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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE
COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**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**

A. INTRODUCTION

Since the Council adopted the 4th European Union Work Plan for Sport (2021-2024)¹, sport has continued to live up to its role as part of Europe's culture, history and traditions. Its unique and unifying power in our societies comes with a great responsibility as an enabler of change through societal progress, economic activity and healthier, more cohesive communities.

The current EU Work Plan focuses on integrity and values in sport, the socio-economic and environmental aspects of sport and the promotion of participation in sport, as well as health-enhancing physical activity.

The context in which this plan was implemented was complex and challenging. The sporting world had to grapple with the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which blended in with Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and the ensuing period of inflation, high energy prices and geopolitical tensions influencing sports competitions. Management of challenges in relation to these developments comes on top of work on underlying priorities, such as promoting health, equality and safety. Legal challenges before the European courts have increased the visibility and salience of the European dimension of sport. In particular, the debate on the European Sport Model has intensified, capturing the public imagination.

Throughout this period, the EU Work Plan for Sport has been an anchor to ensure focus on the core sports policy priorities, while addressing the recovery and resilience needs of the sports sector.

The EU Work Plan is the basis for dialogue and cooperation between the Member States, the Council and the Commission. As set out in the EU Work Plan, the Council invites the Commission to submit a report on its implementation and relevance. This forms part of the basis for the preparation of the next EU Work Plan, to be adopted during the first half of 2024.

This report is informed by a wide consultation. An online public consultation survey allowed Member States and stakeholders to give written feedback. A total of 72 replies came from Member States, international and European sports institutions, National Olympic Committees, National Anti-Doping Organisations and other relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, the Commission hosted a meeting to receive additional qualitative feedback from the respondents.

This report is based on an assessment of progress made in the EU Work Plan's key policy areas. It reviews the implementation of planned activities, looks at the effectiveness of the tools and working methods. It includes recommendations for future actions and cooperation in the field of sport. This report also evaluates the implementation of the Recommendation on health-enhancing physical activity across sectors².

B. EVALUATION/REPORTING

1. Working methods

The EU Work Plan for Sport was implemented through several established working formats and reporting mechanisms, which have been refined and elaborated in the last three years.

¹ OJ C 419, 04.12.2020, p.1–11.

² OJ C 354, 04.12.2013, p.1-5.

These included Council Conclusions, debates, expert groups, peer-learning activities, conferences and seminars, meetings of the EU Directors-General for sport and studies.

Two **expert groups** were set up on **green sport** and on the **recovery and the resilience of the sports sector during and after the COVID-19 pandemic**. These groups, chaired by the Commission, with active participation by Member States' authorities, as well as observers and experts from the sports movement. They delivered reports and recommendations and provided a platform for exchanging expertise and best practice.

Peer-learning activities for Member States to exchange information and experiences on specific topics, significantly developed over the period of the EU Work Plan. **High-level meetings** and conferences such as informal meetings of the EU Directors-General for sport, along with the policy debates in the Council played a key role in advancing policies on common challenges.

The Commission carried out **studies** on topical issues and continued to develop **initiatives and campaigns**, such as the EU Sport Forum, the European Week of Sport, the HealthyLifestyle4All campaign and the SHARE initiative. These studies and campaigns aimed to help Member States and other stakeholders develop and pursue sport policies and activities.

Sports federations, associations and other sports stakeholders have a key role in implementing sport policy and their views form a crucial part of policy discussions. In this spirit, the sports movement took an active part in the annual EU Sport Forum and other conferences. It also followed the expert groups with a keen interest.

The Commission also cooperated with **international governmental and non-governmental organisations**, such as the Council of Europe (CoE), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

These working methods have helped strengthen the cooperation between Member States, the Council, the Commission and sports stakeholders. They have improved EU coordination and enabled the exchange of valuable expertise and experience, in advancing the EU Work Plan. At the same time, some adjustments in how actions are designed may be needed to ensure more regular communication of results and ensure outputs that are easy to replicate.

2. Actions and outputs

2.1. Expert groups

The report on **green sport** from the expert group³ examined how the European sporting system could best promote environmental sustainability and set out recommendations addressed primarily to the public authorities and national sports organisations. These included an invitation for sport and sustainability champions to promote green sport, the establishment of knowledge-sharing bodies, and for funding at national and European level to support the transition to greener sport. The report showed that sport depends highly on other sectors, with

³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0e76da18-9e26-11ee-b164-01aa75ed71a1>

its primary impact on the climate centred around the travel of fans and participants to competitions.

The expert group report on **recovery and resilience**⁴ outlined the significant impacts of COVID-19 felt across the sports sector. The report also showed the impact of subsequent crises, particularly related to Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and rising energy costs. Aside from the direct crisis impact and response, the report looked at how this interlinked with wider issues such as sustainability and governance. The report thereby emphasised the importance for sports organisations to adopt risk strategies and contingency planning.

2.2. Presidency events and peer-learning activities

Member States holding the EU presidency organised conferences, seminars and meetings of the EU Directors-General for sport. These events delivered a wealth of expertise and policy orientations in areas such as sports diplomacy, innovation, sustainability, integrity and equality.

