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## REPORT

on the role of sport in education  
(2007/2086(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

Rapporteur: Pál Schmitt

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on the role of sport in education (2007/2086(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 149, 150 and 152 of the EC Treaty,
- having regard to the Helsinki Report and to the Nice declaration on the specific characteristics of sport and its social function in Europe,
- having regard to the Commission's White Paper on Sport (COM(2007)0391),
- having regard to the Commission's White Paper on 'A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues' (COM(2007)0279),
- having regard to the Commission's evaluation of the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES 2004) programme (COM(2005)0680),
- having regard to the Council of Europe Recommendation on improving physical education and sport for children and young people in all European countries (Rec(2003)6),
- having regard to the Commission's Green Paper "Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases"(COM(2005)0637),
- having regard to the study published by the European Parliament entitled "Current situation and prospects for physical education in the European Union",
- having regard to its resolution of 13 June 1997 on the role of the European Union in the field of sport<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 March 2007 on the future of professional football in Europe<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 April 2005 on doping in sport<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to Articles I-17 and III-282 of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (Constitutional Treaty),
- having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education and the opinions of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A6-0415/2007),

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 200, 30.6.1997, p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P6\_TA(2007)0100.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 33, 9.2.2006, p.497.

- A. whereas physical education (PE) is the only school subject which seeks to prepare children for a healthy lifestyle and focuses on their overall physical and mental development, as well as imparting important social values such as fairness, self-discipline, solidarity, team spirit, tolerance and fair play,
- B. whereas overweight caused by a sedentary lifestyle and incorrect diet, giving rise in some cases to bad health and psycho-social problems and illnesses which are associated with expensive complications, such as high blood-pressure, diabetes, and cardiac and vascular diseases, is affecting an ever greater proportion of the EU's population, including around a quarter of children,
- C. whereas school PE and sport are among the most important tools of social integration, but whereas for some minority and religious communities, and for children with disabilities, full participation in PE is in many cases not guaranteed and raises numerous problems that are difficult to resolve,
- D. whereas the number of lessons devoted to PE has fallen in the past decade not only in primary but also in secondary schools, and whereas there are extremely wide divergences between the Member States as regards the provision of establishments and equipment,
- E. whereas the Member States' PE teacher training programmes differ widely and there is an increasingly widespread practice whereby PE is taught in school by teachers with inadequate specialist training,
- F. whereas there is no appropriate coordination aimed at reconciling school and out-of-school sporting activities, and at making better use of existing establishments, and whereas the link between them varies from one Member State to another,
- G. whereas parents have a crucial role to play in the network of partnerships in this area, and whereas parental support for children's sporting activities is of vital importance, since they set an example for their children and it is they who enable the children to have access to establishments and programmes,
- H. whereas the legal frameworks governing PE and sport, and those governing EU funding of these activities, are both equally uncertain,
- I. bearing in mind the fact that public health and protection of youth are priorities of the European Union and for this reason special emphasis should be given to combating doping in sport,
- J. bearing in mind that sport is one of the most effective measures for combating smoking, especially among young people,
- 1. Reaffirms the European Union's legitimate interest in sport, in particular its social and cultural aspects, as well as the educational and social values that sport transmits such as self-discipline, challenging personal limitations, solidarity, healthy competition, respect for opponents, social inclusion, opposition to any form of discrimination, team spirit, tolerance, and fair play;

2. Stresses the significance of implementing the Amsterdam and Nice declarations, especially concerning the specific characteristics of sport in Europe and its social function, of which account should be taken when implementing common policies;
3. Stresses that, in our multicultural society, sport can and should be an integral part of formal and informal education and that studies have shown that regular physical activity improves mental and physical wellbeing, while having beneficial effect on learning abilities;
4. Calls on the Member States and the competent authorities to ensure that greater stress is placed on health development in school and preschool teaching programmes by encouraging specific forms of physical activity suitable for the latter age group and raising awareness within clubs and associations in order to ensure, for example, that children can start physical activity at the earliest possible age, for the benefit of their development and health, and hence to guarantee PE status in accordance with the profile of the institution and the corresponding level of study;
5. Points out that sport and physical activity can make an important contribution to combating negative health trends such as a sedentary life-style and obesity; refers to the recent Eurobarometer on Health, Food and Nutrition (November 2006) which addresses the health and physical characteristics of Europeans, their diets and problems relating to obesity and lack of exercise;
6. Urges the Member States to carry out information campaigns on the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle, and engage in regular physical activity and on the health risks linked to an unhealthy diet aimed at children from a very early age and their parents;
7. Welcomes the informal working parties set up by the Commission and the Council in the area of sport, and proposes that these working parties pay more attention to reinforcing the link between health and school PE;
8. Proposes that the work of the group of experts involved in the 'EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health' set up by the Commission be reinforced through the participation of PE educators and sport experts;
9. Calls on the Member States to consider, and where necessary implement, changes in the orientation of PE as a subject, taking account of children's health and social needs and expectations;
10. Calls on the Member States to make PE compulsory in primary and secondary schools, and to accept the principle that the timetable should guarantee at least 3 PE lessons per week, while schools should be encouraged to exceed this prescribed minimum as far as possible;
11. Calls on the Member States and the responsible authorities to promote body awareness and healthy development through a higher degree of integration between sport and academic subjects;

