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DRAFT REPORT

on the role of EU policies in shaping the European Sport Model
(2025/2035(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the role of EU policies in shaping the European Sport Model (2025/2035(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 6 and 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which specify the competences and action of the Union in the area of sport, and in particular the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking into account the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013¹, and in particular Chapter IV on Sport,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 July 2007 entitled ‘White Paper on Sport’ ([COM\(2007\)0391](#)),
- having regard to the Commission report of 18 January 2011 entitled ‘Developing the European Dimension in Sport’ ([COM\(2011\)0012](#)),
- having regard to its resolution of 2 February 2012 on the European dimension in sport²,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2013 on match-fixing and corruption in sport³,
- having regard to its resolution of 2 February 2017 on an integrated approach to Sport Policy: good governance, accessibility and integrity⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 May 2021 on challenges of sports events organisers in the digital environment⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 November 2021 on EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward⁶,
- having regard to the study entitled ‘EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward’, published in June 2001 by its Directorate-General for Internal Policies⁷,
- having regard to the Commission study entitled ‘Study on the European Sport Model’, published in 2022⁸,

¹ [OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/817/oj](#).

² [OJ C 239 E, 20.8.2013, p. 46](#).

³ [OJ C 36, 29.1.2016, p. 137](#).

⁴ [OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 2](#).

⁵ [Texts adopted, P9_TA\(2021\)0236](#).

⁶ [OJ C 224, 8.6.2022, p. 2](#).

⁷ [Study requested by the CULT committee, 2001](#).

- having regard to the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (1 July 2024 – 31 December 2027)⁹,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 14 February 2024 entitled ‘Implementation Report on the EU Work Plan for Sport (2021–2024)’, ([COM\(2024\)0073](#)),
 - having regard to its study of June 2021 entitled ‘EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward’¹⁰,
 - having regard to the Council of Europe Convention of 18 September 2014 on the manipulation of sport competitions (the Macolin Convention),
 - having regard to the Council of Europe’s Revised European Sports Charter of 2022¹¹,
 - having regard to recent European Court of Justice rulings related to sport, including the cases of *International Skating Union v Commission*¹², *Royal Antwerp Football Club*¹³, *European Superleague Company*¹⁴ and *Lassana Diarra and FIFPRO v FIFA and URBSFA* (C-650/22),
 - having regard to the Resolution of 12 December 2021 of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the key features of a European Sport Model¹⁵,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A10-0000/2025),
- A. whereas sport is a European public good and an increasingly valuable European asset – socially, economically, politically and culturally;
 - B. whereas sport and physical activity play an important role in people’s lives, bringing communities and people together and improving health and well-being;
 - C. whereas sport serves as a vector for integration, especially for people with fewer opportunities;
 - D. whereas sport plays a vital role in promoting EU values such as democracy, respect, solidarity, diversity and equality;

⁸ [Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture \(European Commission\), 2022.](#)

⁹ [ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/3527/oj>.](http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/3527/oj)

¹⁰ Mittag, J. & Naul, R. (2021), EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward, European Parliament, Research for CULT Committee – Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels.

¹¹ [Revised European Sports Charter, 2022.](#)

¹² [ECLI:EU:C:2023:1012.](#)

¹³ [ECLI:EU:C:2023:1010.](#)

¹⁴ [ECLI:EU:C:2023:1011.](#)

¹⁵ [OJ C 501, 13.12.2021, p. 1.](#)

- E. whereas the European Sport Model is underpinned by key features such as the principles of solidarity, sustainability, integrity, inclusiveness, open competition and sporting merit;
- F. whereas the European Sport Model encompasses both elite and grassroots sport;
- G. whereas the European Sport Model encompasses the development of women's sport and the promotion of gender equality in sport;
- H. whereas there is a worrying decline in volunteers in grassroots sport;
- I. whereas recent judgements of the European Court of Justice represent an opportunity for EU policy to further enhance the European Sport Model;
- J. whereas sport faces numerous challenges, including problems of governance, corruption, match-fixing, doping, piracy and discrimination;
- K. whereas there is a rising trend of foreign investment and ownership, threats from pure-profit entertainment models and risks to the competitive balance in professional sport;