In addition, **peer-learning activities** have proven to be an increasingly popular method for Member States to organise and share knowledge in more specific fields in an in-depth manner.

A full list of **presidency events** and other activities can be found in Annex I. While the period of the EU Work Plan is still ongoing, nearly all activities and events set out in this Annex have been carried out successfully. This collective achievement reflects the strong commitment of the Member States, the presidencies, the Council, the Commission and all other stakeholders to contribute and collaborate under the EU Work Plan.

2.3. Further initiatives in support of the EU Work Plan

To increase the impact of the priority areas and achieve the guiding objectives of the EU Work Plan, the Commission carried out various relevant activities to complement the actions and purposes.

One of the plan's guiding objectives is to intensify dialogue and cooperation. The **EU Sport Forum** is the main public platform for policy dialogue among sports stakeholders on key challenges and areas in which cooperation is ongoing as part of the EU Work Plan. Taking place annually, it attracts up to 400 participants each year from across Europe, drawn from sports federations, clubs, national and regional authorities, academics, athletes and NGOs.

Furthermore, in 2020, the Commission launched the **High-Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport** with 15 experts from different backgrounds beginning their work in 2021. The report on gender equality in sport produced by this group⁵ included an action plan with recommendations addressed to the Commission, Member States, national and international sports bodies and grassroots organisations across various thematic areas, such as sports participation, equal treatment, leadership and measures to ensure safe sport.

Contributing to the priority area of increasing participation in sport and health-enhancing physical activity, the **HealthyLifestyle4All** campaign, which ran from 2021 to 2023, promoted healthy lifestyles across all generations and social groups, by linking sport and

⁴ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a482583b-b3a7-11ec-b164-01aa75ed71a1>

⁵ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/684ab3af-9f57-11ec-83e1-01aa75ed71a1>

active lifestyles with health, food and other policies. This initiative invited contributions and in response received 102 pledges from sports stakeholders. These included the Commission itself, Member States, local authorities, sports federations, grassroots sports and civil society organisations. A mapping on healthy lifestyles provides an overview of results and offers a funding guide for projects⁶.

The European Week of Sport, another tool to mobilise efforts to foster participation in sport, has gone from strength to strength and allows sports organisations, communities and others from across the EU and its neighbourhood to promote participation in physical activity and sport among the general public. The week is the central part of the Commission's yearly #BeActive campaign that promotes the EU Work Plan and sport widely throughout the EU. The activities have continued despite the COVID-19 pandemic with its #BeActive@Home component. The 2022 edition was a bumper year for events with more than 13 million participants in 40 countries and regions. In 2023, there were 36 000 events involving nearly 11 million people. Since 2022, as part of the campaign, the Commission has handed out the **#BeActive Awards**, in four categories, namely education, work, local hero and across generations.

Erasmus+ Sport Actions promote participation in sport, physical activity and voluntary activities. Through their financial support, these actions provide a substantial basis for furthering European cooperation. They are designed to tackle both societal and sports-related challenges and their priorities⁷ are well aligned with those of the EU Work Plan. The budget has doubled compared to the previous programming period, now amounting to EUR 470 million for the period 2021-2027. The opportunities to engage in partnerships are increasingly popular and the introduction of small-scale partnerships enabled more grassroots organisations to engage in cooperation. For example, in 2023 the Commission received a record-breaking 1 500 proposals, an increase of 17% compared to 2022. In 2023, for the first time, learning mobility projects for sports coaches were made possible.

The Commission was also involved in other areas promoting the mainstreaming of sport and physical activity. On 30 May 2023, it held a **Sport and Innovation Summit** to bring together researchers, companies and policymakers to discuss opportunities and create new partnerships on athlete performance, sustainability and digitalisation. The **#BeInclusive EU Sport Awards** recognise organisations using sport to increase social inclusion. Since 2022, the categories have recognised projects that show how barriers can be broken, promote gender equality and showcase the value of sport to promote EU values and peace, such as integrating refugees from Ukraine.

As part of the EU Work Plan, the Commission contributed to evidence-based policies by gathering data through studies and surveys, including the 2021 study on the **fight against anabolic steroids and human growth hormones in sport within the EU**⁸ and the 2022 study on the **European Sport Model**⁹. In 2023, a study on **athletes' rights in and around major sports events** was launched with a final report planned in 2024. Moreover, the **Eurobarometer Survey on Sport and Physical Activity 2022**¹⁰ provided quantitative data

⁶ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3c4366d4-89b5-11ee-99ba-01aa75ed71a1>

