



# Sports in Europe

**SPECIAL  
EDITION**

**April 09**

## 8 Sport Questions for the European Political Groups

From the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of June the elections to the European Parliament will take place in each of the 27 EU Member States. Around 375 million EU citizens are called upon to cast their votes for their parliamentary representatives in Brussels.

As around one third of these 375 million EU citizens is organised in a sport club, ENGSO issues a special edition of its newsletter informing the 110 million sport club members and maybe-voters about the sport political views of the European political groups. This sport initiative of ENGSO is the first of its kind at EU level.

### Why does ENGSO ask these sport political questions?

Sport is becoming more important at EU level, as developments such as the European Commission's White Paper on Sport, the legal reference to sport in the Lisbon Treaty and various European Parliament's reports related to sport indicate. Therefore, European political groups should explain themselves what they think about sports, and what they intend to do.

In putting together this inventory on sport political views, ENGSO answers to many inquiries from its member organisations received from all over Europe.

### What are these questions to the groups based upon?

Considering the increasing role of sport at EU level, ENGSO adopted a political manifesto entitled "**Sport for an Active and Competitive Europe**" which you find also on ENGSO's website



www.engso.eu. The manifesto identified 8 priority areas and, furthermore, it shall give guidance to EU decision makers to shape the future EU sport competence, once the Lisbon Treaty will enter into force.

### Who has responded to the 8 questions?

Each of the eight political groups represented in the European Parliament has received the 8 ENGSO sport questions. Answers have been thankfully received by the

- Group of the Greens / European Free Alliance (31/03)
- Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (31/03)
- Socialist Group in the European Parliament (31/03)
- Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats (01/04)

These four answers received represent 648 (83%) out of 785 seats in the EP.

**ENGSO wishes enjoyable reading.**

# 1. Autonomy of Sport Organisations



## How will your political group deal with the autonomy of sport organisations?

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### **Greens/European Free Alliance:**

We will continue to support the autonomy of sport organizations to ensure that sport organizations remain independent in order to organize themselves and promote their sport according to their specificity. Even though we support subsidiarity in the matter of sport, we also think that the nature of challenges that sport is facing needs a European treatment. We will continue to have a fruitful dialogue with all the concerned actors like we have done in the past.

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### **Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe:**

*Matters concerning the general organisation and rules of professional sport are best left to the national authorities and that action on the part of the EU should only be taken with respect to the economic activities of professional organisations.*

*The European Union must establish a clear distinction between activities on and off the field or track. The Treaty of Lisbon, once ratified, will give the EU a role in supplementing national measures to support sporting activities and participants across the EU, both professional and amateur, but it must be careful to avoid getting involved in on-field matters that are more appropriately*

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### **Socialist Group in the European Parliament:**

Sport autonomy is a guiding principle which the SPE Group fully respects and adheres to. The PSE Group calls therefore on the Commission and Member States to respect the autonomy of sport organisations in order to promote and complement – but not to regulate – the actions of Member States and sport organisations.

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### **European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats:**

*We consider that the European Sport Model is deeply rooted in European civil society and is an important expression of our culture and attitude towards sporting values. It is a democratic model that serves to ensure sport remains open to everyone. The European Sport Model resembles a pyramid structure, with grassroots and clubs constituting the base of the pyramid and offering maximum scope for local participation.*

*We see the autonomy of sporting organisations and representative structures as a basis of this model:*

- *we believe that the complementary competences relating to sport contained in Article 149 of the EC Treaty as amended by the Lisbon Treaty should be exercised by the Commission with regard to the principle of subsidiarity, respecting the autonomy of sports organisations and the relevant governing bodies, and with due regard to the specificity of sport;*
  - *the independent nature of sports bodies should be supported and protected and their autonomy to organise the sport for which they are responsible should be recognised. The federation should continue to be the key form of sporting organisation providing a guarantee of cohesion and participatory democracy;*
  - *we are for promoting the implementation and strengthening of self regulatory licensing systems at national and European level in order to increase good governance and to create a level playing field concerning financial transparency and stability;*
  - *We strongly support the innovative and effective dialogue with the sports movement in Europe, bringing together governmental and non-governmental sport stakeholders*
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## 2. Specific Nature of Sport



