

Brussels, 26 November 2024
(OR. en)

16149/24

SPORT 83
SUSTDEV 128
ENV 1149
SOC 870

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

Subject: Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on fostering the lasting legacy of major sporting events

Delegations will find attached the abovementioned conclusions approved by the Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) at its meeting on 25-26 November 2024.

Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on fostering the lasting legacy of major sporting events

INTRODUCTION

The organisation of major sporting events can contribute to the development of hosting countries, regions and cities, which, however, may also require significant investment. To make maximum use of such investment and serve the public interest, it is essential to strive for a lasting tangible and intangible sporting, infrastructural, environmental, economic and social legacy of major sporting events that is a prerequisite for their acceptance and recognition by the wider public and for their success.

THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,

RECALLING:

1. Article 6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which refers to sport as an area where action at EU level should support, coordinate and supplement the actions of Member States and Article 165 TFEU, according to which ‘the Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of the specific nature of sport’.
2. The European Union Work Plan for Sport 2024-2027¹ and its priority areas and guiding objectives, and in particular the key topic ‘Major sporting events’.

¹ Resolution 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), OJ C, C/2024/3527, 3.6.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/3527/oj>.

3. The resolution of the Council on the key features of a European Sport Model² which recognises that, among others, the key features for most of the values-based organised sport in Europe represent an organisation of sport in an autonomous, democratic and territorial basis with a pyramidal structure, encompassing all levels of sport from grassroots to professional sport, comprising both club and national team competitions and including mechanisms to ensure financial solidarity, fairness and openness in competitions, such as the principle of promotion and relegation.
4. The political background to this issue as set out in the Annex II to the Annex.

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT:

5. Major sporting events can be a catalyst for change in society, with regards to sustainability, integrity, inclusivity, accessibility³ and a healthy lifestyle⁴ and can contribute to the competitiveness and visibility of the hosting cities, regions and countries.⁵

² Resolution 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, OJ C 501, 13.12.2021, pp. 1–7.

³ European Social Charter for Sport Events (2023), available in digital format on the website of the European Association of Sport Employers (EASE): <https://www.easesport.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/european-social-charter-for-sport-events.pdf>

⁴ An evidence-based assessment of the impact of the Olympic Games on population levels of physical activity, Adrian Bauman, Masamitsu Kamada, Rodrigo Reis, et al., The Lancet, Volume 398(10298), (July-August 2021).

⁵ A lasting legacy: How major sporting events can drive positive change for host communities and economies; Deloitte (2010), p. 8.

6. A major sporting event has the potential to create a lasting legacy and can contribute to the global and public reputation of the host city, region, country and the European Union as a whole, contribute to gender equality, boost community, national and European pride and cohesion, as well as the economic, social, touristic and cultural development of the host city, region or country.⁶
7. There can be a wide variety of tangible and intangible legacies of major sporting events:
 - a) As part of the sporting legacy, major sporting events are often accompanied by the development of sports infrastructure. They also provide an opportunity for increased awareness of physical activity⁷; they can be an impetus for increased support and sponsorship in the realm of sport and for new initiatives to extend sports offerings for the general public, including sports development programmes for clubs, schools and higher education institutions, workplaces, as well as for an increase in sports participation among the population of all ages, including those with a sedentary lifestyle.
 - b) The broader infrastructural legacy may include the upgrading, modernisation and renovation of networks, ranging from public transportation to telecommunications, access routes as well as basic services, such as water, electricity and waste treatment. The potential modernisation or extension of transport, residential, event and leisure infrastructure, also in terms of accessibility for persons with a disability, may improve the quality of life and attractiveness of the host city, region and country. It is important that such infrastructure improvements are made in a sustainable way and that they meet the needs of the local community, also after the major sporting event.

⁶ Happiness, pride and elite sporting success: What population segments gain most from national athletic achievements? *Sport Management Review* Volume 16, Issue 2, May 2013, pp. 226-235.

⁷ *Building Social Legacies: Through Mega, Major and Signature Sport Events* (September 2019) ISBN: 978-1-9992609-0-3, p. 16.

