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Study on the European Sport Model

*A report to the European
Commission*

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A report to the European Commission

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EU Work Plan on Sport 2021-2024 identifies the European Sport Model as a key topic and mandates the European Commission to study the impact of closed sport competitions on the system of organised sport, taking into account the specificity of sport and looking at the possible challenges faced by European sport organisations and federations. In this context, the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission commissioned Ecorys and Kea in August 2021 to undertake a study on the European Sport Model. The study has aimed to provide more informed evidence and background on what is happening to the European Sport Model at large through undertaking a mapping of the evolution of sport governance regulations, finances and practices in different places and different organised sports over time. It also aimed to examine how the European Sport Model is adapting to the differing conditions and contexts affecting organised sports in different Member States across the EU.

It is important to highlight that this study focuses specifically on how the European Sport Model applies in organised and competitive sports and does not examine in any detail more informal sport and physical activity participation activities.

Background

The European model of sport specifies the core features of how sport is organised in most European countries and disciplines. This model is further detailed in the staff working document accompanying the European Commission's 2007 White Paper on Sport:

- A pyramid structure for the organisation of sport and of sport competitions (from grassroots to national and international levels) and a central role for the sports federations;
- A system of open competitions based on the principle of promotion/relegation;
- Solidarity between the various constituent elements and operators;
- A broadly autonomous sports movement that may develop partnerships with the public authorities (autonomy of sport);
- Structures based on voluntary activity.

The study comes at an important moment as the European Sport Model has recently been discussed extensively at the Council of the European Union where the Council of Ministers in November 2021 approved a resolution on the key features of a European Sport Model. While the Council of the European Union refers to "a" European Sport Model in its resolution instead of the often-referenced European Sport Model(s), the terminology issue is still being discussed at EU level. For the purposes of this study, however, the model is understood as the key features of a European Sport Model. The European Parliament, in its October 2021 Resolution on EU Sport Policy, also raised the importance of protecting and strengthening the European Sport Model, in particular from the threat of closed and breakaway competitions.

The study therefore can feed into political discussions regarding possible future policy actions at a European level by reiterating the common understanding on what the model aims to represent, examining how the European Sport Model is evolving and its continued value in response to recent economic and societal trends and possible threats. The study aims to provide transparency for authorities, the sport movement and other stakeholders in the field with a view to supporting future political and policy discussions designed to strengthen and protect the European Sport Model.

Methodology

At the scoping stage of the study interviews were conducted with a small number of sport federations and academics with specific expertise in the topic. A literature review was also

undertaken which identified and summarised existing literature (in English, French, German, Spanish and Italian) addressing relevant contextual issues. The interim stage examined the application of the model and trends in 15 selected sports. The selection was based on a number of criteria including in particular the need to balance team sports and individual sports, ensuring a mixture of mass participation and lower participation sports and the need to ensure a good representation of issues and developments identified at the scoping stage. The 15 selected sports that were extensively researched during this phase were the following: Archery; Athletics; Basketball; Cycling; Football; Handball; Ice Hockey; Ice Skating; Judo; Rowing; Rugby; Swimming; Tennis; Triathlon; Volleyball. Once the 15 sports had been agreed upon, the study team conducted further and more extensive desk research in order to identify and categorise how the key features of the European Sport Model applied in each sport. The study team also undertook approximately 2-4 stakeholder interviews per sport. These included the European and national federations for the different sports, EU Athletes, International Sport and Culture Association, European and national leagues, Ministries of sport, and Players Union representations for the different sports.

During the interim stage, the study team also produced and disseminated a wider survey of stakeholders to gather views on the relevance of the main traits of the European Sport Model and the importance of specific trends affecting our understanding of the model. The survey was disseminated across a representative sample of respondents from international and national authorities, sport federations and civil society across all EU Member States. The survey went live on 2 November 2021 and was closed on 10 December 2021 and received a total of 235 responses.

Based on the information collected through the desk research, interviews and survey, the study team produced short sport fiches for each of the 15 selected sports. The sport fiches provide an overview of how the European Sport Model applies in each case and key trends affecting the model. These are annexed to the Final Report. The study team also compiled six case studies focusing on particular developments within the sports in order to illustrate issues of relevance to the European Sport Model and how it is adapting to particular trends.

During the final phase of the study, emerging findings were checked and validated with high-level experts and stakeholders in the field in order to inform the production of a Final Report.

Key findings: Relevance of European Sport Model's key features

The study has considered the continuing relevance of the European Sport Model. Key findings are set out below in relation to each of the key features of the model.