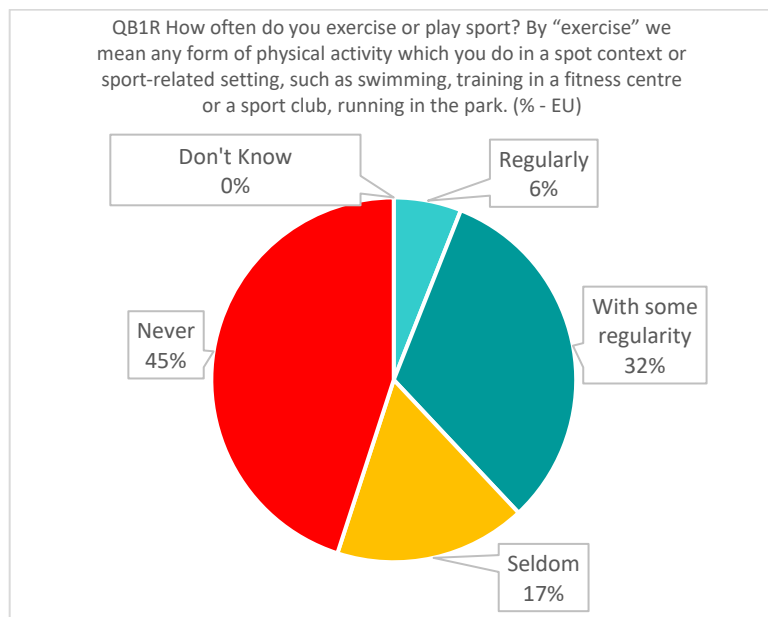
⁷ Sports-specific priorities include: i) encouraging healthy lifestyles for all; ii) promoting integrity and values in sport; iii) promoting education in and throughout sport; iv) combating violence and tackling racism, discrimination and intolerance in sport; and v) tackling violent radicalisation.

⁸ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/76890558-f016-11eb-a71c-01aa75ed71a1>.

⁹ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d10b4b5b-e159-11ec-a534-01aa75ed71a1>.

¹⁰ <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2668>.

on the prevalence of sport and physical activity in the EU and on several related issues, such as volunteering in sport, sustainability and equality. The frequency that Europeans engage in sport is also used as a key indicator for sport policy.



2.4. Cooperation with international bodies

The EU and the **CoE** share common aspirations for sport, specifically for it to be a social good, and a vehicle for human rights and European values. This is the basis for joint EU-CoE projects focused on combating hate speech in sport, child protection and safeguarding, and gender equality.

The Commission cooperates with **WADA** on the fight against doping in sport. The Council Working Party on Sport has continued to prepare the EU's mandate, in accordance with the Resolution of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, on the representation of the Member States in the Foundation Board of WADA and the coordination of Member States' positions prior to WADA meetings. The Council Resolution was updated in 2023, to reflect evolving practices and legal developments¹¹.

The Commission and **UNODC** are cooperating on addressing anti-corruption, anti-money-laundering, and asset recovery in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and at international level to support the review mechanism of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

The Commission also upholds good relations with the **WHO** and **UNESCO** to achieve the goals of the EU Work Plan. The Commission has also signed formal **Arrangements for Cooperation** with the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)¹² and the European Olympic Committee (EOC)¹³.

¹¹ OJ C 185, 26.5.2023, p. 29–34.

¹² C(2022) 3721 final.

¹³ C(2022) 257 final.

2.5 Cooperation on health-enhancing physical activity across sectors

The Council Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors¹⁴ encourages Member States to develop national strategies and action plans to promote physical activity while cooperating with each other and the Commission. The Recommendation calls for the WHO to be supported in collecting data and gathering country-specific overviews. Progress is monitored based on a framework of 23 indicators.

Overall, the structured cooperation between the WHO and the Commission can be assessed as positive. The implementation results across the 23 indicators attained by Member States increased from 64.7% in 2015 to 74.5% in 2018 and again to 75.7% in 2021. Only two indicators are lagging – indicator 7 (sports clubs for health programme) and indicator 18 (European guidelines for improving infrastructure for leisure-time physical activity).

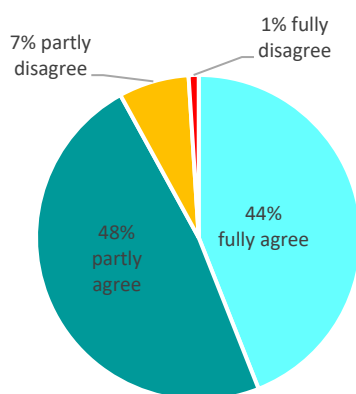
Most Member States and stakeholders consider the Recommendation and its indicators as well as outputs and data as still relevant (details in Annex II).

3. Feedback on the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport

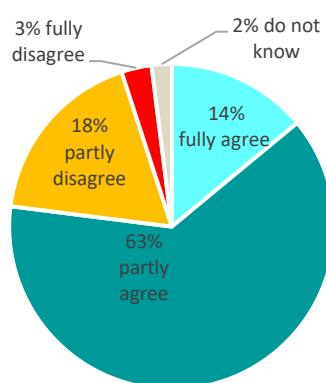
Member States' and stakeholders' feedback on the implementation of the EU Work Plan were collected through an open online survey and discussions at a stakeholders' meeting for respondents.

Analysis showed high levels of approval for the priorities, the exchange of knowledge and experience, and the working methods. A majority found the expert groups, studies and events very appropriate. The peer-learning activities were also evaluated positively.

In your view, has the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024 focused on the right priorities (integrity and values, recovery and crisis, participation in sport)?



In your view, has the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024 introduced the appropriate working formats (Annex I of the Work Plan)?