**How does your political group understand the notion "of the specific nature of sport" and what will you do to protect it?**

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### **Greens/European Free Alliance:**



*60% of European citizens practice a sport and there are over 700000 sport associations. Despite those figures, European policies have, in the past 50 years development, largely set aside sport activities and the direct consequence of this omission is that sport has been dealt with through the small prism of economy, competition and internal market. The specificity of sport is a central question for the becoming of European sport. It has to be reinforced and preserved. The defence of solidarity in the European sport sector is essential to combat regular destabilization initiatives aiming at disconnecting professional sport to non-professional sport. We defend the creation of a common cost control for all European clubs guaranteeing discipline by discipline equity in competitions and safeguard of the European model of sport.*

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### **Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe:**

The ALDE Group recognises that most challenges can be addressed through self-regulation and asks the Commission to respect the specificity of sport by providing more legal clarity in the guidelines on the applicability of European law to sports.

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### **Socialist Group in the European Parliament:**

*The PSE Group recognises that there are specific rules inherent in sport and welcomes the reference to the "specific nature" of sport in the Lisbon Treaty. The PSE Group offers its cooperation with stakeholders in sport to define the specific characteristics in sport.*

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### **European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats:**

The European sport is special in our view in two respects: (a) the specific nature of sporting activities and rules and (b) the specific framework in which sport activities take place (independence and diversity of sports organizations, organization of sports on a national level and the principle of a single federation per sport etc.

We need to protect the specific nature of sport within the limits of existing EU competences. We are very much in favour of EU policy in the sport area. The role of sport in Europe must be given a "strategic orientation" and the application of Community law must be clarified. Therefore we:

- Ask the Commission to respect sport's specificity and to create clear guidelines as to how EU rules should be applied
  - Believe that a case-by-case approach to deal with the specificity of sport is unsatisfactory as it entrench existing legal uncertainty. There must be further sports-related action at EU level while respecting the autonomy, specificity and self-regulation of sports organisations;
  - We invite the Commission to ensure clarity, coherence and public visibility of EU rules, so that sports services of general interest can fulfil their objectives and contribute to a better quality of life for European citizens; further asks the Commission to monitor and regularly review the application of EU law in accordance with the EC Treaty to take account of new realities so as to identify and solve pending or emerging issues
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### 3. Sport and health



**What will your political group do to involve sport actively in the process of improving health standards in the EU?**

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**Greens/European Free Alliance:**

We will encourage Member States to have information campaign targeted to children and their parents on the necessity to adopt a healthy way of life, to practice a regular physical activity and on the risks linked to an unhealthy diet. We will also continue our support for the better access of handi-capped people in particular to sport facilities, whether they are participants or spectators. Furthermore, physical education in school should be promoted and improved.

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**Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe:**

*Sport also plays a valuable role in maintaining and improving general health in the wider community such as in fighting and preventing obesity and related illnesses. EU support for greater public participation in sports in general would contribute positively to the state of public health of Europeans.*

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**Socialist Group in the European Parliament:**

The PSE Group recognizes the role of sport in health care prevention, in particular regarding the fight against obesity, prevention of certain diseases such as cardio-vascular diseases, high blood pressure, certain forms of cancers. Therefore, the PSE Groups calls on the EU Public Health Programme to support more projects promoting physical activity. Furthermore, the SPE Group advocates the increase of physical education in schools, preferably three hours per week.

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**European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats:**

*The EPP-ED Group has taken the lead on the issue of sport and relation between sport and health. We stress the essential role of sport for healthy lifestyle and suggest that concrete steps must be taken from the early childhood. In our view, physical education is the only school subject which seeks to prepare children for a healthy lifestyle and focuses on their overall physical and mental development.*

*In order to introduce a real «sporting culture», full integration of sport to school curricula at all levels and even higher integration between sport and academic subjects we:*

