

## Introduction

Please accept this paper as representing the views of UK Sport, Sport England, sportsotland, the Sports Council for Wales, the Sports Council for Northern Ireland and SkillsActive in respect of the planned EU White Paper on Sport.

For ease, the questions have been answered and numbered as they appear in the online consultation document.

## The Online Consultation Questions

### 1.1 Country of residence/where your organisation is established?

UK

### 1.2 Gender?

Legal Entity

### 1.3 You are a member of:

A governmental organisation

## 2 Do you think that sport activities have a fundamental role to play in contributing to changing attitudes?

Yes. It is widely recognised at a national level that physical activity can have a significant impact upon the health of our communities. People who are physically active reduce the risk of developing major chronic diseases by up to 50% and the risk of premature death by 20-30% (Department of Health, 2004).

Research by Sport England highlighted that overall annual savings of £2.29billion could be achieved if government spending on the NHS was 9.4% of GDP and 70% of the population were physically active.

Many UK and European-wide initiatives have successfully used sport to change attitudes and promote greater social tolerance and inclusion. A key example is Kick Racism Out of Football, which has successfully isolated racism as an unacceptable attitude, to the extent that it is not tolerated within British football.

The attitudes of equality and fairness are promoted through participation in sport across all clubs and organisations. Sport is doing much to change attitudes within its own structures, and move towards an equitable and fair environment. The UK benefits from an 'Equality Standard for Sport' which provides a framework to guide sports and community organisations towards achieving equality.

Evidence exists demonstrating that sport can positively affect attitudes in a way that creates stronger, safer communities. For example, a paper on Sports Activities and Youth Offending (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, DCMS, Youth Justice Board and Sport England 2005) highlighted that appropriately structured sports activities can strengthen protective factors (role models, opportunities for involvement and success or social bonding) and weaken some of the risk factors (community disorganisation or alienation) that affect communities.

Evaluation of the Youth Inclusion Programme by the YJB in 2003 identified that arrest rates amongst young people considered to be most at risk of offending went down by 65% after engagement with sports projects.

The Local Government Association (2004) claimed that “sport and other cultural services can be a powerful tool to engage all sections of the community and break down barriers between them...Physical activity and sport can be used as a means of bringing people together from different communities to share positive experiences and gain greater understanding of each other’s ways of life.”

The strategic policy implication is clear, greater emphasis should be placed on encouragement to take part in sport and other exercise as an important component of preventative health care and the creation of stronger and safer communities. However, while the societal role of sport is important, it is also vital that the work of the EU adds value to that of Member States. Therefore, it is important that any programmes to improve health and social justice are additional to those required to deliver sport for its own sake.

Maximising health, education and the social benefits of sport requires a good deal of dedicated resource. Leadership is required at government level and local authorities must view the delivery of sport as a priority. It requires additional financial support and guidance to develop programmes and practices that are beneficial to furthering the goals of increased participation in sport, particularly among those groups currently disengaged from sporting activity.

**3 Do you think the time for sport/physical activity should be increased in school?**

Yes. There is great disparity across the EU in the hours of physical education provided in formal education structures. Children who receive positive experiences of sport, activity and movement at a young age are more likely to continue their participation into adulthood and lead healthier lifestyles. Activities in school can provide the physical literacy and confidence that children need to remain active as adults and even become high performance athletes.

The UK Government currently aims to provide all schoolchildren in England with two hours per week of physical education and school sport within and beyond the curriculum. Its aspiration is to increase this to four hours by 2010. The Scottish Executive aspires to achieve two hours per week of curricular Physical Education, in addition to school sport beyond the curriculum. Programmes have been put in place to promote the use of professional coaches within schools and provide children with a pathway from school to sports club participation. These models for school and club sport are already being adopted in other European countries, but they would benefit from greater promotion across EU Member States.

Furthermore, there is a pan-European need for teachers, particularly in the primary sector, to receive better physical education training and for schools to have access to facilities and equipment suitable for delivering high quality physical education. There is also a need for children to try a range of different sports, enabling them to find the right activity for their interests and skills.

How activity is presented is another important consideration. Breakfast clubs offering a physical activity option are becoming common place. Sport need not necessarily be seen as part of the curriculum but an integral part of a young person’s day.

The EU could play a role in encouraging national governments to improve their physical education policies, share best practice examples amongst Member States and provide funding for physical educational training and personal development for teachers.