- c) As part of the economic legacy, hosting major sporting events can help to boost the economy, may contribute to an increase in international and domestic tourism⁸, it can boost innovation, employment and create new business opportunities throughout the host city, region and country.
- d) The environmental legacy includes a focus on the reduction of the carbon footprint, the integration of greening principles (such as low-carbon energies, circular economy, waste-management strategy), and climate-responsiveness. Major sporting events can showcase good practices in sustainability and environmental consciousness for all stakeholders involved, and contribute to the EU's overall objectives regarding climate, biodiversity and resource efficiency.
- e) As part of the social legacy, major sporting events can contribute to an enhanced awareness of a healthy lifestyle and to the improvement of the lives of individuals, which encompasses, inter alia, the following:
 - i) They have the potential to provide an impetus for specific programmes that contribute to social inclusion, for example through developments in rural, remote, peripheral, less developed areas and outermost regions.
 - ii) Promotion and support for participation in sports could be increased for all citizens, of all age groups, in particular for children at school, and persons and groups from a disadvantaged background.

⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2017), Major events as catalysts for tourism, OECD Tourism Papers, OECD Publishing, Paris.

- iii) Major sporting events, such as the Paralympic Games, can help to improve access to sport and sports facilities for people with disabilities, as well as the public's perception of disability.
 - iv) Major sporting events can contribute to the promotion of cultural programmes and side events and to the enhancement of the sense of pride and identity in and the image of the host city, region or country and the European Union as a whole.
 - v) Hosting a major sporting event provides an opportunity for individual and community development through volunteer work. Community development may be a formal objective of a host committee in terms of leaving a legacy of volunteering in a community.
8. Major sporting events can pose challenges that need to be overcome or minimised as well, such as: the budgetary burdens of maintaining oversized and potentially unused infrastructure after the event, a negative impact on the environment (e.g. due to greenhouse gas emissions, unsustainable facilities, the destruction of natural areas, biodiversity loss, increased waste and noise) and possible gentrification of the hosting areas.
9. If those challenges are not properly addressed, together with the lack of lasting legacy, there is a risk of decreasing level of support from European citizens for hosting major sporting events⁹ and thus the decreasing share of such events held in the EU Member States, which in turn would increase the risk that such events, instead of being awarded to democratic states respecting human rights, could contribute to other states' sportswashing practices.

⁹ Paragraph 12 of the 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 events, OJ C 212, 14.6.2016, pp. 14–17.

10. In order to minimise negative impacts and achieve a lasting legacy, a long-term planning perspective is needed. This requires strong leadership and sustained commitment from the organising committee, sports organisations and public authorities of the host city, region or country, during the whole life cycle of a major sporting event.
11. Organising a major sporting event that leaves a lasting legacy requires the support of and cooperation with various sectors (e.g. sport, economy, tourism, public transport, safety authorities, culture, media, education, youth, health, and internal and external affairs) and a broad range of stakeholders at the local, regional, national and international level. These include public authorities, businesses, international, national and local sports organisations, NGOs and civil society.¹⁰
12. It is important to actively promote the lasting legacy vision of major sporting events to the public, especially local communities and other key stakeholders, and to involve them as from the preparatory phase.
13. The security of major sporting events should be guaranteed with an adequate provision of material and human resources to strive for the safety and peaceful coexistence of all, e.g. athletes, spectators, as well as residents, and the peaceful enjoyment of the event.

¹⁰ A lasting legacy: How major sporting events can drive positive change for host communities and economies; Deloitte (2010), p. 10.

14. Although there are surveys and studies available on various aspects of the legacy of major sporting events, systematic and scientific monitoring could be improved to support evidence-based policies regarding the lasting legacy of major sporting events.
15. The option of co-hosting across multiple cities, regions and countries could make the hosting of major sporting events more attractive and feasible also for smaller countries, while reducing the associated burden and taking into account the additional carbon footprint that transportation may create. This may also contribute to the European dimension in sport and the promotion of European Union values.
16. Hosting and organising smaller sporting events can also provide for building a lasting legacy in order to promote a healthy and active lifestyle, volunteering and access to sport, in particular for young people and those from a disadvantaged background.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES TO:

17. Promote a strategic approach, taking into account the sporting, broader infrastructural, environmental, economic and social legacies from the initial phase of the planning process through the bidding procedure as well as the preparations for and during the hosting of major sporting events.
18. Consider, where relevant, conditioning the state funding of the hosting of major sporting events on focusing on the lasting legacy and sustainability aspects during the whole life-cycle of the event, taking into account good governance principles.

