

The Lithuanian Presidency presents its priorities in the area of sport

On 1 July, Lithuania assumed the Presidency of the Council of the EU, following the 6-month Irish mandate. This is the first time that the Baltic country, which entered the EU 9 years ago, takes on this task. The Presidency of Lithuania will last until December 31.

During the first days of the Presidency, Lithuanian Ministers in charge of the different policy areas visited the relevant committees of the European Parliament to present their priorities for the next 6 months and hold an exchange of views with MEPs.

Dailis Alfonsas Barakauskas, the Lithuanian Minister for Interior, who is also in charge of sport and leisure policy, met with the Culture Committee of the European Parliament to discuss the **Lithuanian priorities in the area of sport**. After thanking the Committee members for their constructive work during the negotiations for the Erasmus for All programme, Mr. Barakauskas stressed that the Presidency will work in collaboration with Ireland (outgoing Presidency) and Greece (upcoming Presidency).

One of the first priorities will be the **Recommendation of the Council on health promotion through physical activity (HEPA)**. In that regard, the Minister announced that it is planned that this document would reach the Sports Working Group of the Council of in September.

The Presidency will seek that this document would be adopted at the end of November during the Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council.



The second document which the Presidency will seek to adopt is the **conclusions of the Council on the contribution of sport to the economic stability and growth**, and socially inclusive communities during high levels of youth unemployment.

*Minister Barakauskas,
Lithuanian Minister in charge of
sport and leisure policy*

The Presidency also plans to hold political discussions in the Council on good governance, which would prove beneficial to enhancing the managerial abilities of federations, as well as ethics in sport. Anti-doping issues will also be on the agenda of the Lithuanians.



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d'Arlon 25

1050 Brussels +32 2234 6113
info@eusportsplatform.eu
www.eusportsplatform.eu

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EUSP membership meeting - 19 June

On June 19, the EU Sports Platform held its second membership meeting for 2013.

The Chairman, Mr. John Bruton, welcomed representatives of sport and of the European Parliament, the Commission and the Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU to the meeting.

The first topic on the agenda was **state aid in sport**, a issues of great relevance to most sports and something that has been on the radar of the European Commission in the past months. **Wouter Pieké**, Head of the State Aid Unit of DG Competition in the European Commission, gave an overview of the EU rules with regard to the granting of aid to sports infrastructure, but also to individual sports, either through special tax measures or through support to clubs with financial difficulties.

Mr. Pieké highlighted that there is some uncertainty in the world of sport when it comes to permitted (or not) state aid, but more decisions of the European Commission, as well as legal decisions, should provide more guidance. Mr. Pieké also referred to the letter that the Commission sent last October to all permanent representations of Member States to get an overview of the national schemes of public financing of sport around Europe.



Ivo Belet, Belgian member of the European Parliament and one of the most involved politicians in the area of sport, gave some background from the Parliament's side on this issue and stressed the importance of better re-distribution of media revenues to sport.

Ken Daly, Partner at Sidley Austin LLP, presented a short analysis of the main sources of income for sport and gave an outline of the recent football-related cases in the area of state aid.

Participants at the meeting heard also from **Anne-Marie Smith and Shane Ryan** about the achievements of the Irish Presidency in the area of sport.

The meeting was concluded with a presentation by **Michal Rynkowski**, Programme Officer at the Sport Unit of DG Education and Culture on the latest preparatory actions in the field of sport.

The next meeting will take place on **November 5**.

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info@eusportsplatform.eu
www.eusportsplatform.eu

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Council of the EU adopts revised state aid rules on block exemptions and procedures



The EU's Council of Ministers has formally adopted two European Commission proposals for revised regulations on **state aid exemptions** (Enabling Regulation) and procedures (Procedural Regulation). The new rules will contribute to the Commission's State Aid initiative.



Of specific interest to sports organisations is the Enabling Regulation, which introduces **new categories of aid that the Commission may decide to exempt from the obligation of prior notification** ("block exemptions"). This includes **aid for sport**, amongst other sectors.

Following the Council's approval, the Commission launched a **public consultation on these additional categories for a revised draft General Block Exemption Regulation on state aid measures**.