At the same time respondents suggested ways to improve the implementation and impact of results, namely to improve the presentation of outputs and flow of information and broaden the opportunities to share experience. Several expressed a preference for in-person contact and networking. Continuity and building upon work done was also stressed.

¹⁴ OJ C 354, 4.12.2013, p. 1-3.

Feedback for the future: a snapshot

Member States and other stakeholders who responded to the consultation emphasised the following topics.

Professional sports – integrity and values in sport

- Promote and further develop the European Sport Model
- Focus on the values of integrity in sport, anti-doping, anti-corruption and good governance

Socio-economic and environmental dimensions of sport

- Pursue a more comprehensive approach to equal and fair access to sport
- Continue to promote and improve gender equality and inclusion across the board – from governance structures to grassroots participation
- Focus on sustainability in sports – environmental and economic

Grassroot sports – participation in sport and health-enhancing physical activity

- Promote participation in grassroot sports and focus specifically on the needs of grassroots and local organisations
- Focus on a holistic approach to healthy lifestyles
- Highlight the importance of volunteering for sports
- Safeguarding young people and minors in sport, including at grassroots level

Tools – working methods

- Foster in-person meetings and promote exchange of good practice
- Ensure more frequent dissemination of outputs and access to information, data and reports
- Facilitate dialogue and cooperation in a flexible way

C. WAY FORWARD

The Commission welcomes the feedback from the Member States and stakeholders. While implementing the EU Work Plan for Sport, the Commission has generally found the working methods to perform well. The Commission sees a lot of value in continuing to support the exchange of knowledge and experiences and recognises that this is an area where it can play a useful coordinating role. The Commission is ready to address the issues raised in some formats and events and is committed to their continuous improvement.

The overall assessment and feedback from Member States and stakeholders shows that the focus on policy priorities is appropriate but may need to be reviewed against current and future developments such as Russian's war of aggression in Ukraine, EU enlargement or global interest in European sport. There is general satisfaction with the exchange of knowledge and experience and networking. The Commission shares this appreciation.

The report's findings give an outlook on the areas for future attention. In broad terms, these could be grouped into areas such as: i) promoting the **European Sport Model**; ii) shaping value-based sports governance and major events in Europe; iii) financial sustainability; iv) upholding high standards of integrity; v) upholding the rights of athletes pursuing their careers; vi) ensuring equality and representation; and vii) better valuing the role of grassroots sports and volunteering.

There is a clear political will and need to continue the focus on **sustainable development**, looking at economic viability but also the impact of climate change on sport and the green, innovative and inclusive solutions that it can develop. The plan may also need to consider any changes brought on by advances in technology and AI and their impact on sport.

Ensuring **equality and fairness for all people who want to access sport for the purposes of participation** remains high on the agenda, with a clear need to continue addressing the needs and challenges of underrepresented groups in sport including women, people from disadvantaged backgrounds and a growing group of older people and people suffering from chronic disease or disability.

Drawing on the lessons of the wider context in which this EU Work Plan was implemented, a stronger focus on the external and diplomatic aspects of sport, including the promotion of European values, should also be considered.

Underpinning these focus areas is the **importance of upholding and promoting integrity and values in sport**, whether through combating corruption, doping, discrimination, violence and intolerance (e.g. hate speech), or promoting and defending social inclusion, equality, tolerance and human rights. Sport should provide a safe environment, enabling people to learn skills and invest in positive social connections. This is essential in ensuring that sport in Europe can continue to play its full role as a uniting, cohesive and empowering force for our societies, communities and economies.

The European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions are invited to take note of this report.

As part of the next EU Work Plan for Sport, the Council is invited to consider the feedback on priorities for future work and for the working methods identified in this report.

The Presidency is invited to take this report as a basis for the preparation of the next EU Work Plan for Sport during the first half of 2024.



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ANNEXES 1 to 2

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ANNEX I

Priority area: Protect integrity and values in sport

Key topic	Theme	Goal	Working format	Output/Date	Leader(s)
<i>Safe Environment in Sport¹</i>	Prevention of harassment, abuse and violence, including sexual violence and any form of discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness raising - Best-practice exchange - Knowledge building - Follow-up to the Recommendations of the Expert Group on Good Governance on the protection of young athletes and safeguarding children's rights in sport (2016)² and Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on safeguarding children in sport (2019)³ 	Council and preparatory bodies Conference on Safe Environment in sport	22/09/2023, Valencia	ES Presidency
			Policy debate - EYCS Council	24/11/2023, Brussels	ES Presidency
<i>Anti-Doping⁴</i>	Ensuring coordination and information sharing, in particular in the context of WADA and CAHAMA meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of the EU and its Member States' positions for the Ad Hoc European Committee for the World Anti-Doping Agency (CAHAMA) and World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) meetings in accordance with the Resolution of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the representation of the EU Member States in the Foundation Board of WADA and the coordination of Member States' positions prior to WADA meetings⁵ (or any subsequent document relating thereto) - Best-practice exchange 	Council and its preparatory bodies (supported as necessary by experts) EU coordination and position		Presidencies, Commission
			Resolution reviewing the EU Member States' representation and coordination for	15-16/05/2023	SE Presidency

¹ [Article 165 \(2\) TFEU: 'Union action shall be aimed at \(...\) developing the European dimension in sport, \(...\) by protecting the physical and moral integrity of sportsmen and sportswomen, especially the youngest sportsmen and sportswomen.'](#)

² <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAdditionalInfo/25000/download>

³ OJ C 419, 12.12.2019, p. 1.

