

Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 27 November 2012 on strengthening the evidence-base for sport policy making

(2012/C 393/06)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES,

1. RECALLING:

1. the EU's mandate, pursuant to Article 165 TFEU, to develop the European dimension in sport and to promote European sporting issues;
2. the European Union Work Plan for Sport for 2011-2014 ⁽¹⁾, adopted on 20 May 2011, which gave high priority to work towards evidence-based sport policy at the EU level and which established an Expert Group on Sport Statistics that got the mandate to recommend ways to further promote data collection in the field of sport based on ongoing work;
3. the Commission's White Paper on Sport of 7 July 2007 ⁽²⁾ and its Communication on Developing the European Dimension in Sport of 18 January 2011 ⁽³⁾, which highlighted the importance of a sound evidence base to underpin sport-policy making, including comparable EU-wide data on social and economic aspects of sport, and which set out concrete action to address this need;
4. the structured EU level cooperation between Member States in the field of sport statistics, facilitated by the Commission, that has been on-going since 2006 and that has led to the development of a common methodology to measure the economic importance of sport, based on an agreed EU definition ('Vilnius Definition of Sport'), and the development of Sport Satellite Accounts ⁽⁴⁾ in several Member States;
5. the EU-wide studies launched by the Commission in 2010 and 2011 respectively on 'Sport's contribution to economic growth and employment in the EU' and on a 'Possible future sport monitoring function in the EU' ⁽⁵⁾;

6. the first EU Conference on Sport Statistics, held in Brussels on 23 March 2011, which confirmed the importance of better and more comparable sport data ⁽⁶⁾.

2. CONSIDERING THAT:

1. The current financial and economic crisis is having a major impact on public spending across the EU, which leads many Member States to direct resources to policy areas that generate growth and jobs;
2. Although research on the economic impact of sport has been carried out at different levels, results have generally not been comparable across countries. Today, there is growing evidence that sport makes a significant contribution to Europe's economy and is an important driver of growth and employment ⁽⁷⁾, while also ensuring social cohesion, well-being and soft skill development ⁽⁸⁾, thus making a distinct contribution to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy.
3. According to a recent EU-wide study the share of sport amounts to 1,76 % of overall gross value added in the EU ⁽⁹⁾. When multiplier effects are taken into account, the share of sport even adds up to 2,98 % of the overall gross value added in the EU. In addition, growth in the sport sector has proven to be labour-intensive, as reflected by a higher share of sport in overall EU employment

⁽⁶⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/eu-conference-on-sport-statistics_en.htm

⁽⁷⁾ Executive summary 'Study on sport's contribution to economic growth and employment in the EU': <http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/documents/b1/eusf2012-executive-summary-study-costegaeiteu-august-2012.pdf>. One of the specific study objectives was to develop a methodological framework that takes into account the economic impact of sport in the EU. To arrive at the latter, the study embedded all national estimates into a multi-regional system of sport satellite accounts (interpreting each Member State as representing a regional entity of the EU-27) in accordance with the Vilnius Definition of Sport.

⁽⁸⁾ Soft skills and competences — teamwork, discipline, initiative, perseverance, organisational skills — acquired through participating or organising sport at the grassroots level play a vital role in equipping individuals for a labour market where such skills are highly valued;

⁽⁹⁾ The share of sport in European value added is thereby comparable to the share of agriculture, forestry, and fishing combined and almost 2.5 times as large as mining and quarrying, and represents at least more than one fifth of financial service activities, including insurance and pension funding. Every sixtieth Euro generated and earned in the EU is sport-related. 'Study on sport's contribution to economic growth and employment in the EU': <http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/documents/b1/eusf2012-executive-summary-study-costegaeiteu-august-2012.pdf>

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 162, 1.6.2011, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ European Commission White Paper on Sport, COM(2007) 391 final.

⁽³⁾ European Commission Communication 'Developing the European dimension in Sport', COM(2011) 12 final.

⁽⁴⁾ A system of satellite accounts (here: sport satellite account - SSA) is defined as a robust statistical framework to measure the economic importance of a specific industry (here: the sport sector) in the national economy.

⁽⁵⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/sport/preparatory_actions/studies-surveys-conferences-and-seminars_en.htm

- (amounting to 2,12 %) than in gross value added. Given its disproportionately high labour intensity, sport plays an important role in securing employment;
4. The collection of a variety of sport-related data and their use in policy formulation can increase the quality of sport policies. In this regard, sport satellite accounts are considered a valuable instrument to generate evidence for the formulation of sport policies. Excellent progress has been made in some Member States in measuring the economic importance of sport through the set up of a Sport Satellite Account at national level
 5. Enhanced cooperation for improving the level of knowledge on sport in the EU can best be achieved through cross-sectoral cooperation between academics, the sport industry, the sport movement as well as national and European public authorities, including the statistical offices;
 6. Eurobarometer surveys have been shown to be a useful tool to compare trends among Member States over time regarding the outcome of different sport policies; they cannot, however, replace sound statistical data provided through the European statistical system by Eurostat;
 7. A first set of deliverables ⁽¹⁾ regarding specific aspects of a more strengthened evidence base for sport has been developed by the Expert Group on Sport Statistics, in line with its mandate. It comprises:
 - policy recommendations based on the study on the contribution of sport to economic growth and employment in the EU, and
 - a manual for national statistical offices on how to set up Sport Satellite Accounts.
 8. The development of an improved evidence-base for sport policy-making must take into account the budgetary constraints at both national and European level resulting from the financial and economic crisis.
3. INVITE EU MEMBER STATES TO:
1. Continue progress in voluntarily developing Sport Satellite Accounts by drawing on the available methodological instruments, by making use of the existing cooperation structures at EU level and by seeking to involve relevant governmental structures, including national statistical offices.
 2. Encourage and support initiatives aimed at improving the collection and dissemination of information and data regarding sport, including existing national data, as a means to strengthen evidence-based sport policies.
4. INVITE THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION IN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE TO:
1. Improve the evidence base regarding social and economic aspects of sport in the EU and its Member States, such as by including these topics in the European Statistical Programme 2013 – 2017 and subsequent Annual Statistical Work Programmes.
 2. Seek to improve the cooperation between the relevant institutional structures for sport and for statistics at EU level and in the Member States in order to raise awareness on the need for sound and comparable data on sport.
 3. Promote a wider understanding, taking into account existing evidence, of the crucial role of sport as a driver for growth, employment and skills development, as well as for social cohesion, in the context of national and regional policy making as well as of the Europe 2020 strategy.
5. INVITE THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO:
1. On the basis of previous work in this field, consider using available and future EU funding instruments to support national efforts to develop Sport Satellite Accounts.
 2. Promote the strengthening of the evidence base for sport, in particular by supporting on the basis of previous work in this field, national efforts to develop Sport Satellite Accounts and the sharing of best practices at EU level in order to empirically measure the contribution of sport to economic growth and to safeguarding and expanding employment in Europe;
 - the identification of key data needs for sport policy making in Europe, such as participation in sport, and, subsequently, work towards the collection and dissemination of EU-wide sport data in these areas;
 - the launch and dissemination of EU surveys, such as the Eurobarometer, and studies in line with political priorities for sport identified by the Council, and by including sport in existing Eurostat surveys.

⁽¹⁾ <http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/documents>