12. Awaits the conclusions of the Commission Working Party on Sport and Health on determining the minimum recommended daily bodily exercise or the promotion of physical activity at school;
13. Welcomes the Commission's White Paper on sport, which represents an important step towards the future development of Community action in the field of sport, and hopes that the issue of school PE will form part of the 'Pierre de Coubertin' Action Plan;
14. Welcomes the abovementioned Commission's White Paper on 'A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues', which identifies prevention, primarily by means of the promotion of exercise and an increase in the numbers of participants in sport, as a priority;
15. Welcomes the achievements of the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES 2004), which stressed the role of sport in education and drew attention to the wide-ranging social role of sport;
16. Stresses that the results of the EYES 2004 must be utilised to the full, capitalising on and further developing good practices through new initiatives receiving public and private funding or being promoted in the spirit of corporate social responsibility;
17. Welcomes the decision of the International Olympic Committee to hold the Youth Olympic Games starting from 2010, an event which will contribute to young people's awareness of the Olympic spirit and the value of sport;
18. Considers that sports education and training, particularly with an emphasis on Olympic ideals, is an effective instrument for social inclusion of disadvantaged groups and multicultural dialogue, and for the promotion of voluntary work, and plays an active part in counteracting discrimination, intolerance, racism, xenophobia and violence;
19. Encourages Member States to modernise and improve their physical education policies - principally to ensure that a balance is struck between physical and intellectual activities in schools - to invest in quality sports facilities and take appropriate measures to make sports premises and sports curricula at schools accessible to all students, with proper regard being paid to the needs of disabled students; suggests that support is forthcoming for a wide range of sporting activities so that every student has a real opportunity to participate in different sports; calls on the Member States to support the requirement to increase the time spent on physical education in schools; to promote the legal recognition of institutions and organisations which contribute to better integration of sports activities in schools and preschools; favours granting incentives to sports clubs having collaboration agreements with schools, educational establishments, youth centres, and other community or voluntary organisations involved in lifelong learning projects;
20. Calls on the Member States to guarantee the conditions for compliance with the prescribed minimum number of PE lessons, bearing in mind that regular exercise contributes significantly to reducing health care expenditure;
21. Invites all Member States to ensure the teaching of PE at all levels, including primary school, by specialised PE instructors;

22. Urges the Member States, in the spirit of the Bologna process, to step up convergence between training programmes for PE teachers at each school level and ensure the continuous professional training of PE educators integrating gender specific aspects, and to devise an independent supervision system in the interest of guaranteeing quality;
23. Urges the Member States, in cooperation with physical education colleges, to provide high-quality, all-round education, equipping athletes with all the necessary skills to enter the employment market or pursue their studies in higher education institutions and beyond;
24. Calls on the Member States and competent authorities to provide physical education teachers with training in the issue of gender by including this aspect in their curriculum; calls for an end to the downgrading of the status of physical education as a subject and of the status of PE teachers; stresses the importance of the possibility of sports coeducation for children at nursery and primary schools as well as the option of having either sports coeducation or single sex classes from secondary level onwards in order to encourage girls to try out sports traditionally practiced by men; stresses the need to explore alternative forms of physical activity, which could be practiced on an optional basis, preferably outside compulsory state education;
25. Considers that the qualifications acquired through sports activity should be recognised under the common reference system embodied in the future European Qualifications Framework; welcomes the Commission proposal to include sport in the field of application of the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training; considers that increased transparency and mutual recognition of licenses and diplomas for the provision of services in the sports sector in the European Union would contribute to the free movement of persons (students, sportsmen and women, workers and employers) as well as to the long-term assimilation of athletes on the employment market, and that it would also contribute to social cohesion in Europe and to achieving the Lisbon Strategy targets, as this is an area with a high potential for job creation;
26. Calls on the Commission to initiate and support multi-disciplinary research in the field of sport and PE, and to disseminate best practice; recommends that it devise basic principles for the pan-European survey on physical education policies and practices which the Council of Europe has defined as a priority;
27. Stresses that the use of performance-enhancing chemical substances is contrary to the values of sport as a social, cultural and educational activity; also calls on the Member States to ensure that PE teachers, both in schools and outside, inform pupils about the physical and psychological dangers inherent in the use of doping substances;
28. Calls on the Member States to carry out a study of quantitative and qualitative participation of girls and boys in sport within and outside schools and to provide the necessary resources to further expand the sports on offer and thereby increase the participation of girls in sports; reiterates the need to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of such public spending by means of gender budgeting and gender impact assessment;
29. Urges the Member States, when developing actions in the field of sport and physical education, to mainstream gender by taking systematic account of the differences between