19. Promote, from the very beginning, close cooperation between the organiser or organising committee and the public authorities of the host city, region or country, and the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders - such as sports organisations, the media sector, companies, local communities, volunteers and the wider public - to ensure a lasting legacy of major sporting events.
20. Promote the organisation of major sporting events in a sustainable, circular and climate-neutral manner and utilising those events as pilots for sustainable innovations in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and various organisations specialised in sustainability, as well as through partnerships with universities and research centres.
21. Strive, in close cooperation with the sports movement, to ensure that the largest possible number of people benefit from major sporting events and their legacies, using the events to build a community, promote social inclusion and gender equality, and foster mutual respect and tolerance.
22. To provide, when appropriate, adequate support to sports clubs and municipalities so that they have the necessary resources and infrastructure to welcome and manage the increased interest in sporting activities that may occur after the major sporting event.
23. Promote, in close cooperation with the sports movement, the creation of specific volunteer programmes, attracting volunteers to contribute to major sporting events, and the establishment of standards to value their work during and after the event, as well as mechanisms to recognise the skills acquired by volunteers during the major sporting events, and networks to mobilise them for future activities in the sports sector.

24. Use the impetus of major sporting events to promote physical activity, a healthy lifestyle, as well as European and Olympic values in our societies in the long term, with targeted measures, e.g. in education and training institutions, youth associations and sports clubs, workplaces, local and regional communities, with particular attention to people who are underrepresented in sporting activities.
25. Give special attention to social inclusion, inter alia through sustainable infrastructural developments connected to major sporting events in disadvantaged areas.
26. Promote inclusivity and protect human rights during the whole life cycle of major sporting events and ensure non-discriminatory access to sports infrastructure.
27. In cooperation with the stakeholders involved, provide the means to guarantee sports integrity, hospitality as well as the highest necessary safety and security standards to make the events safe, secure and welcoming, inside and outside the premises.
28. Promote cultural, educational and other side events with opportunities for children and for all generations to experience art and culture both before, during and after major sporting events.
29. Promote existing international and European frameworks and standards that contribute to ensuring the positive legacy of major sporting events¹¹.

¹¹ Among others, the recommendations from the Sport's contribution to the European Green Deal - A sport sector playbook (2023), the European Social Charter for Sport Events (2023), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Sports for Climate Action Framework , the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011), the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct (2023) , as well as the ISO 20121:2024 standard for event sustainability management systems.

30. Promote the monitoring and collection of information and data, including through dedicated reporting mechanisms, to improve the measuring of the legacy of major sporting events, using, for example, the OECD guidelines¹².
31. Promote the exchange of best practices between cities, regions and countries that have hosted major sporting events.
32. Encourage future organisers of major sporting events, as well as other sectors, to draw inspiration from innovative, sustainable and responsible practices (for example, the Paris 2024 Social Charter or the Human Rights Declaration for UEFA EURO 2024).
33. Promote the hosting of major sporting events by more than one country, so that more countries, including smaller ones, can benefit from the tangible and intangible legacies of major sporting events, while taking into account the economic aspects and avoiding the additional carbon footprint that transportation may create.
34. Encourage, when relevant, cities and regions that hosted major sporting events to complement and foster their legacy by organising, in close cooperation with the sports movement, other sporting events, including smaller ones, to make use of the infrastructure, expertise, momentum and public engagement.

¹² OECD (2023), How to measure the impact of culture, sports and business events: A guide, OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Papers, No. 2023/10, OECD Publishing, Paris.

35. Also strive for a lasting legacy of smaller sporting events in order to, among others, promote a healthy and active lifestyle, volunteering and access to sport and sports facilities for all, particularly for young people, underrepresented groups, persons from a disadvantaged background or with disabilities.

INVITE THE COMMISSION TO:

36. Consider and explore relevant policy aspects related to the legacy of major sporting events in preparation of its new long-term strategic document on the future of EU sports policy¹³.
37. Share knowledge and information on relevant initiatives and good practices contributing to the lasting legacy of major sporting events and facilitate the sharing of information and good practices among Member States and the relevant stakeholders.
38. Promote the use of existing international and European frameworks and standards which contribute to ensuring the positive legacy of major sporting events¹⁴.
39. Utilise harmonised sport statistics (SSAs – Sport Satellite Accounts) and similar EU-level data to better measure the sporting, social, economic, touristic, cultural and environmental impact and legacy of major sporting events organised in the EU Member States and foster initiatives aimed at developing and sharing relevant data.

¹³ Paragraph 26 of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2024-2027.

¹⁴ For example, the Sport's contribution to the European Green Deal - A sport sector playbook (2023), the European Social Charter for Sport Events (2023), the UNFCCC Sports for Climate Action Framework, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct, as well as the ISO 20121:2024 standard for event sustainability management systems.