⁴ Article 165 (2) TFEU: Union action shall be aimed at (...) developing the European dimension in sport, by promoting fairness and openness in sporting competitions (...).

⁵ OJ C 192, 7.6.2019, p. 1.

		- Knowledge-building	WADA Conference on Anti-Doping	7-8/11/2022, Prague	CZ Presidency
Sport and Education	- Sport as a framework for personal, social and learning skills and promoting tolerance, solidarity, inclusiveness as well as other sport values and EU values ⁶ - Skills and qualifications in sport: athletes and staff, particularly coaches	- Awareness raising - Best-practice exchange - Knowledge-building - Follow-up to the Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on promoting the common values of the EU through sport ⁷	Group of interested Member States (Peer-learning activity)	12-13/05/2022, Berlin	DE
			Conference on the place and impact of sport in Children's life: "Conference on Sports and Sustainable Development Goals in childhood: societal issues regarding appropriate physical activities"	7-8/02/2022, Paris	FR Presidency
			DGs Meeting (with special focus on professional athletes and sport movements as role models)	21/09/2022, Prague	CZ Presidency
			Conference <i>Not delivered but taken up in the context of the Education Summit</i>	30/11/2023, Brussels	Commission
	Athlete's dual careers	- Awareness raising - Best-practice exchange	Council and preparatory bodies Policy Debate	30/11/2021, Brussels	SI Presidency

⁶ Article 165 (1) TFEU: 'The Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account (...) its social and educational function.'

⁷ OJ C 196, 8.6.2018, p. 23.

		- Follow-up to the Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on dual careers for athletes ⁸			
Gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing the share of women, especially among coaches and leadership positions in sports organisations and sports clubs - Equal conditions (including payment) of female and male athletes, coaches, officials, staff, etc. - Increasing the media coverage of women's sport competitions, fight against stereotypes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best-practice exchange - Knowledge-building - Follow-up to the Council Conclusions of 21 May 2014 on Gender Equality in Sport⁹ and to the Recommendations of the Expert Group on Good Governance on Gender Equality in sport (2016)¹⁰ 	Conference Gender Equality in Sport	14-15/11/2023, Madrid	ES Presidency/Commission
			Council and preparatory bodies Council Conclusions on women and equality in the field of sport	24/11/2023	ES Presidency
			High Level Group on Gender Equality	01/01/2021-15/03/2022	Commission
Sport Diplomacy	Sport Diplomacy in the context of EU external relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best-practice exchange - Knowledge-building - Follow-up to the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy¹¹ 	Conference Sport Diplomacy in the context of EU external relations	3-4/06/2021, Lisbon	PT Presidency
			Group of interested Member States	23-24/10/2023, Dubrovnik	HR
European Model of	- Impact of closed sport competitions on the	- Knowledge-building	Council and preparatory bodies	30/11/2021	SI Presidency

⁸ OJ C 168, 14.6.2013, p. 10.

⁹ OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 39.

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/sport/library/policy_documents/expert-group-gender-equality_en.pdf

¹¹ OJ C 467, 15.12.2016, p. 12.

Sport	system of organised sport, taking into account the specificity of sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of the factual and legal situation - Awareness raising 	Resolution of the Council on the key features of a European Sport Model		
	- Possible challenges faced by European sport organisations and federations (<i>working title</i>)		Study on the European Sport Model	04/2022	Commission
Athletes' rights	Athletes 'rights and working conditions, in particular those related to the participation in sporting events (inter alia marketing rights, freedom of expression, legal protection, non-discrimination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness raising - Knowledge-building - Analysis of the factual and legal situation 	Study	2023-2024	Commission
Good Governance development and promotion within sport	Identifying governance-related obstacles to tackle within sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best-practice exchange - Benchmarking 	Conference <i>Not (yet) delivered</i>	2022 - 2023	BG SE
Fight against the manipulation of sports competitions	Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions ('Macolin Convention')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examine ways, together with the Commission, to solve the deadlock with regard to the Convention in view of enabling the EU and all its Member States to complete their respective ratification processes and accede to the Convention - Follow-up to Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on combating corruption in sport¹² 	Council and preparatory bodies <i>Not acted upon</i>	2021 - 2022	Presidencies Commission

¹² OJ C 416, 11.12.2019, p. 3 (see paragraph 26).

