EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward

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The Committee on Culture and Education adopted an own-initiative report by Tomasz FRANKOWSKI (EPP, PL) on EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward.

Sport plays a key role in the social, cultural and educational life of European citizens and promotes values such as democracy, respect, solidarity, diversity and equality. It must be inclusive and open to all regardless of age, gender, disability or cultural and socioeconomic background.

Strengthening visibility, cooperation and the mainstreaming of sport in EU policies

Members called on the EU to adopt a more holistic approach to sports policy and step up efforts to mainstream it into other EU policies. With this in mind, they called on the Commission to set up regular high-level structured cooperation with all sports stakeholders and other institutions to deliver more targeted and accountable recommendations for action on the current challenges facing the sport sector. The report suggested adding sport to the title of the portfolio of the responsible Commissioner. It also called for the establishment of an **EU sport coordinator** who would be the Commission's contact on the issue and a visible reference point. The increased involvement of Parliament is called for in order to provide a framework for regular political debate and action on sport, and on parliamentary scrutiny and monitoring with regard to the implementation of the strategic goals.

Enhancing the principles of a European sports model

Members called for a European sports model that recognises the need for a strong commitment to integrating the principles of solidarity, sustainability, inclusiveness for all, open competition, sporting merit and fairness, and accordingly strongly opposes breakaway competitions that undermine these standards and endanger the stability of the overall sports ecosystem.

Recognising the role of federations in governing their sport, the report highlighted the need for more targeted and increased solidarity and more financial redistribution, as well as exchanges in skills and know-how, especially between professional and grassroots sport. Sports federations to implement a solidarity mechanism based on a fair and binding distribution method that ensures the adequate funding of amateur and grassroots sport.

Members stated that the German club ownership model based on the 50+1 rule (whereby private investors are only allowed to own up to 49% of the shares) has served German football well and should be considered as a possible example of best practice as other countries seek to enhance their own models.

Ensuring safe, inclusive and equal sport

The Commission and the Member States are called on to involve all relevant stakeholders in ensuring that sports policy and legislation support **gender equality**, with particular attention to tackling all forms of violence and harassment, gender stereotypes, low visibility and media coverage, and disparities in wages, premium pay and awards. Members expressed support for the social inclusion of persons with fewer opportunities, refugees, ethnic minorities and the LGBTQI+ community in sport. Funding should be

increased for people with **disabilities** and children should be safeguarded from abuse. Member States are urged to increase the amount of physical education, including daily physical activities, active breaks and extracurricular physical activities in schools.

Helping sport to ensure a successful recovery

Members insisted on the need for support and dedicated funding mechanisms to get the sport sector and all sports back on track in the wake of COVID-19, including through national support funds, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and EU structural funds. The EU institutions are urged to considerably increase the budget dedicated to grassroots sport under the Erasmus+ programme in the next financial programming period.

Supporting the transition to a sustainable and innovative future

The report underlined that in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, new ways of organising sporting events should be envisaged using the **digital technologies** available. Members called on the Commission to effectively tackle the growing problem of illegal streaming of live sport events without delay.