The European Sport Model: serving society and fostering inclusiveness

1. Reiterates its unwavering commitment to defending the European Sport Model in which sport serves societal objectives;
2. Recognises the need to protect the European Sport Model, ensuring the ongoing sustainable development of sport from grassroots to professional and at regional, national and European levels;
3. Stresses the need to further develop the European Sport Model in line with the interests of citizens, EU values and policy priorities such as equality, diversity, inclusion, health and well-being, the European social model as well as EU competitiveness;
4. Calls on all stakeholders to intensify their efforts to promote safe, inclusive, and equitable sport, with a focus on advancing gender equality, combating all forms of violence and harassment, and improving the accessibility of sports infrastructure;
5. Underlines the vital role of physical activity for children and young people, highlighting its immediate and long-term benefits for physical and mental health, as well as its contribution to developing young people's social and life skills;
6. Underlines the crucial role of volunteers in sport and asks the Commission to develop recommendations jointly with the Member States concerning volunteering in sport;

The European Sport Model: serving EU values and solidarity

7. Stresses the fundamental importance of the principle of solidarity in ensuring that sport serves the interests of all, rather than the profits of a few, and reiterates the need to strengthen the connection between professional and grassroots sport through more effective solidarity mechanisms;

8. Calls on the Commission to present a study mapping existing financial solidarity mechanisms and redistribution schemes covering different sports and levels within the EU, accompanied by recommendations for their further development;
9. Calls in this regard for the Commission to support legal certainty for sport governing bodies and explore the need for redistribution mechanisms between big and small leagues or competitions and in different disciplines, including youth sports;
10. Stresses the need to further increase funding for sport, especially under the new Erasmus+ programme for 2028-2034 and to support further synergies between other programmes and funds;
11. Recognises the flagship role of the Erasmus+ programme in financially supporting grassroots sport organisations and the programme's positive impact on citizens and society;
12. Believes that financial sustainability regulations are essential in sport, and stresses the need to effectively enforce and update these measures, including appropriate controls on player salaries in professional football;
13. Urges the Member States to continue to insist that hosts and organisers of major sports events uphold the values of the European Sport Model, including human rights and sustainability;
14. Acknowledges the rising trend of foreign investment and ownership in European sport and calls on the Commission to safeguard the financial integrity and competitive balance of European sport;
15. Acknowledges the risks of organised and financial crime in sport and believes that strict due diligence on investments and ownership in European sport must be guaranteed, including through extending the EU's anti-money laundering framework to cover professional sport;
16. Highlights the need to address at the EU level the growing issue of doping across all levels of sport, including mass participation, recreational, and school sports;

The European Sport Model: serving to promote collective governance, athletes' rights and fans' voices

17. Recognises that the autonomy of sport is conditional upon good governance, and calls on international, European, and national sport organisations, as well as stakeholder representative organisations to implement the highest standards of governance and transparency;
18. Welcomes efforts made by governing bodies on collective governance and encourages further steps to strengthen stakeholder representation in decision-making, with a particular commitment to ensuring the involvement of athletes and fans;
19. Urges sport governing bodies to implement further measures on equality, diversity and inclusion, in particular to address the persistent under-representation of women in leadership positions;

20. Stresses the need for representativeness standards and checks as a prerequisite for stakeholder organisations to be involved in governance processes;
21. Calls on the Commission to promote social dialogue in sport as a key decision-making process consistent with the principles of good governance and to improve its representativeness and inclusion;
22. Proposes that the Commission consult with relevant stakeholders on the establishment of an EU Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Professional Sport;
23. Calls on the EU institutions to protect and promote the fundamental rights of athletes, including social rights such as the freedom of association, collective bargaining, non-discrimination, decent working conditions and occupational health and safety principles;

The European Sport Model: how EU policy can serve to strengthen and protect

24. Calls on the Commission to present a long-term strategy on sport policy in response to the strong political impetus from Member States and EU institutions, focusing on key features of the European Sport Model and to propose concrete actions in this regard;
25. Calls on the Commission to fulfil its role as the guardian of the treaties in one of the most important social and economic sectors of the Union by actively monitoring and addressing threats to the European Sport Model, such as breakaway competitions that endanger the overall sport ecosystem;
26. Reaffirms the specific nature of sport while upholding respect for EU law and recognises that there is not a one-size-fits-all way in which the European Sport Model applies across different sports;
27. Calls on the Commission to provide clear guidelines on the application of EU law, including competition law, to the sport sector, also in light of recent rulings of the European Court of Justice;