the conditions, situations and needs of women and men in these policies; calls on Eurostat to further develop indicators and obtain improved quality statistics on male and female participation in sport at all levels;

30. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States, while taking full account of the subsidiarity principle, to draw up appropriate instruments which may promote an increase in investments in young people's sporting activities and equipment;
31. Calls on the Member States and the Council to include a direct and unambiguous reference to the social, cultural and economic value of sport, which will form the basis of the legal framework of future Community action, in the text of the Treaty during the current revision of the latter;
32. Proposes that the EU Public Health Programme pay more attention to raising awareness of the prominent role played by education, PE and sport in the area of public health;
33. Recognises that health reasons are not sufficient to encourage regular sporting activities; urges the Member States, therefore, to improve the promotion of sports linked to leisure and social activities;
34. Calls on the Commission to devise clear guidelines on rules for state support, setting out what type of state support is regarded as acceptable and necessary in the interest of successfully fulfilling the social, cultural, health protection and educational functions of sport, including financial or other support awarded by the state authorities for the creation or modernisation of school sports facilities, and for improving and diversifying existing equipment and facilities, because sports equipment in many schools is inadequate or worn out in all respects;
35. Calls on the Commission to identify areas where EU action can provide added value with regard to action already taken by sports organisations and Member States authorities; considers that the open method of coordination is an appropriate way to achieve better cooperation at European level in the specific area of physical education policy and sport for all;
36. Calls on the Commission to take into account and formulate a policy towards stakeholders, decision makers and citizens, to facilitate consultation with regard to European action on the role of sport in education.
37. Recommends that the EU structural funds be used for the creation and development of school and other sports facilities in disadvantaged areas;
38. Asks that the Commission ensure that legislation applies to the provision of services in the sports sector in the same way as to other activities in the framework of all Community policies;
39. Calls on the Member States to ensure equality of opportunity by taking steps to put an end to any discrimination which might arise on the grounds of gender, religion or ethnic origin, to promote a more cooperative approach based on information, greater understanding, and wider public exposure, encompassing diversity and intermixing



methods, and also to guarantee essential and appropriate physical education for children with disabilities and access to a basic level of PE at least and, where possible to wider opportunities;

40. Since sport represents a means of socialization, communication, social integration and, at the same time, teaches team spirit, fairness and respect for rules, invites all Member States to intensify sports programmes and physical education for young people from rehabilitation centres for minors;
41. Urges the Member States to promote cooperation, and improve the exchange of information and exchanges of best practice examples, between schools and out-of-school sports associations, local authorities, voluntary and civil society organisations which run sporting activities;
42. Urges the Member States to actively support forms of physical activity which can be carried out by families, and to improve the dialogue between parents, PE teachers and out-of-school sports associations;
43. Emphasises the need to make European society more aware of the modern role and educational importance of sport, by encouraging educational and sports organisations to establish and develop close partnerships and joint objectives and promoting solidarity between the professional and amateur sectors, and to sensitise the educational community to the need to address the problems of a sedentary lifestyle by promoting sports at school;
44. Stresses the importance of the educational role and social responsibility of sports associations and clubs, as is acknowledged in the Nice declaration;
45. Recognises the vital social and cultural role that sport clubs and associations are able to play in their local and national communities; considers that schools, training centres, sport clubs and associations should be more involved in various forms of engagement and participation of the local population through a better social dialogue, preferably initiated by local authorities (health, social affairs and education departments); asks for attention to be focused in order to ensure that sport clubs function without fanaticisms in compliance with the sporting and social ideals;
46. Emphasises the role of sport organisations and initiatives such as the Special Olympics, that contribute to the integration of people with disabilities in sport as well as in the society through sport; strongly encourages Member State and EU support to continue and expand the work of those organisations and initiatives;
47. Applauds the work of volunteers in all sporting organisations and recognises that most of these organisations could not exist without volunteers; therefore recommends that 'credits' or some form of commendation for voluntary service be put in place at a European level to recognise and promote this work;
48. Calls on the Commission to draw on the experiences of the "sports-minded schools" programme initiated by the Luxembourg Presidency and to devise, in cooperation with the Member States, a uniform set of criteria for the award of this label, as well as the conditions for a European sports prize to be awarded to acknowledge new initiatives;