**4 Which are in your view the main values that can be taught through sport? (Please select the three which according to you are most important) *Team play,***

***Tolerance, Respect for others, Fair play, Compliance with the rules, Discipline, Mutual understanding, Solidarity, Equality, other***

One of the main values that can be taught through sport is equality. In 2004 the European Women and Sport Committee submitted a Resolution which was subsequently approved by the European Parliament as the European Parliament resolution on women and sport (2002/2280(INI)). Despite the EP endorsement, a number of recommendations have not been fulfilled and visible commitments to improve access to under represented groups are sought from the White Paper. Specific recommendations that the authors would wish to see reinforced in the White Paper include the need to:

- Develop a structure for tackling the question of 'women and sport'. The authors would wish the EU to provide support for the functioning of the European Woman and Sport (EWS) network;
- Ensuring equal rights in top level sport;
- Protecting the health of female athletes;
- Greater participation by women in decision making.

The authors continue to advocate change and the need to address inequality (not just gender inequality but that experienced by all sectors of society) through European political machinery.

UK Sport continues to lead work to reduce inequalities in sport through the Equality Standard through and in conjunction with the Home Country Sports Councils and equity partners. UK Sport also leads the way to reduce gender inequality through such initiatives as the Women and Leadership Development Programme.

**5 Should the European Union measure the economic potential of sport in order to help raise the profile of sport in EU and national policies?**

Yes, the authors are of the opinion that the EU should measure the economic potential of sport in order to raise the profile of sport in EU and national policies. Within the UK, the shared priorities of central and local governments include 'promoting the economic vitality of localities'. A range of government strategies, including those for neighbourhood renewal, workforce skills and sustainable communities also recognise that employment and enterprise are at the heart of regenerating disadvantaged areas.

The Comprehensive Spending Review (DCMS 1998) highlights the contribution of sport to the economy:

"Sport offers direct economic benefits. It contributes to the regeneration of towns and cities, improving health, productivity and quality of life. It contributes to savings in the cost of health care and leads to a reduction in crime and vandalism. It offers local environmental benefits that can change the image of a city or a community and lead to increased inward investment."

The value of the sport and leisure industry to the economy can be demonstrated by the following:

- Over 400,000 people in England and 40,000 people in Scotland are estimated to be employed in sports related activities, representing just under 2% of all employment;

- Sport related employment provides households in England with £5.8 billion in disposable income, just over 1% of total household disposable income (The Value of the Sports Economy in England 2003)
- Sport related economic activity increased by 107% over the period 1985 – 2003 (The Economic Impact of Sport in England, 2003)
- In the same period, the UK economy grew by 57%, demonstrating that the sport economy has grown at a far faster rate than that of the UK as a whole (The Economic Impact of Sport in England, 2003).

Every £1 invested in a sports event, attracts £7 of investment in the local economy by competitors and visitors (Measuring Success 2: The Economic Impact of Major Sporting Events, UK Sport). In the UK, the Sport sector contributed £8.6 billion in output to the UK economy in 2004. Employment growth has soared in the last five years (at a rate almost four times that of all UK industries) and there are 634,000 employees, along with 2.7 million volunteers working in the sector. The economic impact of this large scale employment is not always recognised as directly contributing to the economic impact of sport. Such employment statistics and LMI are essential if the sector is to achieve the recognition it deserves. The White Paper should welcome the collation of such data and encourage further research at European level. The sports sector in the UK has significant importance in achieving the goals of the Lisbon agenda.

Further information on how the EU should measure the economic potential of sport is provided at question 7.

## **6 Would you agree that the specific role and status of non-profit organisations and volunteers should be taken into account at EU level?**

26% of volunteering in the UK takes place through sport and recreation (*Citizenship in Action*, CCPR, 2003), and evidence from the Russell Commission in 2005 indicated that 49% of young people would choose to volunteer in sport. Sport is the largest voluntary movement in Europe and is popular with all ages, races, sexes and cultures.

Although sports councils and sporting partners are working towards professionalising sport, the sector relies heavily on clubs and volunteers. The vast majority of UK sports clubs and many national sports associations are run on a not-for-profit basis. In addition, volunteers are central to the successful staging of international sporting events. The authors agree that the specific role and status of non-profit organisations and volunteers should be recognised and taken into account at EU level. Volunteering in sport is also an effective method of developing leadership skills in young people and is exemplified in the UK by the Step into Sport programme.

The recruitment and retention of volunteers requires sports organisations to have effective recruitment and support mechanisms. Investment in these areas is, therefore, essential, as is the reduction of bureaucracy, supporting the organisation of sport to ensure the best use is made of time and skills, and the establishment of safe and equitable working practices.