- *call on the Member States and the competent authorities to ensure that greater stress is placed on health development in school and preschool teaching programmes, children should start physical activity at the earliest possible age;*
  - *urge Members states to carry out information campaigns, aimed at children and their parents on the need to engage in regular physical activity and on the healthy risks linked to an unhealthy diet;*
  - *call on the Member States to implement changes in the orientation of physical education as a subject: physical education should be compulsory in primary and secondary schools following at least 3 physical education lessons per week*
  - *call on the Commission, the Council and the Member States, fully respecting subsidiarity, to promote further investment and equipment in sporting activities*
  - *emphasise the role of sports organisations and initiatives, such as the Special Olympics, that contribute to the integration of people with disabilities; We initiated the creation of the new budget line «Pilot project-Unified Sports Programme» for the budget 2009. This programme will integrate young people with and without disabilities across Europe (access to training, competitions, social activities and events).*
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## 4. Volunteering in sport



**How will your political group promote and act to ensure voluntary work, in particular in the sports sector?**

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### **Greens/European Free Alliance:**

We support volunteering and we are actively for a European Year for volunteering. There is a need for volunteers to be recognised and have a minimum protection and status (we would like to see some recognition of skills and minimum remuneration).

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### **Socialist Group in the European Parliament:**

Sport is the largest voluntary non-governmental organisational activity throughout Europe with more volunteers and participants than any other activity. Thus, the SPE Group welcomes the reference to sport in the Lisbon Treaty and in particular to voluntary activity. Therefore, the PSE Group requests - as it has done for 2009 - for the budget 2010 a special budget line for pilot projects in the field of sport supporting voluntary activities in the field of sport.

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### **European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats:**

We stress the importance of volunteer work in the field of sport as it acts as a major factor in stimulating and promoting social integration, as it promotes local democracy and active citizenship and also as it has an implicit economic value. We applaud therefore the work of volunteers in all sporting organisations and recognise that most of these organisations could not exist without volunteers.

We therefore

- Recommend that 'credits' or some form of reward for voluntary service be put in place at European level in order to promote and give greater recognition to this work;
- Call on the Member States and the Commission to give more encouragement to volunteer initiatives with regard to sport and sports organisations in the context of policy-making at national and European level;
- We are going to undertake concrete measures and proposals in the framework of the upcoming «European Year of volunteering 2011».

## 5. Financing of Grassroots Sport



**How will your political group act to ensure the financing of sport at the European level?**

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### **Socialist Group in the European Parliament:**

The PSE group is concerned at the possible deregulation of the market in gambling and lotteries, since state-run or state-licensed gambling or lottery services will be harmed by competition and will restrict their support and social mission mainly to amateur sport.

Furthermore, the PSE Group calls on the Commission to carry out a study of what would be the social effects on society and sport of full deregulation of the market in gambling and lotteries, and of what types of control mechanisms could be used to protect consumers.

The PSE Group will work together with the respective stakeholders to maintain the existing system of financing sport in the EU Member States.



### **Greens/European Free Alliance:**

The varied landscape of European sport (where it is still possible to push around established schemes: small teams like the Cyprus Anarthosis Famagouste manage it to champions league or FC Lorient make it to first league in France) must be encouraged and supported by a renewed solidarity favourable to a redistribution of financial means. The financial stability of our sports organizations is at stake. We want to maintain the current system of public financing of non-professional sport through contributions from state-run lotteries and licensed gambling bodies in the general interest. Furthermore, any liberalisation of the gambling and lotteries market must be carried out within framework conditions which ensure continuity of financing for professional and especially non-professional sport. We also support the system of centralized TV rights.

Concerning transparency and non-discriminatory measures, we propose that European Sports organisations should develop a transparent licensing procedure so as to ensure a greater degree of transparency in financial flows and curb distortions of competition. In this sense, we recommend to set up an independent financial supervision body consisting of independent lawyers and auditors with a view, in particular, to guaranteeing financial transparency and preventing financial abuses in sport. This body would be given efficient coercive instruments such as tutelary supervision, forbidding transfers, wage bill control or sports relegation and exclusion. The objective being to avoid financial drifts and treatment inequalities leading to competition distortion of economic capacity.