Priority area: Socio-economic and environmental dimensions of sport

Key topic	Theme	Goal	Working format	(Poss.) Output/target date	Leader(s)
Innovation and digitalisation	Sport innovation in every dimension and on all levels of the sport sector (including the local sports clubs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best-practice exchange - Knowledge-building - Follow-up to the Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on sport as a driver of innovation and economic growth¹³ 	Council and preparatory bodies Council conclusions on sport innovation	18/05/2021	PT Presidency
			Seminar Sport Innovation: Beyond business as usual'	16-17/06/2021, Lisbon	PT Presidency
			Group of interested Member States Collaborate to Innovate: Boosting Innovation in Elite and Grassroots Sports in Europe'	30-31/08/2021, Sofia	BG
			Group of interested Member States (focused in particular on the use of digital tools in coach education ¹⁴	21-22/03/2023, Frankfurt	DE HR
			Seminar European Sport Innovation	19/10/2023, Gent	BE
Green Sport	- Education for	- Best-practice exchange	Expert Group	Expert	Commission

¹³ OJ C 436, 5.12.2014, p. 2

¹⁴ Follow-up to the Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the role of coaches in society (OJ C 423, 9.12.2017, p. 6) and Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on empowering coaches by enhancing opportunities to acquire skills and competences (OJ C 196, 11.6.2020, p. 1).

	sustainable sport - Environmentally friendly sports practice, facilities and events - Evolution of sport and its practice in the light of climate change	- Knowledge building - Awareness raising - Elaboration of a proposal for common framework with shared commitments, taking into account the European climate pact		Group on 'Green Sport' 2021-2023	
			Group of interested Member States 'What are the best practices in the EU for implementing waste free and carbon-free sport events?' Towards a green and sustainable deal for sport	3-4/03/2022, Strasbourg	FR Presidency
			Group of interested Member States <i>Not (yet) delivered</i>		NL
			Council and preparatory bodies Council Resolution on sport and physical activity, a promising lever to transform behaviour for sustainable development	04/04/2022	FR Presidency
Sport facilities	Sustainable planning, construction and maintenance	- Best-practice exchange - Knowledge building - Awareness raising	Group of interested Member States (Peer-Learning-Activity) 'Sports Facilities: sustainable planning, construction and maintenance'	16-17/09/2021, Munich	DE
			Conference	22/09/2022,	CZ Presidency

			'Sustainable and accessible sport infrastructure'	Prague	
			Council and preparatory bodies Council conclusions on sustainable and accessible sport infrastructure	29/11/2022	CZ Presidency
Major sporting events	- Future of Europe as hosting place for Major sporting events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best practice exchange - Follow-up to Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on enhancing integrity, transparency and good governance in major sport events¹⁵ and to Recommendations of the Expert Group on the Economic Dimension of Sport on major sport events, in particular on legacy aspects with a focus on social, economic and environmental sustainability (2016)¹⁶ - Follow-up to the declaration signed during the informal ministerial meeting on 31 May 2018 in Paris¹⁷ 	Group of interested Member States or Conference Value of major sport events	17-18/01/2023 Co-organised with the NL	FI+NL
	- Co-hosting of Major sporting events by several countries			2024	ES
	- Sustainable planning and realisation				
	- Positive legacies for host cities or regions (including youth engagement)				
	EU sport perspective on the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games		DGs Meeting	15-16/06/2022, Paris	FR Presidency
Investments in sport and physical activity	- Contribution of sport to regional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of the situation - Best-practice exchange - Knowledge-building 	Group of interested Member States <i>Not (yet) delivered</i>	2021	IT
	- Possibilities for the use of EU funding		Cluster Meeting <i>Not delivered but</i>	30/05/2023	Commission

¹⁵ OJ C 212, 14.6.2016, p. 14.

¹⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAdditionalInfo/23271/download>

¹⁷ https://www.sports.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/declarationjop2024_europe_en.pdf

	programmes (Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), React-EU, the Structural Funds and other EU funding programs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow-up to the Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the economic dimension of sport and its socioeconomic benefits¹⁸ - Follow-up to the Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery of the sport sector¹⁹ 	taken up in the context of the <i>SHARE Initiative and the Sport and Innovation Summit</i>		
Strengthening the recovery and the crisis resilience of the sport sector during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium and long-term impact of the pandemic on professional, high-performance and grassroots sports - Possible need for structural modifications in the sport system - Role of public authorities - Funding opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of situation - Best-practice exchange - Strategy development - Follow-up to the Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery of the sport sector 	Conference <i>Not (yet) delivered</i>	2021	ES
			Expert Group	Expert Group on "Strengthening the recovery and the crisis resilience of the sport sector during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic" 2021 - 2023	Commission

¹⁸ OJ C 449, 13.12.2018, p. 1.

¹⁹ OJ C 214 I, 29.6.2020, p. 1.

Priority area: Promotion of participation in sport and health-enhancing physical activity

Key topic	Theme	Goal	Working format	(Poss.) Output/target date	Leader(s)
<i>Creation of adequate opportunities for sport and physical activity for all generations</i>	Strategic development of sport and physical activity at local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best-practice exchange - Knowledge-building - Follow-up to the Council conclusions on the promotion of motor skills, physical and sport activities for children (2015)²⁰ 	Group of interested Member States	23-24/11/2022, Cologne	DE
	Developing the place and impact of sport in Children's life		Conference Done (see under 'Sport and Education')	07-08/02/2022, Paris	FR Presidency
			Council and preparatory bodies Council Conclusions on sport and physical activity, a promising lever to transform behaviour for sustainable development	04/04/2022	FR Presidency
<i>Promoting Physical Activity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring of lifelong physical activity - Cross-sectoral cooperation with relevant institutions (inter alia with schools) - Role of the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness raising - Knowledge building - Best-practice exchange 	Conference Monitoring of lifelong physical activity'	24/09/2021, Bled	SI Presidency
			Council and preparatory bodies Council conclusions on lifelong physical activity	30/11/2021	SI Presidency

²⁰ OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 48.

