C/2026/1521

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Role of EU policies in shaping the European Sport Model

European Parliament resolution of 7 October 2025 on the role of EU policies in shaping the European Sport Model (2025/2035(INI))

(C/2026/1521)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in particular Articles 6 and 165 thereof, which specify the competences and action of the Union in the area of sport, and in particular the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking into account the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity, and its social and educational function, and Articles 26 and 114 thereof, which specify the competences of the Union with regard to its internal market,

— having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 ([1]), and in particular Chapter IV on Sport,

— having regard to the Commission communication of 11 July 2007 entitled 'White Paper on Sport' (COM(2007) 0391),

— having regard to the Commission communication of 18 January 2011 entitled 'Developing the European Dimension in Sport' (COM(2011)0012),

— having regard to its resolution of 2 February 2012 on the European dimension in sport ([2]),

— having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2013 on match-fixing and corruption in sport ([3]),

— having regard to its resolution of 2 February 2017 on an integrated approach to Sport Policy: good governance, accessibility and integrity ([4]),

— having regard to its resolution of 19 May 2021 with recommendations to the Commission on challenges of sports events organisers in the digital environment ([5]),

— having regard to its resolution of 23 November 2021 on EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward ([6]),

— having regard to the study requested by its Committee on Culture and Education entitled 'EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward', published by its Directorate-General for Internal Policies in June 2021 ([7]),

— having regard to the Commission study entitled 'Study on the European sport model', published in April 2022 ([8]),

— having regard to the resolution of 3 June 2024 of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (1 July 2024 – 31 December 2027) ([9]),

([1]) OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/817/oj.
([2]) OJ C 239 E, 20.8.2013, p. 46.
([3]) OJ C 36, 29.1.2016, p. 137.
([4]) OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 2.
([5]) OJ C 15, 12.1.2022, p. 18.
([6]) OJ C 224, 8.6.2022, p. 2.
([7]) Study – 'EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward', European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, June 2021.
([8]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Sennett, J., Le Gall, A., Kelly, G., Cottrill, R. et al., Study on the European sport model – A report to the European Commission, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/28433.
([9]) OJ C, C/2024/3527, 3.6.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/3527/oj.

— having regard to the Commission report of 14 February 2024 on the implementation and relevance of the European Union Work Plan for Sport 2021–2024 and on the Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activities across sectors (COM(2024)0073),

— having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (the Macolin Convention), signed on 18 September 2014,

— having regard to the Revised European Sports Charter, adopted by the Council of Europe on 13 October 2021,

— having regard to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport of 2015,

— having regard to recent judgments of the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) relating to sport, including Cases C-124/21 P, *International Skating Union* v *Commission* ([10]), C-680/21, *Royal Antwerp Football Club* v *Union royale belge des sociétés de football association* ([11]), C-333/21, *European Superleague Company* v *FIFA and UEFA* ([12]) and C-650/22, *FIFA* v *BZ* ([13]),

— having regard to the resolution of 12 December 2021 of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the key features of a European Sport Model ([14]),

— having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A10-0157/2025),

A. whereas sport is a European public good and an increasingly valuable European asset – socially, economically, politically and culturally;

B. whereas sport and physical activity play an important role in people's lives, bringing communities and people together and improving health and well-being;

C. whereas sport and physical activity serve as vectors for integration and inclusion and offer a sense of community, especially for people with fewer opportunities;

D. whereas sport and physical activity play vital roles in promoting EU values such as democracy, respect, solidarity, diversity and equality;

E. whereas the European Sport Model is underpinned by key features such as the principles of solidarity, sustainability, integrity, inclusiveness, sporting merit, territoriality and openness of competitions;

F. whereas there is a need to maintain a healthy balance between national team competitions and club competitions;

G. whereas the European Sport Model encompasses professional and grassroots sport;

H. whereas sport is a driver of the EU's cohesion policy, particularly in rural and disadvantaged, remote areas which are challenged by limited funds, infrastructure and declining membership;

I. whereas the majority of grassroots sports revenue is based on citizens' own payments, unpaid work by volunteers, support from local businesses and subsidies from municipalities;

([10]) Judgment of the Court of Justice of 21 December 2023, *International Skating Union* v *European Commission*, C-124/21 P, ECLI:EU:C:2023:1012.