49. Calls on the Commission, building on the experiences of EYES 2004, in the framework of the Lifelong Learning, Youth and Europe for Citizens programmes, to devise new initiatives aimed at heightening the profile, and increasing awareness in society, of the role played by sport and PE not only in education and culture point of view but also in terms of social integration and health protection, in particular through the prevention of obesity and stress at school; calls in particular for sports initiatives to be developed as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme;
50. Calls on the Commission to promote the European mobility of PE teachers and trainers, as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme, thereby enabling them to learn about best practices and exchange experience;
51. Calls on the Member States to ensure that sports facilities are designed for easy access by disabled spectators and/or participants;
52. Calls on the Member States to ensure that the diversity of sports offered encourages children to adopt an open-minded attitude to the world and develop values such as self-respect, respect for others, solidarity, self-awareness and tolerance;
53. Recognises that sport plays an important role in lifelong learning, and that students of all ages should be enabled to participate;
54. Calls on the Member States to pay particular attention to situations in which children's talent is exploited with a view to success in sports competitions and stresses that professional sports activities involving children must respect their fundamental rights and best interests;
55. Recognises the importance of the full participation of girls and women in sporting activities at all levels; considers gender equality and non-discrimination to be objectives that form an integral part of sport's educational and social functions; stresses the need to ensure equal access and participation for women and men- and boys and girls at all levels and in all functions and areas of sport, irrespective of their social background, particularly for people with disabilities given that disabled women can face multiple discrimination; furthermore stresses the important role of sport for public health, especially in the fight against obesity that currently affects 21 million children in the EU;
56. Urges the Commission and the Member States to pay particular attention to the physical and mental health of adolescent girls participating in top-level competitions, and to assess with the utmost care the effects certain demands may have on the sexual and reproductive health of adolescent girls and on their physical and mental development, with the aim of preventing any effects that run counter to the important educational role of sport;
57. Urges the Commission to identify best practices in the fight against sexual harassment and abuse in sport; urges the Member States to adopt prevention and elimination measures and develop awareness-raising campaigns on the available legal redress, taking account of the innumerable resolutions on this subject, particularly the Council of Europe resolution of March 2000 on the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse of women, young people and children in sport (Bratislava resolution) and its resolution of 5 June

2003 on women and sport<sup>1</sup>;

58. Calls on the Member States to guarantee equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women in access to training and in pursuing a career in sport;
59. Calls on the Member States and competent authorities to take steps to raise awareness among everyone working in the sports sector (clubs, federations, etc.) of the importance of gender mainstreaming in all their decisions and in all actions launched by them, and of the need to include equality between men and women among their objectives when planning activities;
60. Stresses the importance of physical exercise in curbing obesity and overcoming unhealthy life-style habits, thereby greatly benefiting individual health, expresses concern, however, that longer working hours and present-day conditions of employment in general, are preventing workers from taking regular physical exercise and becoming more involved in sport;
61. Recognises that sport is an employment-creating sector and that other areas, such as education, medicine, the media and the manufacture and marketing of specialised equipment and products, are directly linked to this sector;
62. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the governments and the parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe and the International Olympic Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 68 E, 18.3.2004, p. 605.

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

### *I. GENERAL ASPECTS*

This report intends to mainly deal with school sport and "physical education" (PE). Physical education means a statutory area of the school curriculum, concerned with developing pupils' physical competences and confidence, and their ability to use these to perform in a range of activities. PE is concerned with learning the skills, develop mentally appropriate conditional abilities and understanding required for participation in physical activities, knowledge of one's own body, and its range of and capacity for movement and health-conscious lifelong physical activities.

In contrast, "sport" has a much broader meaning and is a highly diversified social phenomenon, encompassing various forms of physical activity from high-level competition through school, club or community organised programmes to spontaneous and informal physical activity.

School is the ideal setting to promote physical activity and positive attitude towards regular physical activities. Children and adolescents from all social backgrounds are present on a regular basis for at least eleven years of their waking life. School, in general, has also a primary function as a place of learning. Early learning experiences are crucial to continuing involvement in physical activity and a child's experience of curricular and extracurricular opportunities in school is extremely important.

However, at present, it is often said that school is not delivering on its potentials when it comes to promoting physical activity. Hence, the central question is not whether physical education in school is useful or not, the question is: **what conditions are necessary for physical education to have beneficial outcomes?** This is the question this report is dealing with<sup>1</sup>.