40. Further collaborate with relevant stakeholders to exchange information, maximise opportunities and identify solutions to common challenges as regards the legacy of major sporting events, including through the SHARE 2.0 initiative.
41. Explore ways to encourage, recognise and raise the visibility of outstanding volunteering initiatives in the field of sport in the European Union, which encompass volunteering at major sporting events as well as in grassroots sports.

INVITE THE SPORTS MOVEMENT AND OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND THE AUTONOMY OF SPORT, TO:

42. Commit to upholding the principles of economic, environmental, and social sustainability (in particular regarding infrastructure, mobility and energy), good governance, responsible business conduct, respect for human rights and compliance with recognised international standards¹⁵ when organising major sporting events.
43. In cooperation with EU Member States, encourage the hosting of major sporting events by more than one country, if possible, while taking into account economic aspects and avoiding the additional carbon footprint that transportation may create, since joint multi-country bids could make the hosting of major sporting events more feasible for smaller countries.

¹⁵ E.g. the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct, and ISO 20121:2024.

44. Develop sustainability and legacy strategies¹⁶ and implement transparent selection procedures based on published, easily comprehensible, measurable criteria and include sustainability and legacy aspects in the selection and evaluation criteria, so that as many countries, regions and cities as possible organise sustainable major sporting events with a lasting legacy.
45. Respect fundamental and human rights and, in this regard, take accountable decisions on the hosting of major sporting events both within and outside the European Union.¹⁷
46. Advise, support and implement appropriate monitoring and reporting systems, so that the measures included in the bid or agreed on in the hosting contract to ensure principles of economic, environmental, and social sustainability (in particular regarding infrastructure, mobility and energy), good governance, responsible business conduct, respect for human rights and lasting legacies are in fact carried out.
47. Integrate the promotion of a lasting legacy within the communication campaigns for upcoming and previous events with the involvement of volunteers, hosts and athletes, including para-athletes and sport ambassadors connected with those events.

¹⁶ International Olympic Committee (IOC), Legacy strategic approach: 2021-2024 objectives (2021).

¹⁷ Based on paragraph 48 of the Resolution of the Council on the key features of a European Sport Model, on the letter signed by 22 Member States on 21 November 2013 to Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou and the letter signed by 27 Member States on 27 January 2021 and sent to Commissioner Mariya Gabriel; taking also into consideration the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011).

48. Use the potential of major sporting events to widely promote sport and physical activity among the population, for example by exchange of best practices, by combining major sporting events with smaller sporting events open to non-professional athletes that foster greater involvement in sport, or by promoting the integration of sports facilities and physical activity in urban design as well as in rural areas.
 49. As part of financial solidarity, encourage the use of revenues from the organisation of major sporting events to reach the grassroots level.
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DEFINITIONS for the purpose of these conclusions:

A ‘major sporting event’ means an international event organised in one or several host countries, regions or cities and attended by different national and international delegations with the aim of practising one or more sports. Major sporting events have a high international media profile, welcome several thousands of people including supporters, journalists, technical teams and officials, and are often organised over several consecutive days.¹⁸

‘Lasting legacy’ is understood as the positive long-term tangible and intangible impacts of major sporting events, comprising, among others, the sporting, infrastructural, economic, environmental and social outcomes for the host city, region or country.

¹⁸ Based on ‘Recommendations on major sport events, in particular on legacy aspects with a focus on social, economic and environmental sustainability’ adopted by the EU Expert Group on the Economic Dimension of Sport.

Political background

- Council conclusions on the contribution of sport to the EU economy, and in particular to addressing youth unemployment and social inclusion, OJ C 32, 4.2.2014, pp. 2–5.
- 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 events, OJ C 212, 14.6.2016, pp. 14–17.
- Conclusions of the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States on ‘Sport and physical activity, a promising lever to transform behaviour for sustainable development’, OJ C 170, 25.4.2022, pp. 1–6.
- Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Sport Innovation, OJ C 212, 4.6.2021, pp. 2–9.
- Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on combating corruption in sport, OJ C 416, 11.12.2019, pp. 3–8.
- Council Resolution concerning an updated handbook with recommendations for international police cooperation and security management of football matches with an international dimension, in which at least one Member State is involved (‘EU Football Handbook’), doc. 11160/24.

- Council of Europe, Revised European Sports Charter Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)5. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 October 2021 at the 1414th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies, Article 9(1)(d).
 - United Nations Resolution, A/RES/70/1, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015 (§37).
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