



EU Work Plan
for Sport

2014-
2017

Expert Group "Good Governance"

Report from the 1st meeting (16 October 2014)

2014

Report drafted by the European Commission and adopted by the XG GG



1. INTRODUCTION

The Expert Group on Good Governance (XG GG) was created by the Council in adopting its European Union Work Plan for Sport for 2014-2017.¹ The XG reports to the Council.

On 16 October 2014, the XG GG held its first meeting to elect its Chairperson adopt its Work Schedule and take the decision on the participation of observers.

With regards to the functioning of the Expert Groups, the European Commission fulfils a secretarial function to support the work of the XG. All Member States were invited to appoint experts for the new Expert Groups in the field of sport and to indicate their interest in chairing any of these groups by the 4 July 2014. Five Member States declined their participation to the XG GG, namely Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Croatia. The participation in the group is voluntary and it will be possible to join the group at any moment.

As a general rule, the meeting of XG GG will take place in Brussels, twice a year.

As part of introductory remarks, the Commission welcomed the members of XG and briefly presented the political context. The Commission recalled the three priority themes proposed in the Work Plan - the integrity of sport, the economic dimension of sport and sport and society. In order to support the implementation of the Work Plan, the Council agreed on the establishment of five Expert Groups. The XG GG is established to work on the following outcomes as specified in the Annex 2 of the Work Plan: guiding principles relating to democracy, human rights and labour rights, in particular in the context of the awarding procedure of major sport events; recommendations or guidelines on gender equality in sport; promotion of existing good governance principles; recommendations to protect young athletes and safeguard children's rights in sport. The present Work Plan is in the continuity of the 1st Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014. In addition to expert groups, other possible structures or working methods are proposed in the Work Plan, namely Presidency conferences, meetings of Sport Ministers and Directors, commission studies and conferences and pledge boards.

The XG GG meeting on 16 October 2014 was attended by Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom (17 Member States). The Commission was represented by DG Education and Culture (DG EAC).

The XG GG adopted the draft agenda without comments.

2. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR

The Commission informed that two Member States - the Netherlands and the UK - had submitted their candidature to chair the XG GG, namely Mr Darren Bailey (UK) and Mr Jan Loorbach (the Netherlands). Any additional candidates for chairperson within the XG GG were not proposed. Both candidates were invited to present their expertise and motivation to the members of the XG. Following an agreement between Mr Bailey and Mr Loorbach and on their suggestion, the XG unanimously agreed to elect Mr Darren Bailey as the chair of the XG GG and Mr Jan Loorbach as vice chair. The appointment as chair and vice chair will cover the entire lifetime of the XG, i.e. until the end of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2014-2017.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:42014Y0614%2803%29>



3. ADOPTION OF THE WORK SCHEDULE

The newly elected chair invited the Commission to present its proposal regarding the Work Schedule for the XG GG. The Commission recalled that Good Governance was identified as one of priority themes within the framework of the first EU Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014. The first XG GG had worked on three main topics, namely Match-Fixing, Good Governance, and Agents and transfers. The results of the work of XG GG were the following deliverables - *Recommendations on the EU's role in combating match-fixing, Principles on good governance in sport and Recommendations on supervision of sports agents and transfers of players, notably young players.*

The EU Work Plan 2014-2017 proposes that the current XG GG continues the work on good governance on the basis of the following main topics - Protection and safeguarding of minors, good governance, and gender equality. To fulfil its tasks, the XG GG is invited to work on four deliverables, as specified in the Annex I of the EU Work Plan:

- Guiding principles relating to democracy, human rights and labour right, in particular in the context of the awarding procedure of major sport events, possibly followed by a pledge board (2nd half of 2015)
- Expert Group recommendations or guidelines on gender equality in sport possibly followed by a pledge board (2nd half of 2015)
- Promotion of existing good governance principles possibly followed by a pledge board (1st half 2016)
- Expert Group recommendations to protect young athletes and safeguard children's rights in sport (1st half 2016)

The XG agreed that coordination of work for each of the deliverables would be ensured by a lead expert from the XG GG responsible for the relevant area. The XG agreed that the each deliverable would fall under the responsibility of one member of the group. The final distribution of tasks is as follows:

Democracy, human rights and labour right, in particular in the context of the awarding procedure of major sport events	Jan Loorbach (vice chair, NL)
Gender equality	Cedric Chaumond (FR)
Good Governance	Darren Bailey (Chair, UK)
Young athletes / children's rights	Alexandre Husting (LU)

The outcomes of the work on these four deliverables would be successively presented to the Council Working Party on Sport (WPS) by a specific target date. All deliverables would feed into the Commission's final report on the implementation of the EU Work Plan 2014-2017.

The XG GG agreed that target dates to produce deliverables are very demanding therefore a good organisation of work at and between meetings would be needed in order to ensure maximum efficiency.