Pyramid structure

Our research has shown that the key features of the European Sport Model are generally applied in the way sport is organised and structured. All the European team sports analysed follow a pyramid model where the sport federation is the main governing body for a given sport and is generally responsible for the organisation and development of professional and amateur sport. There is also generally a common structure from grassroots clubs at the foundation of the pyramid to national sport federations, which regulate and organise national championships and European and international sport federations which are generally at the top level of the pyramid.

There is evidence however that the role and influence of European federations with respect to international federations varies in practice. To some extent this relates to how competitions are organised and their relative importance at the international and European levels. In some exceptional cases, more fragmented organisational structures apply where there is a much looser relationship with the pyramid structure.

While the broad organisational arrangements are therefore fairly similar across European sports, they however do show discrepancies in terms of 1) the involvement of stakeholder groups including athletes' representatives in the organisational structures of European

sports; and 2) the level of concentration in terms of commercial negotiations, and in particular concerning media rights.

In many of the team sports, national leagues have a particular role in decision-making and commercialisation. Sport leagues typically handle commercial deals and especially broadcasting rights for professional sport. This is generally set out in the agreement between the league and the sport federation, where general principles for tendering broadcasting rights are established. Such a model is applied in most team sports. The picture is slightly different when it comes to individual sports as leagues are less likely to be formally involved in high level decision-making processes and the organisation of competitions.

Open competition

The principle of open competition is generally applied across European sports and is regarded as a specific feature of European sport, distinguishing it from other models such as the North American model. The system of promotion/relegation is almost universally followed in team sports – at a national level, all countries studied for football, basketball, rugby, handball and volleyball generally follow a similar promotion/relegation system. This principle is not applied in only a few exceptional cases at the national and European levels. At the European level, a few closed or semi-closed leagues exist such as the EuroLeague (basketball) or the Six Nations tournament in rugby.

There is also evidence that the promotion/relegation principle is not always sufficient on its own to ensure fair and open competition as there is evidence that financial distribution mechanisms also play an important part in ensuring fair and open competition. Countries can have the same promotion and relegation systems yet the openness of competition can vary considerably across different countries in terms of numbers of genuine contenders for the national leagues. The need to find a “competitive balance” is however a complex and multifaceted area and one in which governing bodies and stakeholders invest efforts to ensure the integrity of fair and open competitions.

There is an emphasis in the European Sport Model on promotion/relegation whereas most individual sports covered in the study do not apply the promotion/relegation system but rather use a ranking system. The principle of open competitions generally applies in these systems though there are marked differences across sports in how the ranking systems work in practice including the types of qualification criteria used.

Solidarity

There is a consensus that the financial solidarity mechanism should remain a core pillar of the European Sport Model in the future and a recognition that European sport federations are world-leaders in this context. For example, UEFA’s HatTrick Programme is one of the largest solidarity and development programmes ever to be established by a sports body. Looking ahead, there is a broad consensus amongst stakeholders on the need to keep improving these mechanisms and their application in practice. While all sport stakeholders acknowledge the principle of solidarity and redistribution of revenues as essential to the survival and ongoing development of their sport at all levels across Europe, areas for improvement are highlighted in many sports. These relate mostly to the need to better balance the amounts of commercial revenue generated at the elite level and the amounts redistributed at grassroots level, along with a perceived lack of transparency on the revenues themselves and their redistribution applied by the governing bodies (see also below under trends). The study has nevertheless identified many examples of transparent solidarity mechanisms, for example in terms of how the International Olympic Committee distributes revenues to international federations and in the case of some of the European Federations that were examined for the study. For some sports however there is a limited availability of data which suggests that in some cases there is a need for greater transparency on level of payments from elite leagues to lower leagues and amateur levels. For a number of the sports, public funding plays a crucial role in supporting the financial sustainability of the grassroots sector.

Autonomy

According to the model, sport federations and governing bodies should have enough *autonomy* to conduct the organisation of sport as they see fit, but within the limits of EU law. It is then of key importance that sport federations and governing bodies have the ability to self-regulate and to be guided by good-governance principles and practices. There is a general recognition however that sport federations must earn their autonomy through accountability and transparency which are a prerequisite for sport federations to benefit from their autonomy. The research highlights a range of initiatives taken forward by European and international federations to promote good governance. While many federations are proactive in the development of good governance approaches, the research has shown that there is also a role for government in influencing federations to adopt such practices in line with European objectives and standards. A reduced level of state involvement in sport which has been seen across Europe has highlighted the weakening of certain natural levels of protection of public interest and its link to policy. In some of the sports and countries analysed for this study, good governance principles are monitored by governments and are a condition of funding. Public authorities therefore also play a key role in encouraging good governance practices through funding allocation criteria and conditions attached.