The consultation will run until **September 10** and you can find the relevant document here (*please note specifically Recital 8 and Article 7*): http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consultations/2013_second_gber/draft_regulation_en.pdf

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EU publishes its contribution to the revision of the WADA Code and International Standards

The Council of the European Union has published a draft of the EU's contribution to the revision of the World Anti-Doping Code and International Standards.

This has been one of the priorities of the Irish Presidency in the area of sport and, at its meeting on July 12, the Council Working Group on sport reached a broad consensus on the text.

The Council of Ministers will now have to approve the text as agreed in one of its following meetings.

You can find the text of the contribution at the following link: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/13/st12/st12159.en13.pdf>



Council expert group on good governance – Meeting of July 17-18

The Council Expert Group on Good Governance met on July 17-18 to discuss the **draft text of the Principles of Good Governance in Sport**.

The Group heard the presentations of four representatives of the eight projects that were funded under the preparatory actions on good governance of 2011. Participants also discussed the draft principles that have been prepared by the drafts team.

There was an **overall agreement** on the main points of the draft principles. However, several participants (including FIFPRO and Transparency International) expressed their concerns regarding the **economic activities of big sport associations**, which should be tackled as any other business activity. This proposition was not welcomed by other participants, e.g. the representative from Poland and EPFL, who argued that business standards should not be included in the principles, as the text should apply more to the **specific nature of sports**.

The EU Sports Platform is participating as an observer at the meetings of the Expert Group. For any specific questions you might have, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@eusportsplatform.eu.

CoR report on Disability, Sport and Leisure – Rapporteur holds public consultation

The Committee of the Regions (CoR), which is the EU's assembly of local and regional, is drafting an own-initiative report on "Disability, Sport and Leisure".

This report comes as a follow-up to the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which was adopted back in 2010 and provides that the European Commission should engage to "improve the accessibility of sports, leisure, cultural and recreational organisations, activities, events, venues, goods and services [...]" for people with disabilities and to "promote participation in sports events and the organisation of disability-specific ones".

People with disabilities must be able to participate and therefore deserve special attention. But precise definitions and clarity on measures and objectives are still lacking. The terms "adaptive sport" and "sport for people with disabilities" need to be clarified.

In preparing the draft report, Mr Jacques Blanc (from France), who is the rapporteur, **will hold a public consultation on July 25** to meet with representatives of local and regional associations and other stakeholders for a consultation and an exchange of views on the relevant topic of this opinion.

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Council of Europe convention on match-fixing

In June, the Council of the European Union issued a decision authorising the European Commission to participate, on behalf of the EU, in the **negotiations for an international Convention of the Council of Europe to combat the manipulation of sports results** (with the exception of matters related to cooperation in criminal matters and police cooperation).

This was the first time that the Commission would participate as EU negotiator in the meeting of the Drafting Group, which took place in Strasbourg on 13-15 June.

The Commission, and in particular the Sport Unit, will play a central role in the negotiation of this Convention that will be open to non-European countries and will cover issues including the promotion of integrity in sport, data protection and internal market freedoms in the field of match-fixing and sports betting.

An additional decision authorising the Commission to participate, on behalf of the EU, in the negotiations for this convention on **matters related to police cooperation and criminal matters** is currently under consideration in the Council.

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European Commission and IOC pledge to continue dialogue

On June 10, European Commissioner for sport Androulla Vassiliou and Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) met as part of the Commission's "structured dialogue" with the sport movement. The IOC President was accompanied by Claudia Bokel, Chair of the IOC Athletes' Commission, and Patrick Hickey, President of the European Olympic Committees (EOC).

The Commissioner and the IOC President discussed the implementation of the current EU Work Plan for Sport (2011-2014) and the priorities of the future Work Plan, as well as the Erasmus for All proposed programme of the Commission.

Other topics discussed at the meeting included athletes' representation and participation in the EU structured dialogue on sport. The EU's funding of the European Youth Olympic Festivals, the fight against doping and match fixing, as well as 'dual careers' which aim to encourage athletes to continue their education alongside their sporting careers, were also on the agenda.

