and proposals for future EU level work in the field of sport statistics – Chair / AT

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 2 organisations/entities that had specifically expressed their interest in participating as observers in meetings of the XG STAT.

The XG agreed to grant observer status to these two organisations, i.e.:

- European Olympic Committees (EOC) EU Office;
- Rütter+partner (Switzerland).

Regarding future decisions on possible participation by other observers, COM suggested using the criteria that were currently being drafted for the XG on Sport, Health and Participation. Moreover, relevant organisations could be invited ad-hoc to contribute to a specific agenda point.

#### **5. SPORT SATELLITE ACCOUNTS (SSAs) – DELIVERABLE 3 OF THE WORK SCHEDULE**

COM introduced the topic by highlighting the increasing demand by policy-makers (e.g. at the Sport Council meeting in May 2010), experts and sport stakeholders to provide more reliable and comparable data, following the inclusion of sport in the Lisbon Treaty. COM explained the progress achieved in the Working Group "Sport & Economics", notably the development of a statistical method for assessing the importance of the sport sector in an economically meaningful way, and the



consensus on a common joint definition, the “Vilnius Definition of Sport”, as the basis for the collection and production of data at national level and thus the compilation of national SSAs. So far four MS were running SSAs at national level and other MS planned to follow in the short term. Further progress regarding the work on SSAs at national level should in time also lead to further consolidation at EU level. As part of this process, COM had launched a study on the contribution of sport to economic growth and employment in the EU (see below). The Communication on sport included concrete actions supporting the production of SSAs and a study on a possible sport monitoring function in the EU. Work on SSAs was furthermore addressed at the EU Conference on Sport Statistics in Brussels on 23 March 2011.

#### *TOUR DE TABLE*

MS presented the state of play regarding the preparation of SSAs at national level.

The four MS (AT, CY, PL, UK) with established SSAs updated the group on the planned continuation of work. PL referred to presentations and subsequent discussion at the EU Sport Ministers meeting in Cracow where MS were encouraged to join the SSA work. PL informed that the national SSA based on 2006 data had been finalised and that another study was planned for the year 2008. AT confirmed continued work on the national SSA. CY noted that it had completed the SSA for 2004, and that a new study could only be launched after the CY Presidency term (i.e. as from 2013). Under its Presidency, CY aimed at giving an additional push to the work on SSAs. UK had completed the SSA for 2004, updated it for the years 2005-2006 and was now working on the 2007-2008 series. If the Ministry decided to stick to initial plans to run time series on the SSA until 2012, it would be possible, for the first time, to measure the impact of the Olympics (i.e. before and after the 2012 Games).

Other MS (DE, NL, and to some extent LU) were also advancing with the preparatory work for their national SSA. DE planned to compile its SSA for 2008 by the end of next year; NL hoped to finish its SSA in mid-2012 with 2006 as the base year. LU intended to continue work on its SSA, but it would use 3-digit levels for the CPA.

Several other MS had not yet started setting up a national SSA given the budgetary and economic situation, but some did not exclude that progress could be made in the future. Many MS confirmed the relevance of SSAs but noted the difficulty to convince their national Ministry to provide the necessary resources. In that respect, some experts expressed hope to receive information on the cost of setting up an SSA. Several MS stressed the need to get Eurostat involved in the SSA project.

The discussion also addressed the question whether the sport sector contributed to the recovery from the financial crisis. Anecdotal evidence from certain MS had shown that economic crises ('80s, '90s, recent crisis) did not lead to a decline in sport participation and that sport activities had been largely immune from global economic turbulences; what was visible was a drop in purchases. The stabilising effect of sport in macro-economic terms was noted, e.g. planning certainty generated by large-scale sport events that were unlikely to be affected by a crisis and created jobs, e.g. on the construction side. The group agreed to further look into these matters when working on the interpretation of results.