([11]) Judgment of the Court of Justice of 21 December 2023, *UL and SA Royal Antwerp Football Club* v *Union royale belge des sociétés de football association ASBL*, C-680/21, ECLI:EU:C:2023:1010.

([12]) Judgment of the Court of Justice of 21 December 2023, *European Superleague Company, SL* v *Fédération internationale de football association (FIFA) and Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)*, C-333/21, ECLI:EU:C:2023:1011.

([13]) Judgment of the Court of Justice of 4 October 2024, *Fédération internationale de football association (FIFA)* v *BZ*, C-650/22, ECLI:EU:C:2024:824.

([14]) OJ C 501, 13.12.2021, p. 1.

J. whereas the European Sport Model encompasses the development of women's sport and the promotion of gender equality in sport;

K. whereas there is a worrying decline in the number of volunteers participating in grassroots sport;

L. whereas athletes often face insufficient social protection, and encounter rising intensity in their sports and match calendars, as well as the challenges of combining education and employment with their sporting careers;

M. whereas the recent CJEU judgments present an opportunity for EU policy to further enhance the European Sport Model;

N. whereas sport faces numerous challenges, including problems of governance, corruption, match-fixing, doping, online piracy and discrimination;

O. whereas the revenue lost by sports events organisers from the online piracy of live sports content could be reinvested in the EU sports ecosystem;

P. whereas there are new and evolving trends in ownership, such as those arising from foreign investment and multi-ownership in sport;

Q. whereas threats from excessive commercialisation, pure-profit entertainment ownership models and competitions put the competitive balance and integrity of professional sport at risk;

The European Sport Model: serving society and fostering inclusiveness

1. Reiterates its unwavering commitment to defending the European Sport Model, in which sport and physical activity serve societal objectives and contribute across key EU policy areas;

2. Recognises the need to protect the European Sport Model, ensuring the ongoing sustainable development of sport and physical activity from grassroots to professional levels and at local, regional, national and European levels;

3. Stresses the need to further develop the European Sport Model in line with the interests of citizens, EU values and policy priorities such as equality, diversity, inclusion, sustainability, health and well-being, the European social model and EU competitiveness;

4. Calls on all stakeholders to intensify their efforts to promote safe, inclusive and equitable sport, accessible to all, with a focus on advancing gender equality, combating all forms of violence, discrimination and harassment, and improving the accessibility of sports infrastructure;

5. Stresses, in this regard, the need to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all sports contexts, including their involvement in governance and decision-making processes;

6. Highlights that the European Sport Model must be based on the principle of sport as a public good, ensuring that public investment in sport returns benefits to society in the form of inclusion, health, education and social cohesion;

7. Underlines the vital role of physical activity for all, regardless of age, highlighting its immediate and long-term benefits for physical and mental health, as well as its contribution to developing and maintaining people's social and life skills;

8. Stresses the importance of promoting physical activity among children and young people, including the involvement of athletes and para-athletes as role models, and calls for the increased investment in the necessary school sport infrastructures, quality physical education and extracurricular sport programmes;

9. Stresses the preventive role of sport in addressing the social isolation, violence and radicalisation of young people, and highlights the need to protect them from any form of abuse in sport;

10. Underlines the crucial role of volunteers in sport, and calls on the Commission to develop recommendations jointly with the Member States to support and incentivise volunteering in sport, including guidelines for attracting, acknowledging and retaining volunteers in sport, both for grassroots and professional sport;

11. Acknowledges that grassroots sport in Europe is characterised by strong civil society engagement with community-rooted clubs and associations, which are based on volunteering;

