

**JOINT DECLARATION BY THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL**

of 5 May 2003

on 'the social value of sport for young people'

(2003/C 134/03)

THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL:

1. STRESSING the social and health significance of sport for young people, both male and female, and its role in forging identity and bringing people together as affirmed in the declaration on the social importance of sport annexed to the Treaty of Amsterdam;
2. RECALLING that the Declaration on the specific characteristics of sport and its social function in Europe, annexed to the Presidency conclusions of the Nice European Council meeting (7, 8 and 9 December 2000), requests 'the Community institutions and the Member States to continue examining their policies, in compliance with the Treaty and in accordance with their respective powers, in the light of these general principles';
3. RECALLING the Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers for Youth meeting within the Council of 17 December 1999 on the non-formal education dimension of sporting activities in the European Community Youth Programmes ⁽¹⁾;
4. STRESSING also that the development of physical, intellectual and social powers through physical education and sport should be encouraged for everyone, both within the educational system and in other aspects of social life;
5. RECOGNISING that focusing on the economic dimension of sport in Europe risks weakening its educational, social and health function for young people;
6. NOTING with satisfaction that the year 2003 has been declared 'European year of people with disabilities',

STRESSING the importance of the decision establishing the European Year of Education through Sport 2004,

1. EMPHASISE the need to disseminate the values of sport: promotion of physical and mental well-being, and improvement of quality of life;
2. STRESS that it is possible to make the educational systems more attractive by using sport as an educational instrument to improve the involvement of young people both in formal education and non-formal learning;

3. HIGHLIGHT the importance of promoting the values and virtues of self-discipline, self-esteem and hard effort fostered by sport, thus helping young people to identify their skills and limitations and to overcome the difficulties they may face in their everyday life, and as a result permitting them to achieve their objectives and to gain their autonomy;
4. POINT OUT that through the values of solidarity, respect for others, participation and fair play, sport contributes to the socialisation of young people, fosters their participation in public life, and promotes democratic values and citizenship among the young;
5. STRESS the role which can be played by sport for social cohesion, especially among disadvantaged young people;
6. STRESS that by promoting tolerance, acceptance and respect for diversity towards other young athletes, sport may make an important contribution to intercultural understanding, and combating racism, xenophobia, sexism and other forms of discrimination;
7. STRESS moreover the need to ensure that these values are respected by all involved in sports and that measures aimed at young people in favour of fair play and against threats to their health, in particular doping, as well as violence in sport, should be encouraged;
8. UNDERLINE that sport can improve the quality of life and foster the independence of young people with disabilities. It can help them overcome social prejudices, and STRESS the need to remove barriers that prevent young people with disabilities from having access to sporting activities;
9. CONSIDER that it is essential to safeguard the specific characteristics of sport and to promote its ethical values and Olympic ideals, and thereby avoid possible risks through excessive development of the economic dimension of sport;
10. CONSIDER also that voluntary activities in sport should be fostered, with the participation and active contribution of all bodies concerned, especially of the volunteer youth sports associations and organisations.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 8, 12.1.2000.