### **Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe:**

*Regarding betting, the ALDE Group is concerned at a possible deregulation of the market in gambling and lotteries and considers it appropriate to use the profits derived through such lotteries for purposes that are in the public interest, including the continuing financing of professional and amateur sports.*



### **European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats:**

The EPP-ED stressed the importance to ensure continued funding for sport, taking into account the important role of sport in term notably of effective tool for social integration. Therefore the EPP-ED Group is in favour of the present system of public funding for amateur sport, from state-run lotteries and bodies licensed to organise betting activities in the public interest: it is appropriate to use gambling and profits for purposes that are in the public interest, and a major source of income for amateur sports. The Member States have to take regulatory measures to protect sport from any harmful consequences of betting and ensure fair play and guarantee respect for intellectual property rights with regard to pools championship.

Among other issues, there is a possibility of reducing VAT for sport in view of its social significance, the promotion of the cooperation between professional and amateur sports in order to provide support for small clubs to ensure that not only the biggest clubs will benefit from the selling of the TV rights. The Mavrommatis report recommended that Member States and national sports federations and leagues introduce collective selling of media rights so that there should be an equitable redistribution of income between the clubs within and between the leagues and between professional and amateur sport. The sport organisations would reinvest a % of the revenue from TV rights to a particular sport to fund the volunteer and non-profit sectors.

EU funding: As sport can contribute to job creation and economic recovering, some EU funding programmes should be used by the Member States to finance sport projects.

EPP-ED Members tabled amendments in the Budget 2009 for the "preparatory action in the field of sport" of 6 million in commitment and payment appropriations for providing support for the identification of future policy actions in the area of sport (notably for combating doping, for financing the Mediterranean Games in Pescara and the special Olympics programme).

## 6. Sport and Education



**Which plans does your political group have built on the experiences gained in 2004 to improve the cooperation between educational institutions and sport organisations?**

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### **Greens/European Free Alliance:**

We ask Member States to ensure that the diversity of sports offered allow a certain opening of mind of children towards the world and the developing of values such as self respect and respect of others, solidarity, self -knowledge, tolerance...We also pledge for more physical education in schools as well as campaigns on the role of sport against obesity and school stress. We support the idea of promoting home-grown players in particular for football team so more money would be invested in education. We would also favour initiatives aiming at educating on the environment and environmental issues through sport.

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### **Socialist Group in the European Parliament:**

*The PSE Group recommends that Member States recognise the need to provide 'dual career' training for young sportsmen and -women, provide high-quality local training centres and communicate values which are important for professional sport. Another important aspect for the SPE-Group is the co-operation between schools and clubs. This means, that clubs should be more integrated into the after school programmes of schools.*

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### **European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats:**

The EPP-ED rapporteur, Doris Pack on the European Year of education through the sport stressed the importance to raise awareness about the potentially beneficial links between education and sport : the value of sport in terms of team spirit, solidarity, competition, fair-play, improvement of physical and social skills are necessary in a multicultural environment and for social integration.

The establishment of networks between educational institutions and sports organisations is one of the greatest achievements of the EYES. Synergy between the EYES and the national and local policies for education through sport is recognised by the various stakeholders involved in this process. Our political priority is to reinforce and develop efficiently those networks and to supports any political measures and actions which promote the "sport" dimension in the fields of voluntary work, informal and formal education as well as within others EC 's actions (such as in the fields of health, research,...)

The EPP-ED Group stresses the important role of sport in education, teaching young people the values of tolerance, honesty and respect for the rules of fair-play, and health care prevention, in particular to tackle obesity.

Sport and physical exercise should be promoted as education standards: the educational programmes would seek to increase and enhance children's and schoolchildren's physical activity from a very early age.

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## 7. Ethics and Sport



Which measures does your political group propose to fight ills such as doping and match fixing?



### Greens/European Free Alliance:

In our opinion the focus on fighting against doping is positive, though we stress the need to fight irregularities through checks, research, testing, long-term monitoring by independent doctors and through education. Furthermore professional clubs and sport organisations should adopt a pledge to combat doping and monitor compliance through internal and external independent checks;

Concerning betting and gambling we ask Member States to adopt regulatory measures to protect sport from any undue influence relating to betting. We also considered it necessary to reduce the offering of bets and to remove the risks of conflict between the economic interests of betting operators and sporting results. Member States should ban betting operators from owning sports clubs or having any commercial involvement in clubs. Any liberalisation of the gambling and lotteries market must be carried out within framework conditions which ensure continuity of financing for professional and amateur sport, which guarantee the integrity of sporting events and respect for their organisers' exploitation rights and which make it possible to combat gambling addiction.