Annex II – Report on the Implementation of the Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors²¹.

Context

The Council Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors, adopted in November 2013, encourages the Member States to develop national strategies and action plans to promote physical activity involving all relevant sectors, including but not limited to sport and health. It also encourages them to cooperate closely with each other and with the Commission by regularly exchanging information and best practices. Finally, the Recommendation calls for cooperation between the Commission and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to collect relevant data, country-specific overviews and analysis.

The monitoring of progress is based on a framework of 23 indicators. This work is carried out by WHO, a network of National health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) focal points appointed by Member States and the Commission. The project was intended to run from mid-2019 to mid-2022, but its planning was affected by the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project results were eventually delivered in the first semester of 2023.

HEPA network

The cooperation with the WHO, in particular its Regional Office for Europe, has proven its continued relevance and mutual benefit. It successfully contributed to monitoring and surveillance of HEPA in the Member States through the network of national HEPA focal points.

The network of national focal points has grown into a reliable and useful network. Since 2019, the functioning of the network has been further fine-tuned, including to strengthen its cross-sector cooperation at national level. All relevant stakeholders were engaged, thoroughly collecting and exchanging policy-relevant information on HEPA within all Member States. Moreover, the work resulted in quality and substantiated reports on the European situation and allowed to keep the WHO European Health Information Gateway database updated.

Since 2019, the network of national HEPA focal points held eight meetings, which were dedicated to enhancing the capabilities of the focal points to ensure a sustainable system of data collection. In addition, the focal points examined and discussed innovative physical activity developments and good practices.

WHO organised further occasions for the focal points to engage in international, regional, and inter-country collaboration. Focal points could participate in HEPA Europe conferences, which is a WHO-led forum for the advancement of health-enhancing physical activity research, policy and practice for better health and well-being. Meetings were held with other networks such as with the WHO's high level group for nutrition and physical activity. Dedicated workshops were carried out to discuss how to strengthen collaboration and multisectoral initiatives to strengthen HEPA promotion.

WHO provided support for individual countries to develop evidence-based physical activity guidelines, recommendations, and roadmaps for physical activity policies in different sectors.

²¹ OJ C 354, 4.12.2013, p. 1

Data collection

The WHO enhanced the monitoring of physical activity among Member States and developed novel tools for physical activity promotion. The data collated since 2015 of the EU HEPA indicators by Member States through the national HEPA focal points is now available in the WHO European Health Information Gateway database²². This database provides data on surveillance and monitoring physical activity indicators at the country and regional level with an interactive visualisation mechanism.

A key output of the project are the 2021 physical activity factsheets for the EU and its 27 Member States²³. Building on lessons from the past, with an improved survey to Member States, a third round of data was collated on prevalence of physical activity and policy actions to promote HEPA among various sectors in 2021. It included questions on trends, progress, and changes since 2015 across the EU and all 27 EU Member States.

In support of HEPA policies and actions, the report ‘Step up! Tackling the burden of insufficient physical activity in Europe’²⁴ calculated the socio-economic benefits of physical activity. This report shows that increasing physical activity levels would have considerable and positive effects on population health and the economy: Investing in physical activity policies improves individual well-being and population health, while also returning EUR 1.7 in economic benefits for every EUR 1 invested. In Europe, it would increase the life expectancy of people who are insufficiently active by 7.5 months, preventing more than 10 000 premature deaths per year, and saving Member States a total of EUR 8 billion per year.

WHO has disseminated several other reports, including on technical tools to enhance physical activity practices in the workplace focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and support materials for sport clubs to promote health-enhancing physical activities. It has also worked on audit tools for health promotion in sports clubs.

As regards the comparison of prevalence of physical activity across Member States, the existence of sometimes contradictory data from different survey instruments remains an issue to be addressed. The availability of reliable data is essential to drive policy making. In this light, the Commission produced relevant data on sport and physical activity, through a new Eurobarometer survey²⁵.

Also, the Commission invested in improving the methodology of relevant statistics. Further to the mapping of available sport statistics and data in the EU²⁶, it is conducting a study launched in 2022 to support to the development of harmonised sport statistics in the EU, including statistics and data on health-enhancing physical activity. The study aims to enhance the evidence-base and creation of comparative data for better EU-level policy making on sport and physical activity.

