

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Regional Development

2007/2261(INI)

7.3.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on the White Paper on Sport
(2007/2261(INI))

Draftsman: Gerardo Galeote

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SUGGESTIONS

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

- A. having regard to the role of sport in promoting integration and its potential contribution to social cohesion and the internal cohesion of the regions,
 1. Stresses the significance of the inclusion of sport in the Lisbon Treaty and points to the opportunity it offers to mobilise EU financial resources and programmes with the aim of using sport as an instrument for economic development, social cohesion and improving the infrastructures of the cities and regions of the EU;
 2. Recognises the importance of sport, the sports industry and sports tourism for the creation of jobs and small and medium-sized businesses;
 3. Stresses that a high level of availability and accessibility of sports-related infrastructure for all social groups has a positive impact on the quality of life in both rural and urban areas; calls on local and regional authorities to develop sports-related infrastructure as an essential public service;
 4. Recalls and stresses that sport is subject to the general Community rules on the internal market, free competition, and the free movement of workers, which have proved their worth with regard to social and regional cohesion and economic development; points out, too, that the majority of sports and leisure facilities in the municipalities and regions are an essential part of inter-cultural coexistence, and as such a vital public service;
 5. Points out that the success achieved by certain sports clubs in international competitions is important for the development of certain regions and countries, either directly in the form of exports and product licences or indirectly through the renown such clubs may bring to their country or region as cultural ambassadors; supports the measures adopted by countries or regions to safeguard or enhance the competitiveness of their most prestigious clubs, provided that the same basic rules apply to all and the measures comply with Community law; stresses, too, that the positive development of popular and recreational sports is crucial for the social and economic development of a region, particularly to make the region attractive to young people and to keep young people in the region; supports the involvement of the most prestigious sports clubs in popular and recreational sports; stresses that this involvement is in the public interest;
 6. Points to the great disparities between the different regions and Member States with regard to the social and economic importance of various sports, as well as in the relative size and popularity of the major clubs in the leading professional sports; therefore believes that the differences in the ways in which revenue is composed and generated, in how support is provided, and in the approach taken to ensuring competitive balance, are both justifiable and necessary; believes, however, that in order to safeguard the social and economic importance of sport in all regions and in the smaller entities, it's important to encourage the involvement of the sport clubs in social solidarity actions and in optional

social solidarity mechanisms; considers that the social involvement of sports clubs in popular sports and the use of high-quality sports facilities by all social groups can make a major contribution to social and economic cohesion, and therefore considers such involvement to be vital;

7. Calls on the Commission and Member States, as part of their sustainable development strategies, to provide funding for sports-related infrastructures and projects under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), as well as providing for the possible use of new funding instruments (including JEREMIE and JESSICA):
8. Proposes that an effective mechanism be set up for promoting cross-border and inter-regional cooperation so as to make better use of infrastructure investments connected to sporting events; further proposes to encourage the promotion of sport through the European grouping of territorial cooperation as provided for by Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)¹;
9. Calls on the Commission to ensure that, when drawing up proposals relating to matters which are highly sensitive as regards the development of sports in the Member States, such as image rights, the management of broadcasting rights or sports betting, it complies strictly with the subsidiarity principle and pays due regard to the experience and individual characteristics of each Member State, as well as to the transfer of powers to the relevant national regions which may ensue;
10. Stresses the role of regions and local authorities in organising professional and recreational sports events, developing infrastructure and promoting sport and a healthy lifestyle among EU citizens, particularly schoolchildren.
11. Recommends that the social policy of the Member States always take into account the important integrative role of sport for immigrant populations and the development of values inherent in sport, such as cohabitation, tolerance and solidarity;
12. Calls on the Member States, bearing in mind the importance of inclusive sport, to create opportunities for athletes and pupils with disabilities to engage in everyday sporting activities both in school and outside ;
13. Given the need to adopt a horizontal approach to questions concerning the protection of the environment and health, recommends that the Commission encourage the promotion of environmental and health protection on the occasion of European sporting events;
14. Acknowledges the importance of sport in health protection and for this reason recommends that the owners of the broadcasting rights promote publicity for sport as such;
15. Calls on the Member States – since one of the objectives of the White Paper is the introduction of daily sporting activity in educational establishments – to make physical education compulsory at every level of the educational system, from primary school to

¹ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p 19.

higher education;

16. Recommends that the Member States use a significant percentage of their income from sports to cover sports-related expenditure at national and local level;
17. Advises the Commission – in view of the fact that efforts towards cohesion within the EU are extremely important to the new Member States, and that the proportion of the population in the new Member States who regularly participate in sport is worryingly low – that the EU should aim to considerably increase that figure in the next five years.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	27.2.2008
Result of final vote	+: 49 -: 0 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Alfonso Andria, Emmanouil Angelakas, Stavros Arnautakis, Elspeth Attwooll, Rolf Berend, Jana Bobošíková, Victor Boștinaru, Antonio De Blasio, Petru Filip, Gerardo Galeote, Iratxe García Pérez, Eugenijus Gentvilas, Pedro Guerreiro, Gábor Harangozó, Marian Harkin, Jim Higgins, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Rumiana Jeleva, Gisela Kallenbach, Tunne Kelam, Evgeni Kirilov, Miloš Koterec, Constanze Angela Krehl, Jamila Madeira, Mario Mantovani, Sérgio Marques, Miroslav Mikolášik, James Nicholson, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Jan Olbrycht, Maria Petre, Markus Pieper, Pierre Pribetich, Wojciech Roszkowski, Elisabeth Schroedter, Grażyna Staniszevska, Catherine Stihler, Dimitar Stoyanov, Margie Sudre, Andrzej Jan Szejna, Oldřich Vlasák
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jan Březina, Brigitte Douay, Den Dover, Emanuel Jardim Fernandes, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Vladko Todorov Panayotov, Miloslav Ransdorf, Zita Pleštinská, László Surján, Iuliu Winkler
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Janelly Fourtou, Zdzisław Zbigniew Podkański