It should also be noted that volunteers will value recognition. This may be through tax breaks, award schemes, or less formal demonstrations of appreciation. Standard recognised qualifications will support the development and recognition of volunteers. For example the UK Coaching Certificate brings consistency in coaching courses across sports, allowing for an easier transfer of skills.

**7 The overall economic impact of sport in quantitative terms is scarcely documented, including at EU level. Methodological shortcomings relate to varying definitions of sport as well as to the lack of reliable data and information. Would you agree that the European Union should address these shortcomings?**

Yes, the authors agree that the EU should address these shortcomings. The EU Working Group on Sport and Economics was set up to examine how this area can be taken forward. At the moment, although several countries carry out studies of the economic importance of sport, they all use different methodologies and it is therefore difficult to make comparisons. The real benefit would come from the ability to compare our sport industry with those in other EU countries. The benefits are therefore greater the larger the number of countries that take part in the exercise.

Collecting data should be done in co-operation with sport, and care should be taken to ensure that any statistical analysis is conducted by organisations familiar with European sports organisations and their structures. All too frequently national sports organisations and governments are unsure of where Commission studies have originated from, their purpose, or who has been asked to provide national feedback. Questionnaires should contain a briefing, which outlines the purpose of the consultation, which organisations are being consulted and what the data will be used for.

The Commission are requested to ensure that timeframes for responses are a minimum of eight weeks, as outline in Standard D of the Commission's Consultation Procedural Guidelines, but ideally twelve weeks, as provided in the UK by the Compact Agreement.

UK Sport has played a lead role in establishing an agreed methodology for measuring the economic impact of staging major sports events and would welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with EU colleagues to ensure consistency in the application of a consolidated methodology in this area.

However, in addition to the economic impact of sport, there is a pressing need for EU research into other areas, such as:

- How can we improve the low evidence base on the social benefits of sport?
- How can we identify means of increasing the numbers of the lowest participating group – the elderly – who take part in sport?
- How can we improve the low evidence base on sustaining children's levels of participation into adolescence (particularly girls) and adulthood?
- What more do we need to understand about motivations to participate and reasons for non/low participation across age, gender and various social groups?

**8 Would you agree that a White Paper on sport should address the need for Member States to seek more stable ways of financing grassroots sport in the long run? Should there be a debate at European level?**

Researching and promoting sustainable funding opportunities for sport should be one of the Sport Unit's tasks and the authors agree that the White Paper should address this issue and call for a debate at European level. The Services Directive highlighted the potential threat to sports' income in many European countries (although not in this instance the UK). The decline in revenue from national lotteries due to competition from other games, online gambling and foreign ownership of lottery companies indicates the need to obtain secure sustainable funding from other sources.

**9 Do you think that the EU should address the specificities of sport professions in the field of education to ensure a better recognition of sport-related qualifications at EU level?**

In order for sport to be sustainable, it requires the involvement of large numbers of qualified volunteers and staff. In addition, the diversity of sport and active recreation requires a range of competences and qualifications and this need in the UK is growing as the sector expands. Recognition and portability of sport related qualifications at EU level allows for greater mobility of staff, both geographically and within the sector. The current lack of co-ordination at the European level is currently limiting staff mobility and employment potential. The authors support the development of a transparent vocational education and training (VET) system for all Member States, and requests that the Commission ensures that the system enhances standards and encourages better funding for sports related qualifications within Member States.

In analysing VET in the then 25 Member States, the VOCASPORT Report (2004) concluded that:

“The sports sector represents a group of varied activities and services ranging from organised competition within clubs as a means of training and education, to the events put on by professional sports people, leisure sporting pursuits practiced for pleasure or fitness purposes and the use of sports to boost social integration of population groups in difficult circumstances. Together, these largely interdependent practices concern over half of European citizens, with nearly a million employees working in the field as their main professional activity (employment has grown by nearly 60% in 10 years) and almost 10 million volunteers throughout the European Union.”

The VOCASPORT Report, as the first true attempt to give a definitive picture of the sector in Europe, highlighted the complexities that exist within sport, yet unequivocally identified a clear need to raise the qualification levels of those working in this large and dynamic sector.

The recently formed European Sports Workforce Development Alliance (the Alliance) has been created to present one clear voice on skills issues for the sector and raise the profile and importance of this with the Commission. Acknowledgement of the importance of a competent and qualified workforce is crucial and should be embraced by the Commission through the White Paper.

There is now increasing consensus among Member States that the structure of sport qualifications must be demand led; employers in the sector are best placed to identify what skills they require from their staff and the development of qualifications must therefore be a consultative process between the sector and organisations responsible for actually creating the qualifications (such as SkillsActive in the UK).