The European Sport Model: serving EU values and solidarity

12. Stresses the fundamental importance of the principle of solidarity in ensuring that sport serves and promotes the interests of all, rather than the profits of a few, and reiterates the need to strengthen the connection between professional and grassroots sport through more effective financial solidarity mechanisms, to optimise its development;

13. Calls on the Commission to encourage sports governing bodies to implement mechanisms and policies in youth development, aimed at rewarding clubs for training players who contribute to the continued success of professional competitions, thereby ensuring the long-term competitiveness of the sports sector;

14. Calls on the Commission to present a study mapping existing financial solidarity mechanisms and redistribution schemes covering different sports and levels within the EU, accompanied by recommendations for their further development;

15. Calls, in this regard, for the Commission to support legal certainty for sports governing bodies and explore the need for redistribution mechanisms between big and small leagues, clubs or competitions and in different disciplines, including in youth sports;

16. Stresses the need to significantly increase funding for sport and physical activity, especially under the Erasmus+ programme for 2028-2034, in line with the existing horizontal priorities and to support further synergies between other programmes and funds;

17. Recognises the potential flagship role of the Erasmus+ programme in financially supporting grassroots sports organisations and the programme's positive impact on citizens and society;

18. Calls on the Commission to develop accessible and substantial funding schemes for sports clubs and organisations, with clear and accessible mechanisms, ensuring that earmarked funds reach the grassroots level;

19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support investment in safe and accessible sports infrastructure at all levels through EU funds such as the European Regional Development Fund, with a particular focus on rural and disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods;

20. Believes that financial sustainability regulations are essential in sport to ensure the long-term viability and integrity of professional sport within the EU; encourages the Commission and the Member States to promote consistent financial governance standards across all professional sports, and stresses the need to effectively enforce and update these measures, including appropriate oversight of athletes' salaries;

21. Urges the Member States to continue to insist that the awarding of hosting rights for major sports events should be merit-based and that hosts, organisers and sponsors uphold the values of the European Sport Model, including human rights, democratic values and sustainability;

22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage environmental responsibility and climate adaptation in sport, including sustainable equipment and sports infrastructure management, carbon-responsible event organisation and environmental education through sport;

23. Acknowledges the rising trend of foreign investment and ownership in European sport, and calls on the Commission to consider the impact of this trend, when supporting efforts to safeguard the financial integrity and competitive balance of European sport;

24. Acknowledges the risks of organised and financial crime in sport, and believes that strict due diligence on investments and ownership in European sport must be guaranteed, including through extending the EU's anti-money laundering framework to cover professional sport;

25. Condemns all forms of match-fixing, which undermines integrity and fair play, and calls on the Member States and sporting bodies to strengthen preventive measures through enhanced monitoring, educational campaigns and cooperation with law enforcement;

26. Urges the Council to break the deadlock on the signing and ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions;

27. Highlights the need to address, at EU level, the growing problem of doping across all levels of sport, through educational and awareness-raising campaigns;

28. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to intensify actions against online piracy and calls on the Commission to bring forward a proposal for targeted legislation to address the issue of online piracy of sports and other live content, including by strengthening digital enforcement mechanisms, applying Know Your Business Customer obligations, promoting cooperation with online platforms and raising awareness among consumers;

29. Highlights the rise of dynamic ticket pricing, which can impede accessibility to sports events in Europe, and calls for the close monitoring of market participants' compliance with EU legislation;

The European Sport Model: serving to promote collective governance, athletes' rights and fans' voices

30. Recognises that the autonomy of sport is conditional upon good governance, and calls on international, European, and national sports organisations, as well as stakeholder-representative organisations, to implement the highest standards of governance, integrity and transparency, with appropriate checks and balances to ensure accountability;

31. Invites the Commission to review the effectiveness and consistency of current EU measures in these areas, and to develop targeted actions and policy responses to address persisting challenges;