The Commissioner also informed the President about a proposal for a Council Recommendation on health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA), due to be unveiled later this year, and invited the IOC to the EU Conference on Gender Equality and Sport, which will take place in Vilnius on 3-4 December.



Dates for the Diary



September 30th EU Sport Forum, Vilnius



October 1st Informal meeting of Sports Ministers,
Vilnius



October 28th-31st Play the Game Conference, Denmark



November 26th EYCS Council

December 2nd-3rd Meeting of Director-Generals, Kaunas

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News in brief

“Erasmus for all” is now “Erasmus +”

European Parliament has reached an agreement with the Council of the EU with regard to the content of the Erasmus for all programme. Parties have also decided to rename the programme to “Erasmus +”. After the conclusion of the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework, Parliament and Council will be able to formally approve the agreement.

CJEU rules on television broadcasts of the World Cup and the EURO

On July 18, the Court of Justice of the European Union gave its judgment on the joint cases UEFA v Commission / FIFA v Commission. The Court dismissed the appeal of FIFA and UEFA, stating that Member States (in this specific case Belgium and the UK) can keep major sports events like soccer's World Cup on free TV.

Online gambling regulators meet in Lisbon

On July 4-5, regulators from Germany, the UK, Spain, France, Italy and Portugal met in Lisbon to exchange market data, information on their internal regulations and sports ethics. Discussions focused on the fight against illegal gambling, fraud prevention, protecting gamblers and their assets as well as sharing international liquidities.

Parliamentary questions

Members of the European Parliament have the right to ask Parliamentary Questions to the European Commission on areas relating to European law, including sport. Recent queries have included:

- A possible campaign for the promotion and adoption of the European Charter of Women's Rights in Sports coordinated by the European Commission in cooperation with Member States from Patrizia Toia (Italy);
- The Commission's position is with regard to the recent decision by WADA to raise the threshold of THC for athletes involved in sports competitions as well as the Institution's intentions to revise its guidelines and embark upon the road towards harmonisation of the legal status of cannabis for medicinal use in sports from Oreste Rossi (Italy);
- Whether there is any funding available to carry out the renovation and adjustment work that is needed for the gym managed by the Pesaro-Urbino Provincial Committee of the ASI (Italian Sports Alliance) organisation from Roberta Angelilli (Italy);
- The Commission's view on Israel's suitability to host the 2013 European Under-21 Championships from Patrick Le Hyaric (France);
- The Commission's plans to tackle violence and fascism in sport from Angelika Werthmann (Austria);
- The Commission's plans to support research to increase knowledge of the benefits of sport for the human body from Oreste Rossi (Italy);
- The Commission take of the use of the blood passport to provide evidence of doping from Ivo Belet (Belgium).

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The Last Word: John Bruton Chairman of the EU Sports Platform



The European Parliament is officially in recess since mid-July until August 28, which gives Brussels a little time to rest and prepare for a new season of policy initiatives, legislative proposals, official meetings, conferences and events.



I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the support many of you have given to the EU Sports Platform.

Our last meeting, on 19 June, was one of our most successful to date, with a strong turnout from old and new members and a high level of engagement.

It was great to see such a wide range of sports represented, from cricket to sailing, hockey to korfbal. The EU Sports Platform is continuing to grow and I hope to see more new faces at our next meeting.

At the June meeting, we had the pleasure to welcome again representatives from the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council, and I also very much appreciate the support they give to the EUSP.

Their engagement is vital as we are to properly serve the interests of our members and the wider sports community.

I'd like to thank in particular Annie-Marie Smith and Shane Ryan from the Irish Presidency for all their support and input over the past six months. We've collaborated together on a couple of events, including a seminar on health enhancing physical activity, and I know our members have appreciated the hard work that went in to these.

As you know, the EU Sports Platform is always open to suggestions about issues of interest to you, so please don't hesitate to get in contact if there's something you'd like to see on the agenda.

Our next meeting will take place on November 5th and we will circulate further details of that in September.

Wishing you all a very enjoyable and relaxing summer holiday,

John Bruton

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