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28. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Sport is deeply ingrained in the lives of Europeans. Whether as fans, athletes, volunteers, or participants, people across Europe share a passion for sport – and as policymakers, we share a passion for shaping sport’s role in society. Sport is more than entertainment, it is part of our social fabric. It contributes to building cohesive communities, promotes healthy lifestyles, and teaches us essential life skills at every age. It also supports the equality and integration of people with fewer opportunities, in particular people with disabilities.

Beyond that, sport is a growing economic sector, contributing 2.12% to the EU’s GDP and providing jobs to nearly six million people. European sport does not only represent a major asset on the global stage, but is also celebrated domestically by fostering cooperation between EU Member States.

Given the vital role sport plays in European society, we must carefully consider how it is organised, how it functions and how it is governed and developed. Reflecting this, Europe has a distinctive approach to sport through the European Sport Model. This model is based on principles such as fairness, open competitions, sporting merit and solidarity between all levels of sport. These features have been reaffirmed through numerous resolutions, reports and debates, demonstrating the broad consensus around the importance of protecting and promoting sport as one of the key cornerstones of our social and cultural fabric.

Europe’s commitment to strengthening the European Sport Model is clear - but sport itself stands at an important turning point. Growing commercialisation, foreign and state-level investment and ownership, profit-driven models, breakaway competitions, and governance issues threaten the integrity and sustainability of sport. These challenges are not limited to football. They affect a wide range of sports and appear only to be growing in scale and complexity, further testing the resilience of the European Sport Model.

In response, this forward-looking report focuses on what can and should be done to face these challenges. Specifically, the Rapporteur sets out concrete proposals and recommendations on how EU policy can mitigate these challenges and play a role in developing and promoting the European Sport Model. The report is structured around the concept of the Model serving four specific areas. Firstly, its role in society and fostering inclusiveness, secondly, promoting EU values and solidarity, thirdly, focusing on inclusive stakeholder governance, and finally, how EU policy can serve to strengthen and protect the European Sport Model.

The Rapporteur firmly rejects the notion that the EU lacks the competence or political will to support European sport. On the contrary, this report highlights a strong foundation of past policy actions, increasing EU institutional engagement, and growing partnership with sport stakeholders at EU level. Recent rulings by the European Court of Justice on sport governance and athletes’ rights, create a clear opportunity for stronger EU action. They underline the need to reinforce the European Sport Model, defend values-based sport, and ensure that governance aligns with EU law.

This is a pivotal moment to set out a long-term strategy for European sport policy. The Rapporteur calls for a renewed focus on enhancing the key features of the European Sport Model and advancing concrete actions in this regard. To support this work, a detailed assessment is required on which key features are subject to the highest pressures and need to be safeguarded, including by appropriate and available legal means.

A prominent example is the necessity to maintain a healthy balance between national team competitions and club competitions, a balance that underpins the solidarity model and grassroots development across many sports in Europe.

The Rapporteur underlines the need for stronger recognition of the specific nature of sport within EU law and policymaking. This applies in particular to competition law, free movement and state aid provisions. Accordingly, the report calls on the Commission to provide clear practical guidelines on how EU law applies to the sport sector, especially in light of recent European Court of Justice rulings. Recognising that there is not a universal, one-size-fits-all way in which the European Sport Model applies across different sports, the report calls for monitoring of emerging threats, in order to identify risks to the overall ecosystem.

Strengthening financial solidarity is essential to the future of the European Sport Model. The Rapporteur calls for stronger links between professional and grassroots sport through more effective solidarity mechanisms and fairer revenue sharing. While many positive examples already exist, there are sports and competitions where financial solidarity is insufficient, leaving grassroots sport development heavily dependent on citizens, regional municipalities or EU funding programmes. The Rapporteur therefore calls on the Commission to present a study mapping the existing financial solidarity mechanisms and redistribution schemes covering different sports with concrete recommendations on how to further develop solidarity. In particular, redistribution between professional and grassroots sport is needed to support vital areas such as women's and youth tournaments, which are important for the long-term development of sport. Securing additional funds for sport is of paramount importance. In future programmes such as Erasmus+, sport should receive more funds from the overall EU budget.