Volunteers

The role of volunteers is shown to be fundamental to all sports. There is a clear dependence on volunteers for European sports, and they play a crucial role both in terms of running sport clubs and federations, as well as supporting the organisation of sport competitions (at all levels). The development of different programmes and support schemes for volunteering are essential to cater to this important pillar of the European Sport Model.

Reflection on the role of European values

The focus of the research has been to examine how the key features of the European Sport Model apply to the organisation of sport in practice. A common theme in many of the discussions with stakeholders however is that the European Sport Model ought to have a more explicit focus on the promotion of particular European values (for example, democracy, labour rights and human rights). Such views raise expectations regarding the civic responsibility of sport federations. A common assertion is that a greater alignment between the articles of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the European Sport Model could inspire the core values that should be promoted as widely as possible. There is evidence that the development of good governance practice to safeguard the autonomy of sport federations, as highlighted above, helps to ensure that those specific European values are reflected in the application of the European Sport Model. Such values are therefore already part of European sport, both at grassroots and professional levels. A range of stakeholders have suggested however that the European Sport Model does not necessarily provide an overall framework for the development of such practices.

Key findings: Main trends affecting the European Sport Model

The study has also examined how some key trends are affecting the European Sport Model. Key findings are highlighted below.

Internationalisation and commercialisation

There appears to be a consensus that internationalisation and commercialisation of European sport can be regarded as positive for the future development of European sport where they remain aligned with the values and solidarity spirit and objectives of the European Sports Model. However, these trends could become threats to the European Sport Model with the development of a commercial entertainment and pure profit driven model. The effects of internationalisation on sport manifest through increasing global audiences, wider media coverage of events and competitions and the increasing role of multinational companies in investment and sponsorship including the increasing activities and influence of private equity and venture capital interests in European sport.

The internationalisation of audiences encourages sports to exploit this increasing market potential through higher sponsorship deals, increasing merchandise sales and higher value broadcasting rights. The concern amongst some stakeholders that only the “commercially attractive sports” (i.e., suited to television) will survive and smaller sports may suffer due to a lack of funding is not borne out by the research. The evidence indicates however that internationalisation and commercialisation are affecting specific sports to varying degrees and in different ways.

Commercialisation in the form of enhanced revenues is generally not considered a threat for sport per se as in principle there is potential for increased revenues from commercialisation to trickle down to provide benefits for the sport as a whole. The benefits of commercialisation are seen in some sports for example volleyball where enhanced revenues have helped to reinforce the international federation’s solidarity approach. For some of the more popular team sports, such as football, rugby and basketball, however, there is evidence from some countries that commercialisation is encouraging a greater concentration of wealth amongst a smaller group of elite clubs and their financial backers. Stakeholders have highlighted that this may be exacerbated where there is a pure profit motive for owners and investors. This type of commercialisation, is viewed by some as a possible threat to the European Sport Model. It can distort the role and function of sport by shifting focus from traditional solidarity and social/societal service functions to pure business and profit motivations and drive to closed competitions in which the sporting merit is undermined as well as the possibility for all clubs to compete at the highest level in domestic and European competitions.

This type of commercialisation can also have other negative consequences for the European Sport Model. It can bring about a number of new issues (for example doping, match-fixing, fraud, money laundering or any other form of corrupt criminal activity) which may not be covered by the European Sport Model. Moreover, increasing interdependence between sport federations and private TV networks with regard to broadcasting major sporting events and competitions may compromise the autonomy of sport. The increasing influence of media companies and sponsors as stakeholders also results in clubs distancing themselves from servicing the interests of their fans in order to pursue more profitable business relationships.

The dual role of sports governing bodies is recognised as an established principle in European law and policy, in line with the autonomy and special role of sport. Stakeholders point to the dual role for governing bodies as fundamental to a European sport model which ensures that sport serves wider social and societal functions. At the same time, stakeholders see it as crucial that conflicts of interest are avoided. As highlighted below, while increasing efforts have been made by sport federations to address issues of good governance and integrity, the research highlights the challenges for some federations in balancing commercial objectives with other objectives such as ensuring fair and open competition and fulfilling their solidarity role.