A continued commitment to developing a mobile workforce through a transparent VET system is of great importance to sport.

**10 We would like to have your views on the way the Commission should take account of the specific features of sport in current and future policies.**

The authors recognise that trends such as increasing commercialisation have resulted in new challenges for the organisation and governance of sport in Europe. These challenges have highlighted a lack of clarity in the consequences of the application of EU rules to sport that has helped create a climate of uncertainty that threatens to undermine effective governance. More clearly defining the specificity of sport is essential to improving matters and allowing the special nature of sport to be more consistently reflected in national and EU policy making in line with the 2000 Nice Declaration.

Whilst the authors believe that the autonomy and specificity of sport should be protected at all times it is understood that sport cannot be exempted from certain EU laws and regulations. However, the application of some EU Laws can conflict with internationally defined rules for a sport and can actually prevent sports from making positive changes to their rules and club governance. It is considered important that sport is consulted on proposals that will impact on the sector.

The Commission should work to ensure that clarification of the effects of EU law on sport is provided in order to identify challenges and provide greater clarity to sports stakeholders. The authors would support the development of clear guidelines on the application of Competition, State Aid and Freedom of Movement rules to sport.

The Commission should protect sport from unnecessary legislative burdens, inform sport of the regulations that they must comply with and work with the national sports federations to ensure that compliance is carried out with the minimum impact possible. This requires mainstreaming within all DGs, and we recommend that sport is included in all future impact assessments.

**11 We would like to have your views on elements which characterise the European approach to sport in comparison with other continents.**

See response to Q12.

**12 Would you agree that there is a European approach to sport clearly differentiated from other continents?**

The authors recognise the difficulties of attempting to define precisely a European approach to sport.

The pyramid structure of sport may be unique to Europe, enabling close co-operation between elite and grassroots sport, and encouraging mass participation. However, it is inaccurate to suggest that all sports within Europe operate within such a structure as this does not take into account the differing nature of individual sports in each country. Going forward, policies must be flexible and consider individual Member State and sporting needs.

The authors believe that a key task is to identify the core characteristics that make sport different from other sectors and what this means in practical terms for EU policy making. The aim should be a clear statement of the defining characteristics of sport that make it so different from other sectors as to necessitate a different approach in relation to particular issues. For example, whether the economic rationale of sport is sufficiently different from that of other sectors as to necessitate a practically different approach to examining Competition issues.

**13 Do you think that cooperation between sport organisations, Member States and EU institutions is desirable?**

The authors wish to have a positive and constructive relationship with the Sports Unit.

The authors support an ongoing open and inclusive dialogue between sport and the Commission aimed at ensuring the special nature of sport is taken into account in policy-making, in line with the Nice Declaration and to maximise the contribution sport can make to EU objectives.

Sporting organisations must retain their ability to engage directly with the Commission where competency on relevant issues resides at EU level. The authors endorse a flexible approach focussing on the outcomes that are sought in particular issues. The White Paper could helpfully begin to set out the key principles underpinning the relationship between the Commission and sport stakeholders and the core aims of an ongoing dialogue.

An important consideration is that many members of European sports confederations are not from EU Member States. Accordingly, any representations would need to consider the impact on sports within non-EU member states and any policy decisions would need to be compatible not only with EU law but with individual national laws in non-EU states.

**14 Would you say that the role of the European Union in the field of sport is: insignificant, not sufficiently active, sufficient, excessive?**

The EU needs to work with sports organisations to determine the correct level of involvement for specific issues. For example, considerable assistance will be required to amend legislation to better reflect the needs of the sports sector, whilst discussions over rules of the game are better left to individual sports federations. Whilst we would not support the imposition of rules and regulations, clarification and guidance on EU compliance would be welcome.

**15, 16 & 17**

Information relevant to these questions is contained throughout the above text, separate answers are therefore not necessary for these questions.

However, in relation to anti-doping, as we have the Association of National Anti-Doping Agencies (ANADO), the Council of Europe and the recently ratified UNESCO Convention Against Doping in Sport, all of which we are fully involved with and supportive of, the UK would want to see what added value any EU NADO network would provide before supporting such a development.

**Conclusion**

It is recognised that sport, and particular commercial sports, do have to operate with the laws of the EU. The authors are ready to play their role in helping the Commission to ensure that this is managed with the minimum detrimental impact upon the sector.

Sport has a great deal to offer Europe, both socially and economically, and the authors hope that the White Paper will be a step towards open and progressive dialogue between the sports sector and the EU.