The Commission agreed that it would check with the WPS whether there was any flexibility regarding the deliverable due dates, stating that some flexibility could be conceivable,



particularly given the priorities of the EU Presidencies which should be taken on board. The Netherlands confirmed the deliverable on major events should be kept in order to fall in with the work of their Presidency. It was agreed that an extra meeting in June 2015 would be explored if members felt it necessary. In light of the timetable it was felt that an additional meeting would be required.

The chair asked whether there were other work streams or projects that should be taken into account and/or would assist in the work of the XG GG. It was noted that the XG GG should have regard to the results of the EC study on gender-based violence and consider a request of postponement of the target date specified for the deliverable in the Work Plan, if necessary. The XG GG recommended also taking into account the studies made by external sport organisations and other projects under the Erasmus framework. It was noted that this approach had worked well in previous expert groups in particular in developing and educating on the Good Governance principles.

The draft Work Plan has been adopted with the XG GG comments.

4. DECISION ON OBSERVERS

The Commission presented the list of 23 organisations and 1 independent person that had expressed their interest in participating as observers in meetings of the XG GG. The lack of clear criteria on selecting and refusing candidates was highlighted. However, after a discussion on the motivation, added value, expertise and interest of the applicants for the XG GG, the XG decided that all organisations that had requested to become observer to the XG GG will be admitted as observers. However, the XG decided to not to accept applications from individual persons.

The list of admitted observers was then agreed as follows:

- Council of Europe (EPAS)
- EAS (European Athlete Student) Network
- ECA - European Club Association
- European Elite Athletes Association
- EHFA - The European Health & Fitness Association
- ENGSO - European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation
- EOSE - European Observatory of Sport and Employment
- EOC – European Olympic Committee, EU Office
- EPFL - European Professional Football Leagues
- European Tour
- European Women and Sport
- FIFA
- FIVB - Federation Internationale de Volleyball
- FIFPRO – World Players Union
- ICSS - International Centre for Sport Security
- ICSSPE - Int. Council of Sport Science and Physical Education



- IOC – International Olympic Committee
- ISCA - International sport and culture association
- Play the game (Danish Institute for Sport Studies)
- Supporters Direct (SD) Europe
- Transparency International Germany
- UEFA
- UNI Sport PRO

Additionally, members of the XG commented that, in general, the meetings should not be closed for observers, while also insisting that – given the high number of participants to the XG GG- the meetings should remain efficient. It was recalled that although observers have no voting rights, their expertise provides a real added value for the XG. It was agreed that XG GG meeting would be divided into sessions where observers could be admitted or not. This would be communicated to observers accordingly.

It was noted that in the future, a reflection on possible admission criteria and modalities for observers should be undertaken and the status of observers could be better defined in the next Work Plan.

The XG asked the Commission, as the Secretariat of the XG, to inform the applicants of its decision.

5. Preparation of deliverables

The XG held a discussion on each deliverable expected to be produced by the XG GG. The Commission informed the XG that the results of the selection of the projects from the preparatory actions 2014 will be announced shortly and could enrich the reflections on good governance.

- **Guiding principles relating to democracy, human rights and labour right, in particular in the context of the awarding procedure of major sport events, possibly followed by a pledge board (2nd half of 2015)**

The Commission made a short introduction noting that the topic is relatively new in the context of sport issues and has not been treated to a large extent at EU level. Therefore, the detailed scope of the document should be defined within the XG GG. However, the XG GG should also take into account the national and international sensibilities. Consultation of Working Party on Sport could be envisaged if necessary.

The XG GG discussed the possible scope of the deliverable, given that it was unclear whether it referred to democracy and human rights issues in a given territory seeking to host an event or democracy in the context of the process of awarding procedure of major sport events. It was noted that both possibilities may be taken on board. Moreover, the XG GG agreed that any distinction between major events and mega events was unnecessary in this context; it was a question of the principles to be applied, irrespective of classification of the sport event. Finally, the XG GG agreed that all potential recipients of the deliverables should also be discussed (sport organisations, governing sport bodies, MS, sponsors...) as part of the XG GG deliberations.



A discussion on the scope of the guiding principles was held and the following elements were proposed:

- to ensure that human rights are respected
- to define possible minimum standards acceptable for all countries and how additional standards may be embraced.
- to promote the applicable human rights standards
- to take into account the economic benefits and impacts of major events
- to consider cultural and societal differences and avoid inappropriate comparisons
- to analyse and give guidance on different stages of the process of attribution of the major sport events
- to evaluate whether it is possible to develop certain standard criteria for awarding events
- to examine the possibility of discussion with international federations and verify the current standards of international federations
- to take into account the subsidiarity and the possibility to deal with that topic at MS level or at EU level
- to promote the best practices and the exchange thereof

The importance to avoid duplication and not deal with those aspects falling under the responsibility of the XG GG on the Economic Dimension was highlighted.