32. Calls for a collaborative approach between sports organisations and public authorities to uphold these standards and to ensure that sport remains a trusted, safe and ethical space for all participants;

33. Stresses the importance of ensuring that all institutions, sports governing bodies and stakeholders abide by the principles set out in the case-law of the CJEU in the field of sport;

34. Welcomes efforts made by governing bodies on collective governance, and encourages further steps to strengthen stakeholder representation in decision-making, with a particular commitment to ensuring the involvement of athletes and fans;

35. Urges sports governing bodies to implement further measures on equality, diversity and inclusion, particularly to address the persistent under-representation of women in leadership positions;

36. Stresses the need for representativeness standards and checks as a prerequisite for stakeholder organisations to be involved in governance processes;

37. Calls on the Commission to promote social dialogue in sport as a key decision-making process, consistent with the principles of good governance, and to improve sport's representativeness and inclusion;

38. Proposes that the Commission consult with relevant stakeholders on the establishment of an EU Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Professional Sport;

39. Calls for the EU institutions to protect and promote, and for the Member States to implement, the fundamental rights of athletes and other workers in the sports sector, including social rights and protection, such as freedom of association, collective bargaining, non-discrimination, decent working conditions, safety measures and occupational health, especially with regard to pregnancy and maternity leave;

40. Emphasises the need for proactive risk management in developing and overseeing occupational safety and health policies, including factors such as travel, match calendars and overlapping competitions;

41. Calls for the EU institutions and the Member States to further support initiatives related to the dual-careers, lifelong learning, post-retirement periods, personal development and the mental health of athletes, in partnership with relevant organisations such as athlete commissions and associations;

42. Stresses that sports calendars have become more intense due to the increase in European and international matches and competitions, and calls for the involvement of all stakeholders in the calendar decision-making processes to avoid clashes;

43. Supports the right of athletes to be free to represent their countries, and emphasises that clubs should be required to release athletes for national team participation;

44. Calls on the sports governing bodies to prevent domestic competition matches from being played abroad;

45. Recognises the importance of international bodies in ensuring a transparent and fair transfer system, in line with EU law and European specificities, and calls for a strong emphasis on safeguarding the rights of athletes across all sports, with particular attention to minors;

46. Draws attention to the prominent role of sports agents or intermediaries and the unbalanced relationship that can exist between them and young athletes, and stresses the need for a rules-based approach;

The European Sport Model: how EU policy can serve to strengthen and protect

47. Calls on the Commission to present a long-term strategy on sport and physical activity policy, in response to the strong political impetus from the Member States and the EU institutions, focusing on key features of the European Sport Model, and to propose concrete actions in this regard;

48. Welcomes the existing dialogue on sport policy and calls on the Commission to ensure active engagement in the discussions at EU, national and grassroots levels, involving all relevant stakeholders in shaping long-term strategies;

49. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support data collection and evidence-based policymaking, in order to strengthen the role of sport as a contributor to EU policy objectives;

50. Calls on the Commission to fulfil its role as the guardian of the Treaties in one of the most important social and economic sectors of the EU by actively monitoring and addressing threats, at all levels, to the values-based European Sport Model, including breakaway competitions that endanger the overall sports ecosystem;

51. Encourages the Commission to use all the appropriate tools at its disposal to protect the European sport sector from any initiatives aimed at undermining it and transferring the value that it creates to outside of Europe;

52. Reaffirms the specific nature of sport while upholding respect for EU law, and recognises that there is no one-size-fits-all way in which the European Sport Model applies across different sports;

53. Stresses, in this regard, the need to protect the vertical nature of the European Sport Model, whereby promotion and relegation take place at national level, and annual performance in domestic leagues is the sole criterion for qualification to European competitions;

54. Calls on the Commission to provide clear guidelines on the application of EU law, including competition law, to the sports sector, also in light of the recent judgments of the CJEU;

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55. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.