
Foreword

In recent times, sport has been too often associated with scandals linked to doping, match fixing, corruption or governance. We must of course face reality and mobilise the appropriate tools in order to fight against the threats sport is facing. However the Commission's most important added value is after all to promote the positive aspects of sport and to make the best use of the benefits it can bring for Europe and its citizens.

Clearly sport can offer numerous opportunities. The impact of sport on people and society in general – from health and well-being, to social inclusion and integration – is greater and more important than ever. The need for an active society, and the role of sport, cannot be underestimated in a world where physical inactivity is such a leading cause of health issues. Sport can here too play an important part of the response to exclusion and radicalisation, and help integrate societies.

The European Commission, as with all public authorities, is continually challenged with the task of being relevant, with seeking ways to find solutions and respond to both these challenges and opportunities. At EU level there have been many significant developments in the last decade, most notably the introduction of sport as a new competence in the Treaty of Lisbon, followed by the inclusion of sport within the Erasmus+ programme from 2014.

Through the latter, we can provide valuable funding to sport, especially at grassroots level where it can make a real difference on the ground. As the first Erasmus+ projects come to the end of their cycle, and the programme ramps up another level, the impact will become increasingly apparent.

From a legal point of view, of course, the Treaty does not allow any legally binding measures, but rather supplementary and supporting competences. Nevertheless, this provides us with an important basis for extensive policy cooperation in sport and gives legitimacy to some EU initiatives.

But the cross-over between legislation and sport can be wide-reaching, as sport reaches out into other areas of EU law, where the economic dimension of sport and the organisation of sport meet with the freedoms of movement of labour, competition law, digital single market, data protection and so on. EU law has also to be seen in the context of 'the

specific nature of sport', the inherent characteristics of sport which set it apart from other economic and social activities.

Legal certainty is important for everyone concerned in the field of sport. A recent study we commissioned on the specificity of sport illustrated this interaction between EU law and sport, updating our 2007 white paper on sport. It is therefore edifying that this book will add further clarity and insight in this area, bringing together the thoughts of leading authorities in a variety of fields, not just legal but business and academia.

EU law will continue to evolve in the field of sport, of course. And while the degree of legal certainty continues to build and expand, the future of sport is unknown. Match-fixing was not on our radar in 2007 when we published the white paper on sport. It is now one of the main challenges facing sport. Who knows what the future will hold? The newly adopted EU work plan for sport lays out some priorities, but we need to be flexible to adapt to changes as they happen, to respond in a timely manner to challenges. The pace of change in sport, as in all aspects of society, will only quicken.

Mr Yves Le Lostecque
Head of the Sport Policy and Programme Unit
Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
Unit C4 – Sport, European Commission
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