In his conclusion, the chairman suggested holding a separate meeting for interested experts, in particular from smaller MS, in Austria (Vienna), to illustrate the technical steps of setting up a national SSA and related financial costs. He agreed with the COM's proposal to use the planned manual (Deliverable 2) to address such questions by including practical information about the set-up of a national SSA. Regarding deliverable 2, the chairman suggested that the XG could consider establishing a second "easier to handle" version of the Vilnius Definition, for instance to address disaggregated CPAs. The chairman finally noted his impression that a lot of voluntary work was carried out by national statistical offices in several MS in order to progress with the SSA project and suggested exploring the possibility of getting private sponsors involved.

## **6. STUDY ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF SPORT TO ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT IN THE EU – DELIVERABLE 1 OF THE WORK SCHEDULE**

COM introduced the study on the contribution of sport to economic growth and employment in the EU by explaining the general EU policy and budgetary context and the strategic goals (Europe 2020) to which the study should contribute. The study started in late 2010 and should be finalised in the spring of 2012. One of the specific study objectives was to develop a methodological framework that would take into account the economic impact of sport at the national level (27 MS) as well as at EU level, based on the Vilnius Definition and the work already done at national and EU levels. The final report of this study would be addressed at the next meeting of the XG.

AT representing the contractor (i.e. a consortium led by SportsEconAustria - SpEA) presented the state of play in carrying out the study. The main idea was to combine national SSAs and input-output tables (IOTs) within one multi-regional IOT Sport (IOT-S) covering the entire EU. For four countries precise SSA data were available, for the remaining MS proxy IOT-Ss would be used. SpEA explained the main steps for the study, i.e. collect IOTs for 27 MS, transform them into IOT-Ss, merge them by applying the Chenerey/Moses procedure (which was an appropriate methodology to calculate the MRIOT-S), perform an Input-Output analysis (calculate gross-value added, production value, impact on employment), draft final study report. A successful exercise would allow highlighting the contribution of sport to the Europe 2020 strategy. The MRIOT-S for the EU could be gradually improved by inserting new data to become available at the national level. Much depended on the quality of data from the MS.

In the discussion, several MS welcomed the approach chosen, but asked for further explanation on the methodology. The chairman recalled AT's offer to help them calculate their national SSA and noted that the methodology framework existed, which would greatly facilitate the work for new countries. Interested (smaller) MS were invited to contact AT on this. Regarding the update and adaptation of data, AT noted that a recalculation could be done on a regular basis, possibly through the publication of an annual report.



## 7. A.O.B.

### ***- Study on a possible future sport monitoring function in the EU – DELIVERABLE 3 OF THE WORK SCHEDULE***

COM introduced its proposal in the 2011 Communication on sport "to study the feasibility of establishing a sport monitoring function in the EU to analyse trends, collect data, interpret statistics, facilitate research, launch surveys and studies, and promote exchange of information". The call for tender for such a study was launched in July 2011 and the outcomes were expected at the end of 2012. Through this study COM wished to get an overview of all factual elements that may help it determine whether the establishment of a sport monitoring function at EU level would be feasible, what shape it may take, and under what conditions. The study should focus on three main areas (sport and health, social aspects of sport, economic dimension of sport). The XG STAT should usefully contribute to the mapping exercise of this study. It was planned that the contractor would present a progress report at the next XG meeting in April and that it would organise an Expert Seminar linked to the XG meeting in September 2012.

### ***- Eurostat: inclusion of sport in future statistical programme***

COM informed about the state of play regarding the possible inclusion of sport in the work of Eurostat. It explained that there was an ongoing dialogue between DG EAC and Eurostat, including an annual hearing where data needs and areas for cooperation were addressed. At the last meeting in July 2011, DG EAC had highlighted in particular the Council's request to work towards an evidence base for sport, the tasks attributed to the XG STAT, and the COM's commitment in its Communication to ensure progress in the EU-level work on SSAs. DG EAC had also recalled the EU Conference on Sport Statistics (23 March 2011) where Eurostat had shown openness to identifying relevant Eurostat surveys (e.g. SILC, HBS) that already included or could include sport data in the future.

COM (EAC) was currently assessing the possibility to include sport as a theme in the Statistical Programme for 2013-2017. In order for Eurostat to become more involved in the future it was crucial to have strong policy support, including specific requests from the Council.

### ***- Date and place of next meeting***

The XG STAT agreed to hold its next meeting in Brussels on Tuesday, 24 April 2012.