

Challenges of sport development in Europe



Sanda Čorak, PhD
Croatian judo federation, President
COC Vice-president

Position of sport(s) in Europe

- A **tradition of developing many sports** during a long period of time (Olympic and non-Olympic sports)
- **Differences and similarities in sport systems:** Olympic Committees and national governing bodies in sport (ministries or state offices) and local sport organizations including clubs
- **Sport planning documents/strategies still not developed** – sport is perceived as ‘fun and entertainment’, with health contribution – but contribution to education, economy, sustainable development - **neglected and rarely investigated**
- As **horizontal activity** sport is still not included in regional/country smart specialization strategies or this is just proclaimed
- Despite EU efforts on improving governance, there are **no defined and recognized criteria and success indicators in sport**

GREAT POTENTIAL, MANY CHALLENGES!



Key challenges:

It is important that sport ensure basic requirements to be considered as relevant sector:

- ❖ To ensure arguments on the relevance of sport on national and international level: **better sport statistics**
- ❖ To ensure adequate human resources: **better governance**,
- ❖ To ensure ‘full potential of sport as socio-economic phenomenon’: **better collaboration** with related sectors – education, health, economy etc.

Key challenge: **Better sport statistics**

- National statistics have not developed a set of basic indicators to follow development and progress of sport and its contribution to specific fields – EUROSTAT collect some indicators but they are not completely suitable to give comprehensive ‘picture of sport development’; Eurobarometer conducts research on Sport and Physical Activity in member states
- Comparisons with the other sectors on national level or comparisons on international levels are possible only concerning some issues like employment, international trade, attendance to manifestations, sport financing (different definition within different countries are making comparisons difficult); EU methodology on Satellite account for sport has not been developed and accepted (in comparison with tourism, for example where UNWTO defined methodology; Erasmus+ projects on this topic)

Key challenge: **Better governance and administrative capacity**

- Sport is multidisciplinary field and complex one – only important sector that involve work of professionals – employees together with **many volunteers, making sport governance also complex** (sport management is not only on tangible elements but also need to include intangible ones)
- Many social and technological trends impact sport and sport administratives very often are not able to follow sport development that has to be changed fast and fast reaction is needed (skills and competencies)
- Tradition of development of many sports and financing many sports on national level: **small public budgets** are split on different sports but clear criteria in a majority of cases not known (except of the medals won on OG and WC, EC, it is not clear what should be tasks of national federations?)



Key challenge: **Better collaboration**

- Collaboration of sports and related sectors/activities are missing on international as well as on national level – sports and tourism; sports and health; sports and culture, IT
- **Development plans/strategies of each of the related sectors rarely include sport – smart specialization strategies – sport is rarely included**
- Sport is multidisciplinary activity and it is always important to have experts in different areas – **collaboration between scientific disciplines is needed** (kinesiology, economics, management, medicine, sociology, psychology, etc.)

HOW CAN EU HELP?

- **BETTER SPORT STATISTICS:** work on defining comparable sets of indicators and research methodologies to create comparable data
- **BETTER SPORT GOVERNANCE:** developing adequate skills and competencies needed for better sport governance; sharing experiences and establishing networks of experts in specific fields
- **BETTER CROSS-SECTORAL COLLABORATION:** develop Recommendations for better national collaboration on sport and related sectors; initiate cross-sectoral cooperation on EU level