The Rapporteur stresses the need for robust financial sustainability measures to safeguard the long-term health of sport clubs and their role in communities. The report also addresses the rising trend of foreign and state-level investment and ownership, as well as pure-profit entertainment models, which threaten the financial integrity and competitive balance of European sport. Without proper safeguards, there is a serious risk of distorting competition and undermining the social values that underpin the European Sport Model.

While the application of the European Sport Model may vary across sports, the core values and governance standards it embodies are universal. These include human rights, equality, diversity, inclusion, and the broader principles of the European social model. To this end, the report calls on all actors to increase efforts to ensure safe, inclusive and equal sport, with particular attention to supporting gender equality, tackling all forms of violence and harassment and making sport infrastructure more accessible.

The COVID-19 pandemic also exposed vulnerabilities in the sport ecosystem, particularly the sharp decline in sport volunteering. Acknowledging the skills and qualifications gained through volunteering would not only honour the efforts of volunteers, but also encourage greater participation and strengthen their base across the sport sector. Therefore, the report requests the Commission together with the Member States to develop recommendations in this field.

Strong, inclusive and representative governance is essential for the future of both European sport and the European Sport Model. The report underlines the need for greater stakeholder

representation in governance, with particular emphasis on ensuring that athletes and fans have a real voice in decision-making processes. However, the Rapporteur also underlines that stakeholder organisations themselves must be fit for purpose and apt to credibly assume such roles in the governance of their sport. To this end, the report stresses that representativeness standards and checks are a pre-requisite for the involvement of stakeholder organisations.

Building on the successful example of the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Professional Football, the report proposes the establishment of an EU Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Professional Sport. This is linked to the Rapporteur's strong conviction that more should be done to promote the fundamental rights of athletes, including social rights.

A key message in this report is that autonomy of sport can only be sustained through good governance. The Rapporteur encourages relevant international, European and national sport organisations as well as stakeholder representative bodies to adopt the highest standards of governance and transparency. The report also calls on sport governing bodies to take stronger action on equality, diversity and inclusion in sport governance, with a particular focus on addressing the persistent under-representation of women and minorities in leadership roles.

To conclude, this report does not seek to *re-purpose* what has already been said about the European Sport Model – it calls for action. As different sports face mounting threats to its principles and values, it is crucial that EU policymakers stand firmly with sport. We cannot afford complacency in the face of the real and immediate challenges.

Europe is the birthplace of modern sport with fair play and competitive spirit deeply rooted in its culture and history. The European Sport Model is evolving, but the principles that drive our sport policy remain unchanged. EU policy must empower and hold accountable sport organisations and stakeholders. It is vital that we champion the Model in a way that respects and cultivates the unique characteristics of sport.

ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT

Pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, the rapporteur declares that he received input from the following entities or persons in the preparation of the draft report:

Entity and/or person
Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union
Council of Europe
FIFPRO
European Club Association (ECA)
Union of the European Clubs (UEC)
FIFA
UEFA
European Leagues
Football Supporters European (FSE)
European Olympic Committee EU Office
EU Athletes
Special Olympics
Sports Rights Owners Coalition (SROC)
International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA)
Play the Game
The European Organisation for Grassroots Sport (ENGSO)
European University Sport Association (EUSA)
President of the European Athlete as Student network
Sport and Citizenship
Europe Active
Panathlon International EU Brussels
European Association of Sport Employers (EASE)
A 22 Sports Management
La Liga
Stephen Weatherill, Good Governance 4 Sport
Arnout Geeraert, Utrecht School of Governance
Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry (FESI)
Association Representative Youth In Le Champ Du Sport Et De L'animation (ANESTAPS)
European Youth Alliance in Sport (EYAS)
The Association For International Sport for All (TAFISA)
European Network of Outdoor Sports (ENOS)

The list above is drawn up under the exclusive responsibility of the rapporteur.

Where natural persons are identified in the list by their name, by their function or by both, the rapporteur declares that he has submitted to the natural persons concerned the European Parliament's Data Protection Notice No 484 (<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/data-protect/index.do>), which sets out the conditions applicable to the processing of their personal data and the rights linked to that processing.