Finally, to face the racism and anti-Semitism plague, good words are not enough. If we do not take common and exemplary sanctions to put an end to these intimidations, clubs and sports organisation are going to raise the tariffs to avoid excess of violence and streamline sports events. The rehabilitation of "fair play" needs no concession. Monkey screams, fascist flags or neo-nazi songs deserve the commitment of players, supporters, leaders and professional and amateurs leagues. All the available means must be mobilised to put an end to this immunity. European generalisation of obligation for trouble makers to sign a form of presence in a police station on a match night can be an energetic signal sent to these individuals. If we act intelligently, community contribution can put an end to these endemic violence inside and outside sports arenas and events.



### Socialist Group in the European Parliament:

*The PSE Group calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt regulatory measures which ensure that sport is protected from any improper influence associated with betting, to set up a European or national system to monitor betting operations and money streams of sport betting providers and to prohibit the ownership or commercial involvement (e.g. sponsorship) of sports clubs by betting companies as well as links of betting companies with a sportsperson, unless the betting companies exclude the club or sportsperson from their sports betting offer. The SPE-Group also welcomes a close cooperation of national and international Anti-Doping-Agencies to combat doping and guarantee fair competitions.*



### European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats:

The EPP-ED Group is particularly sensitized by the ethical issue confronting sport in our contemporary society.

Competition and fair play, considerations of winning, good sportsmanship and cheating, match fixing and illegal betting, doping and genetic enhancement in sport, permissibility of using performance-enhancing drugs in sport, gender and sexual equality in sport, violence, racism and xenophobia are some of important topics on which political measures should be taken.

Members States are responsible for preventing and dealing with violence, racism and xenophobia and immediate sanctions should be imposed for all acts of violence and racism on the sports grounds or in the stadium :among measures to prevent violence , we call on the Commission and the MS to implement an 'information policy' concerning cross-border police cooperation in the field of sport including exchanges of information between the law enforcement services while at the same time ensuring respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and protection of personal data

In the field of doping, we request MS to agree on a common legislative approach towards doping in order to ensure similar legal treatment in all MS and to define common positions in relation to WADA, Unesco, and the Council of Europe. Policy aimed at preventing and combating doping as well as prevention and training should be implemented in the same time. The MS have to treat the trade in illegal doping substances in the same manner as the trade in illicit drugs and have to adjust their national legislation accordingly. it's a necessity to fight irregularities, trough checks, research, testing, long-term monitoring by independent doctors and trough education and training.

## 8. Commitment of the EU Institutions to Sport



What is the programme of your political group in the field of sport during 2009-2014, considering in particular but not exclusively the Lisbon Treaty including the article on sport and how will your political group mainstream sport in all EU policies and follow up on the issues identified in the various European initiatives?



### **Greens/European Free Alliance:**

*3.7% of the European GDP and almost 15 millions jobs, sport is a very powerful economic vehicle. Numerous infrastructures in particular in the new Member States are obsolete and require a financial commitment from the European Union. The Lisbon Treaty institutionalise sport as a field where Member States remain competent but where the EU can lead support and coordination actions. Whatever happens to the Treaty, we surely will support the creation of a European sport policy which will impulse decisive impetus for the establishment of sport in solidarity guaranteeing tolerance and mutual respect. However, we also will respect subsidiarity and will recall the specificity of sport and the autonomy of sport organisations when necessary. We would also put an emphasis in greening sport especially in big events such as Olympics but also for smaller events or through education.*



### **Socialist Group in the European Parliament:**

The PSE Group urges the Commission to mainstream sport properly in existing EU policies and EU funding programmes and report on the progress of its mainstreaming.



### **European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats:**

*The EPP-ED Group stresses the importance of sport and its specificity in the EU, which is officially recognized in the new reforming Treaty and asks political commitments, incentive measure and actions, including legal framework.*

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