### *Health issues*

The rising prevalence of obesity across Europe, particularly among young people, is alarming and is a major public health concern. The number of EU children affected by overweight and obesity is estimated to be rising by more than 400,000 a year, adding to the 14 million-plus of the EU population who are already overweight (including at least 3 million obese children)<sup>2</sup>; across the entire EU27, overweight affects almost 1 in 4 children. Spain, Portugal and Italy report overweight and obesity levels exceeding 30% among children aged 7-11. The rates of the increase in childhood overweight and obesity vary, with England and Poland showing the steepest increases. In overall terms, children are less fit compared to the generation of the 1970s and 1980s. It is not such much a higher calorie intake that causes overweight, but physical inactivity: children do not eat more - they move less.

There is a strong tendency for excess weight to continue to accumulate from childhood through to middle age. It is therefore important to achieve an optimum body weight throughout life. Apart from the human suffering it causes, the economic consequences of the increasing incidence of obesity are considerable. It is estimated that in the EU obesity

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<sup>1</sup>see also: Current situation and prospects for physical education in the European Union, study commissioned by the European Parliament. Author: Ken Hardman, University of Worcester, Brussels 2007.

<sup>2</sup> COM(2005)0637, Green paper "Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases".

accounts for up to 7% of health care costs, and this amount will further increase given the rising obesity trends.

Furthermore a number of 'adult' conditions, such as osteoporosis and coronary heart diseases have their origin in childhood, and could be aided in part by regular physical activity in the early years

There is also fairly consistent evidence that regular activity can have a positive effect upon the psychological well-being of children and young people, in particular with regards to children's self esteem, especially in disadvantaged groups such as those with learning difficulties or low self-esteem.

### ***Social competences, moral education, integration and crime reduction***

Sport with its underlying concepts of 'fairness' and 'freedom' provides a rich context for the advancement of socio-moral development. Sport and physical education can offer an effective context within which personal and social responsibility can be furthered. It has been pointed out that there is a relationship between the participation in sport and physical activities and social relationships and social integration.

In modern societies young people are less able to fall back on enduring social ties than in the past. This renders social networks - including the school and the class - increasingly important. Exclusion from the group, social isolation, leads to extreme stress; conversely, integration is good for self-esteem. Physical education and sport in general are viewed as an important means of counteracting disintegrating trends because sport provides the chance to belong, to experience the 'we' feeling, community spirit and solidarity. Through sport, one appropriates the norms, values and skills that may be very useful in another context. There is even strong evidence that sport has a part to play in preventing crime, both in rehabilitation and crime prevention.

However, this depends to a large extent on how sport and physical education is taught and organised: also separation and marginalisation can be effects of sport!

## **II. PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED**

There are a number of problems surrounding physical education in the EU:

- **General orientation of physical education:** existing curricula often do not provide personally meaningful and socially relevant experiences and are contrary to societal trends and tendencies in out-of-school activities: there is an orientation towards sports-dominated competitive performance-related activity programmes. If physical education is to become an instrument to effectively combat obesity and overweight of children curricular elements which appeal to all groups of pupils need to be promoted. With computer games gaining ground as a preferred hobby of children, there is growing need for the endorsement of an active, healthy lifestyle among children and young people. For these young population groups, the traditional content of PE has little relevance to their lifestyle;
- Physical education is at risk of **increased marginalisation** within the school day; over the last years the time allocated to PE across the EU has been gradually eroded: since 2002 time allocation has been reduced from 121 to 109 minutes per week for primary school, and from 117 to 101 minutes for secondary school<sup>1</sup> - research recommends that children

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<sup>1</sup> see "Current situation and prospects for physical education in the European Union".

and adolescents perform some form of physical activity for 60 minutes every day! There are signs that the officially announced amount of PE in school does not correspond to the reality on the ground, as implementation does not meet with legal obligations or expectations. A reality check is necessary!

- Linked to the above issue there is **under-funding** of sport facilities; inadequate funding for facilities, equipment and their maintenance and teaching materials is particularly widespread in central, eastern and southern Europe; pupils with disabilities suffer even more the consequences of this lack of financial support.
- A closer look at the curricula of PE teachers in order to support quality **teacher education**, training and support is necessary. There needs to be competent and confident teaching staff which is capable of designing PE classes that respond to health issues and that motivate all children to participate. Effective and successful PE requires well-trained specialist PE teachers.
- There is a gap between PE in school and out-of-school and post-school activities. The **link between school and out-of school activities** could be strengthened.
- **Inclusion**: ethnic minorities have especially low rates of participation in sport activities. The problem of participation is arising already during school time; Muslim girls are an especially sensitive group in this respect. A similar pattern of restricted access is evident among disabled young people. Young people with disability are far less likely to take part in extra-curricular or out-of-school sporting activities.
- There is still a lack of **empirical data** in many areas related to sport, physical education and their effects on health and social trends.