²² <https://gateway.euro.who.int/en/datasets/hepa>

²³ [Physical Activity Fact Sheets 2021 published | Sport \(europa.eu\)](#)

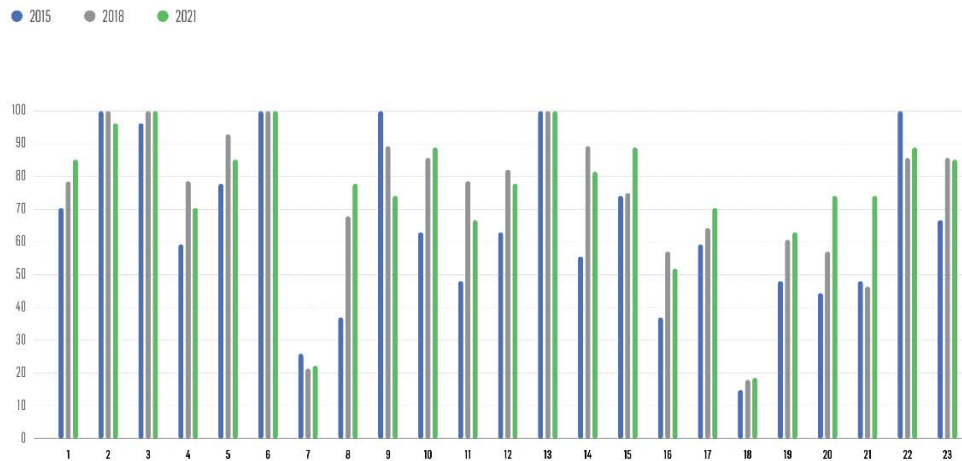
²⁴ <https://doi.org/10.1787/500a9601-en>

²⁵ <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2668>

²⁶ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/25c4dfc8-19bf-11ec-b4fe-01aa75ed71a1>

Results

The results of the 2021 round of data collection on HEPA indicators showed overall stabilisation of implementation, the average proportions of the 23 indicators attained by Member States evolved from 64.7% in 2015 to 74.5% in 2018 and again 75.7% in 2021. Thereby, one has to bear in mind the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that prevented or temporarily halted sport and physical activities.



Data source: 2015, 2018 and 2021 Physical Activity Factsheets for the European Union Member States in the WHO European Region.

Besides important increases in several indicators, such as indicators 15 (HEPA in the training of physical education teachers), 20 (schemes to promote physical activity at the workplace) and 21 (schemes for community interventions to promote physical activity in older adults), several others decreased while others showed no progress as the achieved rates were already maximal in 2018. Most national physical activity policies or action plans were multi-sectoral, with good coverage of the sectors recognised as important for HEPA promotion.

Positive developments notably include indicators on: national recommendations for physical activity (23 countries), the use of physical activity surveillance systems (26 countries), having at least one national sports-for-all policy or action plan for promoting HEPA (all countries), dedicated funding for HEPA promotion (23), the use of national coordination mechanisms (19), actions addressing specific target groups (20), a specific framework to ensure access to recreational sports or exercise facilities for socially disadvantaged groups (21), having national guidance or a programme to promote counselling on physical activity or exercise prescription by health professionals (18), physical education classes held in schools (all), promote active travel to work (17), promote physical activity at the workplace (20), and campaign for physical activity education and public awareness (23).

Two indicators stand out for their low rates of accomplishment – indicator 7 (sports clubs for health programme) and indicator 18 (European guidelines for improving infrastructure for leisure-time physical activity). Only six countries reported having used the guidelines for sports club for health programmes developed by HEPA Europe and the Association for International Sport for All. Another nine countries reported having used similar national guidance or programmes designed to encourage sports clubs to promote health-related sport activities and/or health promotion. Only five countries reported that they applied the 2011

European guidelines for improving infrastructure for leisure-time physical activity in the local arena (IMPALA)²⁷ systematically.

In the context of an open, online survey in summer 2023 on the content and relevance of the Recommendation, most respondents considered it still relevant, or partially relevant. According to an additional survey among the national HEPA focal points, most focal points consider that the Recommendation focuses on the right goals and priorities and consider the structure and working methods as appropriate. There is also agreement that the work produces relevant outputs and data. Indicator 4 (coordination mechanism on HEPA promotion), indicator 10 (monitoring and surveillance of physical activity) and indicator 1 (recommendations on physical activity) were perceived as the most deserving indicators to be considered with priority. Example suggestions included to evaluate indicators from the point of view of data availability, to improve the monitoring mechanism in some Member States and to increase the exchange of good practices for developing and implementing HEPA policies in Member States.

Way forward

Since implementation of the Recommendation began, overall progress can be seen on HEPA promotion and monitoring in the Member States, but continued support will be needed to close the remaining gaps. These include indicators 7 and 18, which show more structural weaknesses. More importantly, despite the very good progress made on the implementation of the Recommendation, data collected on the physical activity of the population suggest that levels remain too low, which calls for more measures to increase physical activity in general.

The Commission will thus continue to cooperate with the WHO to support the Member States on health-enhancing physical activity with the overall aim of contributing to the achievement of the WHO global target of 15% reduction of physical inactivity levels in the Member States by 2030.

²⁷ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349694555_European_Guidelines_on_Improving_Infrastructures_for_Leisure-Time_Physical_Activity_in_the_Local_Arena_towards_social_equity_Intersectoral_collaboration_and_participation?tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7InBhZ2UiOiJwdWJsaWNhdGlvbiIsInByZXZpb3VzUGFnZSI6bnVsbH19