Some references to existing reports and documents, in particular to ILO good practices and to *UN guiding principles on business and human rights* were made. Consequently, the XG GG agreed to collect possible relevant documents for further discussion and inspiration for the next meeting.

- **Expert Group recommendations or guidelines on gender equality in sport followed by a pledge board (2nd half of 2015)**

The XG agreed on the list of possible themes proposed by the Commission on the basis of 'Proposal for Strategic Action 2014-20' to be further explored during the work of the Expert Group (i.e. development of national and international strategies, gender balance and equality in decision making in sport, gender equality in coaching, gender based violence, negative stereotypes in sport and the role of media). The XG agreed to extend the list of proposed items. The reference to gender equality should be widened to the entire sport team and process including, but not limited to – referees, medics, doctors, administrators and sport journalists - instead of being limited to the leadership positions.

With regards to the role of media, a reflection on the promotion of the positive female role models, the visibility of women successes at international level and the active involvement of the sport women in media should be carried on within the work of the XG GG. The possibilities to define quotas should be taken into the account. Eventually, the issue of gender budgeting in sport in the national budgets could be discussed. The idea of compulsory national regulation on gender equality linked to the budget distribution was also raised.

The XG agreed that existing initiatives on gender equality in sport in MS should be examined. FR, SW and UK referred to some initiatives in their countries. The importance of the topic was highlighted also in view of economic dimension and educational aspects.

The rights of LGBT were also raised.



- **Promotion of existing good governance principles possibly followed by a pledge board (1st half 2016)**

The XG chair recalled the deliverable on *Principles on good governance in sport* produced by the previous XG GG created on the basis of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014 and in particular the chapter on implementation. In order to ensure the promotion of existing good governance principles the XG proposed to examine within MS if the promotion of the deliverable has been made. The idea of monitoring actions undertaken was raised as well as the possibility to impose limited scope of time for the implementation of principles. The XG suggested also developing a questionnaire on the situation in each MS. The Commission proposed to wait for results of recent Preparatory Actions on good governance under Erasmus+ in order to have a general view and more data which could feed the work of the XG. The XG GG welcomed all ideas as the best direction to take and agreed that the implantation of good governance principles should be rigorous and conscientious.

The Commission recalled also the idea of the pledge boards for this topic and informed the XG that the first ideas on this working method will be presented to the Working Party on Sport in October. The XG agreed that a pledge board could be a useful tool and welcomed any input from the WPS which would allow work to progress.

- **Expert Group recommendations to protect young athletes and safeguard children's rights in sport (1st half 2016)**

The Commission introduced the subject and brought to the attention of the XG the possible definitions of the scope of the deliverable which could refer to children involved in elite sport only or to the interests of children in sport in general. The Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the Protection of Young People at Work and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child may be considered as a reference document at international level although it was noted that this did not relate specifically to sports or the sports industry.

The XG recommendation will be the first document at EU level working on this topic in the context of sport. It was recalled that the deliverable on *Principles on good governance in sport* produced by the previous XG GG created at the basis of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014 mentioned some elements with regards to 'Engagement with youth groups'.

The XG GG agreed that the topic is very broad but suggested staying ambitious and rigorous. However, given the existence of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the work of the XG GG could concentrate on the rights of minor athletes (amateurs and professionals) and their parents. The focus should be on:

- the importance of identifying and sharing of best practices to protect minors, especially at grass roots level,
- the necessity to establish links with public authorities on this issue,
- the need to consider the specific aspects and challenged for young professional players
- the importance of screening and vetting procedures, e.g. for coaches
- the necessity to discuss the possible negative role and influence of parents and coaches.

The protection against the risk of commercial and marketing abuse and the risk of possible body damage and health issues were also brought up.

The XG discussed the establishment of minimum standards to be shared across Europe. A remark on the obligation of parallel education for children starting their sport career was made. However, it was noted that the group on Human Resources working on double-careers could also cover this question. In that regard, the possibility to increase the minimum age for compulsory education could be envisaged.



6. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The XG agreed to hold its 2nd meeting in Brussels on Thursday, 5 March 2015.

As a general rule the XG meet twice a year. However, the XG GG agreed to extend the number of meetings if necessary. It was suggested to discuss the need of an additional meeting between March and October 2015 at the next XG GG, principally to work on deliverables planned for 2015. The EC should verify logistic and financial possibilities of such a decision.

The practical modalities of work were also discussed. The Commission proposed the use of e-platform called CIRCABC that could be used to share and collect documents. The Commission was requested to send an explanatory message on the tool at the earliest opportunity to allow work to begin and documentation to be submitted.