These observations are the basis for the recommendations that the rapporteur suggests in his report regarding measures to be taken by the responsible bodies, be it on European level or within Member States in order to improve the role of sport in education.

8.6.2007

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on the role of sport in education  
(2007/2086(INI))

Draftswoman: Evangelia Tzampazi

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Reaffirms the European Union's legitimate interest in sport, in particular its social and cultural aspects, as well as the educational and social values that sport transmits such as self-discipline, challenging personal limitations, solidarity, healthy competition, respect for opponents, social inclusion, opposition to any form of discrimination, team spirit, tolerance, and fair play;
2. Stresses the significance of implementing the Amsterdam and Nice declarations, especially concerning the specific characteristics of sport in Europe and its social function, of which account should be taken when implementing common policies;
3. Recognises the vital social and cultural role that sport clubs and associations are able to play in their local and national communities; considers that schools, training centres, sport clubs and associations should be more involved in various forms of engagement and participation of the local population through a better social dialogue, preferably initiated by local authorities (health, social affairs and education departments); asks for attention to be focused in order to ensure that sport clubs function without fanaticisms in compliance with the sporting and social ideals;
4. Emphasises the need to make European society more aware of the modern role and educational importance of sport, by encouraging educational and sports organisations to establish and develop close partnerships and joint objectives and promoting solidarity between the professional and amateur sectors, and to sensitise the educational community to the need to address the problems of a sedentary lifestyle by promoting sports at school;

5. Considers that sports education and training, particularly with an emphasis on olympic ideals, is an effective instrument for social inclusion of disadvantaged groups and multicultural dialogue, and for the promotion of voluntary work, and plays an active part in counteracting discrimination, intolerance, racism, xenophobia and violence;
6. Recognises that sport is an employment-creating sector and that other areas, such as education, medicine, the media and the manufacture and marketing of specialised equipment and products, are directly linked to this sector;
7. Encourages Member States to modernise and improve their physical education policies - principally to ensure that a balance is struck between physical and intellectual activities in schools - to invest in quality sports facilities and take appropriate measures to make sports premises and sports curricula at schools accessible to all students, with proper regard being paid to the needs of disabled students; suggests that support is forthcoming for a wide range of sporting activities so that every student has a real opportunity to participate in different sports; calls on the Member States to support the requirement to increase the time spent on physical education in schools; to promote the legal recognition of institutions and organisations which contribute to better integration of sports activities in schools and preschools; favours granting incentives to sports clubs having collaboration agreements with schools, educational establishments, youth centres, and other community or voluntary organisations involved in lifelong learning projects;
8. Recognises that sport plays an important role in lifelong learning, and that students of all ages should be enabled to participate;
9. Urges the Member States, in cooperation with physical education colleges, to provide high-quality, all-round education, equipping athletes with all the necessary skills to enter the employment market or pursue their studies in higher education institutions and beyond;
10. Emphasises the role of sport organisations and initiatives such as the Special Olympics, that contribute to the integration of people with disabilities in sport as well as in the society through sport; strongly encourages Member State and EU support to continue and expand the work of those organisations and initiatives;
11. Applauds the work of volunteers in all sporting organisations and recognises that most of these organisations could not exist without volunteers; therefore recommends that 'credits' or some form of commendation for voluntary service be put in place at a European level to recognise and promote this work;
12. Asks the Commission to draw up clear guidelines on the application of the State aid rules to public sports facilities, indicating what kind of public support is acceptable and legitimate in order to fulfil the social, cultural, health-enhancing and educational roles of sport, such as financial or other support granted by public authorities for the provision or updating of school sport facilities;
13. Stresses the importance of physical exercise in curbing obesity and overcoming unhealthy life-style habits, thereby greatly benefiting individual health, expresses concern, however, that longer working hours and present-day conditions of employment in general, are



preventing workers from taking regular physical exercise and becoming more involved in sport;

14. Recognises that health reasons are not sufficient to encourage regular sporting activities; urges the Member States, therefore, to improve the promotion of sports linked to leisure and social activities;
15. Considers that sports - and not just team sports - foster interaction between people, in addition to contributing to social integration and greater productivity at work; urges the Commission and Member States to promote easy access to sport at the workplace and to encourage more flexible working hours in order to engage in sporting activities;
16. Stresses that, in our multicultural society, sport can and can be integral part of formal and informal education and that studies have shown that regular physical activity improves mental and physical wellbeing, while having beneficial effect on learning abilities;
17. Calls on the Commission to identify areas where EU action can provide added value with regard to action already taken by sports organisations and Member States authorities; considers that the open method of coordination is an appropriate way to achieve better cooperation at European level in the specific area of physical education policy and sport for all;
18. In the context of the prospective Commission White Paper on sport, considers it important to include funding opportunities for sport related activities which are linked to the objectives stated in Article 149 of the EC Treaty;
19. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States, together with the national and European umbrella organisations for sports, to determine, fully respecting the principle of subsidiarity, the suitable legal framework and the instruments that could be used to increase investment in the sport education and training of young persons in the pre-schools and schools;
20. Asks that the Commission ensure that legislation applies to the provision of services in the sports sector in the same way as to other activities in the framework of all Community policies;
21. Considers that the qualifications acquired through sports activity should be recognised under the common reference system embodied in the future European Qualifications Framework; welcomes the Commission proposal to include sport in the field of application of the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training; considers that increased transparency and mutual recognition of licenses and diplomas for the provision of services in the sports sector in the European Union would contribute to the free movement of persons (students, sportsmen and women, workers and employers) as well as to the long-term assimilation of athletes on the employment market, and that it would also contribute to social cohesion in Europe and to achieving the Lisbon Strategy targets, as this is an area with a high potential for job creation;
22. Stresses that the results of the European Year of Education through Sport 2004 must be utilised to the full, capitalising on and further developing good practices through new

initiatives receiving public and private funding or being promoted in the spirit of corporate social responsibility;

23. Calls on the Commission to take into account and formulate a policy towards stakeholders, decision makers and citizens, to facilitate consultation with regard to European action on the role of sport in education.

## PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	The role of sport in education		
<b>Procedure number</b>	2007/2086(INI)		
<b>Committee responsible</b>	CULT		
<b>Opinion by</b> Date announced in plenary	EMPL 24.5.2007		
<b>Enhanced cooperation – date announced in plenary</b>	No		
<b>Drafts(wo)man</b> Date appointed	Evangelia Tzampazi 18.1.2006		
<b>Previous drafts(wo)man</b>			
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	8.5.2007	14.5.2007	5.6.2007
<b>Date adopted</b>	7.6.2007		
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 38 -: 1 0: 0		
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Jan Andersson, Alexandru Athanasiu, Emine Bozkurt, Iles Braghetto, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Milan Cabrnach, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Luigi Cocilovo, Proinsias De Rossa, Harlem Désir, Harald Ettl, Richard Falbr, Ilda Figueiredo, Joel Hasse Ferreira, Stephen Hughes, Ona Juknevičienė, Jan Jerzy Kułakowski, Jean Lambert, Raymond Langendries, Elizabeth Lynne, Mary Lou McDonald, Thomas Mann, Ana Mato Adrover, Elisabeth Morin, Csaba Öry, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Kathy Sinnott, Jean Spautz, Gabriele Stauner, Anne Van Lancker, Gabriele Zimmer		
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Udo Bullmann, Françoise Castex, Monica Maria Iacob-Ridzi, Sepp Kussstatscher, Mario Mantovani, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Evangelia Tzampazi		
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>			
<b>Comments (available in one language only)</b>			

27.6.2007

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY**

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on the role of sport in education  
(2007/2086(INI))

Draftswoman: Christa Prets

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Recognises the importance of the full participation of girls and women in sporting activities at all levels; considers gender equality and non-discrimination to be objectives that form an integral part of sport's educational and social functions; stresses the need to ensure equal access and participation for women and men- and boys and girls at all levels and in all functions and areas of sport, irrespective of their social background, particularly for people with disabilities given that disabled women can face multiple discrimination; furthermore stresses the important role of sport for public health, especially in the fight against obesity that currently affects 21 million children in the EU;
2. Highlights, among sport's educational and social values, its effectiveness in combating racism and xenophobia and its integrating and egalitarian effect as regards equal treatment and opportunities for men and women;
3. Urges the Member States, when developing actions in the field of sport and physical education, to mainstream gender by taking systematic account of the differences between the conditions, situations and needs of women and men in these policies; calls on Eurostat to further develop indicators and obtain improved quality statistics on male and female participation in sport at all levels;
4. Points out that sport and physical activity can make an important contribution to combating negative health trends such as a sedentary life-style and obesity; refers to the recent Eurobarometer on Health, Food and Nutrition (November 2006) which addresses the health and physical characteristics of Europeans, their diets and problems relating to

obesity and lack of exercise;

5. Calls on the Member States and competent authorities to provide physical education teachers with training in the issue of gender by including this aspect in their curriculum; calls for an end to the downgrading of the status of physical education as a subject and of the status of PE teachers; stresses the importance of the possibility of sports coeducation for children at nursery and primary schools as well as the option of having either sports coeducation or single sex classes from secondary level onwards in order to encourage girls to try out sports traditionally practiced by men ; stresses the need to explore alternative forms of physical activity, which could be practiced on an optional basis, preferably outside compulsory state education;
6. Calls on the Member States to carry out a study of quantitative and qualitative participation of girls and boys in sport within and outside schools and to provide the necessary resources to further expand the sports on offer and thereby increase the participation of girls in sports; reiterates the need to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of such public spending by means of gender budgeting and gender impact assessment;
7. Urges the Commission and the Member States to promote the integration of disabled women in sport, as disabled women's participation in sporting activities is lower than that of disabled men;
8. Recalls its resolution of 5 June 2003 on women and sport<sup>1</sup>, and urges that the recommendations contained therein be implemented; calls on the Commission to undertake a wide-ranging study into the position of women in sport, as suggested at the Conference of EU Sports Ministers held on 12 November 2001 in Brussels, and to submit, inter alia, statistics on the general position of women in sport and information on gender budgeting;
9. Stresses the important role of sport in positive personal development and in facilitating social inclusion; urges the Member States to promote the integration of girls from different ethnic, religious or cultural groups, including young immigrants without identity papers, into sports classes and sports clubs; calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage projects in this field within the framework of European initiatives such as Youth in Action, Citizens for Europe, the European Year for Equal Opportunities and EYES;
10. Calls on the Member States to guarantee equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women in access to training and in pursuing a career in sport;
11. Urges the Commission to identify best practices in the fight against sexual harassment and abuse in sport; urges the Member States to adopt prevention and elimination measures and develop awareness-raising campaigns on the available legal redress, taking account of the innumerable resolutions on this subject, particularly the Council of Europe resolution of March 2000 on the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse of women, young people and children in sport (Bratislava resolution) and the European Parliament

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 68E, 18.3.2004, p. 605.

resolution of 5 June 2003 referred to above;

12. Calls on the Member States to pay particular attention to situations in which children's talent is exploited with a view to success in sports competitions and stresses that professional sports activities involving children must respect their fundamental rights and best interests;
13. Calls on the Member States and competent authorities to take steps to raise awareness among everyone working in the sports sector (clubs, federations, etc.) of the importance of gender mainstreaming in all their decisions and in all actions launched by them, and of the need to include equality between men and women among their objectives when planning activities;
14. Calls on the Member States to actively promote and implement physical education and sports as part of the curriculum of all primary and secondary educational institutions;
15. Calls on the Member States and competent authorities to ensure equal representation of women and men on all decision-making bodies of sport associations and relevant authorities and to promote women in leadership roles by means of positive action, taking account of innumerable resolutions on this topic;
16. Encourages the Member States to promote engagement in women's sports in the media with a view to improving their public image and helping to disseminate the principle of equality in sport;
17. Urges the Commission and the Member States to pay particular attention to the physical and mental health of adolescent girls participating in top-level competitions, and to assess with the utmost care the effects certain demands may have on the sexual and reproductive health of adolescent girls and on their physical and mental development, with the aim of preventing any effects that run counter to the important educational role of sport;
18. Calls on the Member States to encourage the media, through targeted actions, to pay tribute to the achievements of female athletes in the same way as for male athletes.

## PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	The role of sport in education
<b>Procedure number</b>	2007/2086(INI)
<b>Committee responsible</b>	CULT
<b>Opinion by</b> Date announced in plenary	FEMM 26.4.2007
<b>Enhanced cooperation – date announced in plenary</b>	
<b>Drafts(wo)man</b> Date appointed	Christa Prets 27.4.2007
<b>Previous drafts(wo)man</b>	
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	4.6.2007      25.6.2007
<b>Date adopted</b>	25.6.2007
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+:            22 -:            0 0:            0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Edit Bauer, Emine Bozkurt, Esther De Lange, Edite Estrela, Věra Flasarová, Esther Herranz García, Urszula Krupa, Pia Elda Locatelli, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Zita Pleštinská, Christa Prets, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Amalia Sartori, Eva-Britt Svensson, Anna Záborská
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Gabriela Crețu, Anna Hedh, Mary Honeyball, Elisabeth Jeggle, Maria Petre, Feleknaš Uca, Corien Wortmann-Kool
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	
<b>Comments (available in one language only)</b>	...

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	10.9.2007
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+ : 19 - : 1 0 : 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Ivo Belet, Giovanni Berlinguer, Marie-Hélène Descamps, Milan Gaľa, Ovidiu Victor Gănt, Vasco Graça Moura, Luis Herrero-Tejedor, Ruth Hieronymi, Manolis Mavrommatis, Ljudmila Novak, Doris Pack, Pál Schmitt, Hannu Takkula, Helga Trüpel, Henri Weber, Thomas Wise, Tomáš Zatloukal
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Elisabeth Morin, Christel Schaldemose
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	