Redistribution of revenues from elite to grassroots sport

There is also concern amongst many stakeholders that for some sports, commercialisation is undermining the European Sport Model’s solidarity principle and leading to an inequitable distribution of resources between the elite and grassroots levels. There is evidence that mechanisms of redistribution of revenues in top-tiers and closed competitions do not substantially contribute to counteract the significant economic advantage of the biggest clubs and leagues, by also preventing an effective redistribution of revenues for the development of talents and of the sport movement in lower-level competitions. The research also shows that different mechanisms of redistribution of revenues sustaining the grassroots level exist in almost all the sports considered, but not all of these provide enough financial support to the grassroots level. As a result of this, in some sports the role of public authorities is crucial to fund the development of the relevant sports at amateur or grassroots level.

Development of closed competition structures

Additionally, the increasing commercialisation of sport and concentration of wealth in certain sports appears to be increasing the pressure for the most successful clubs to favour closed competition structures. There is a perception that by eliminating the financial risk of relegation, clubs who compete in closed leagues can be more attractive to potential sponsors and investors. However, there is significant concern that closed competitions are less likely to establish solidarity mechanisms, which has raised concerns that commercial event organisers profit from sport federations' investment in talent development whilst at the same time widening the gulf with teams that do not compete in closed leagues. Over the years, sport federations' ability to exercise their autonomy and penalise participants in non-affiliated events has been shaped under EU competition law. In certain sports, some federations and private organisers have found ways to collaborate without apparently engendering risks to the integrity of the overall ecosystem and development of their sports. Certainly, the literature reports that the trend for privately organised competitions will accelerate in future, and so cooperation between private event organisers and sport federations will in some cases be important to preserve integrity of sports and competitions and maintain a healthy development and solidarity basis including the links between grassroots and elite sport.

Development of good governance practices

Our research also outlined the increasing relevance and importance of *good governance practices* developed and implemented by sport authorities and governing bodies to adhere to good governance principles, a fundamental trait of the European Sport Model. The mapping review outlined how increasing efforts have been taken recently by sport governing authorities at national and international level to increase their transparency and accountability, by for instance adopting new codes of conducts or by setting up term limits for the main elected roles in governing bodies. As also outlined by more than half of the survey respondents, the recent development of good governance practices generally align with the values of the European Sport Model, although several stakeholders interviewed argued that more efforts are needed to increase the transparency and accountability of sport governing authorities as well as to increase the involvement of athletes, women and of small federations in decision-making processes. Several efforts have been taken to safeguard the integrity of the game (i.e., illegal betting, corruption, etc.) and of the athletes (i.e., fight against doping, athletes' welfare), while more efforts are still needed to ensure gender balance in governing or executive roles, as well as to ensure adequate representation of athletes and smaller federations or countries in sport governing bodies. It is also clear that good governance structures, transparency and representativeness need to be assured by those stakeholders who engage with governing bodies.

Volunteering trends

There is evidence that the number of sport volunteers in many sports and in many Member States has been declining. The role of the volunteer is also seen to be changing as volunteering is no longer intrinsically connected to grassroots sports, but it is seen as operating at all levels. Moreover, the demographics of volunteers can also be different across different sports and Member States and is also constantly changing. Some stakeholders are concerned that trends in volunteering are affecting the structure of sport and sustainability of grassroots sport. There are fears from some survey respondents that a decline in volunteering and the changing role and demographics of volunteering could undermine the European Sport Model. Nevertheless, over half of the survey respondents did not see such trends as having a big impact on the European Sport Model. Sport can only survive however with the strong support of volunteers. Increased pressure to implement good governance processes and standards in sport has also been highlighted as a possible barrier to attracting committed volunteers. In order to combat these declining numbers of sport volunteers, volunteers must be encouraged, socially stimulated, educated on the importance of their work, and provided with training and skills development and reasonable benefits.

Sporting habits

There is evidence that over the last two or three decades that sporting habits are moving from participation in clubs and in team sports towards participation in informal settings. A lack of public funding and resources has been a factor in contributing to changing habits in practising sport for certain citizens. The Covid-19 pandemic has also had an impact on sport and physical activity behaviour and has overall, with some exceptions, been seen to have exacerbated such trends towards individual and informal sporting practices. Such trends undoubtedly have an impact on affiliation to clubs, on sport pyramids and on sport federations both at national and European levels. Moreover, over half of the survey respondents did see that such trends in sport and physical activity participation and habits constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model. Sport federations and clubs have an important role in ensuring sport participation, as highlighted by the European Sport Model. Similar good practice initiatives as in Germany and Ireland should therefore be adopted by different sport federations/Member States to ensure continued participation of their sports at club and team level. However, given the evolving trends in habits and interests of citizens in practicing sport, the European Sport Model may also need to embrace other initiatives that take place outside of traditional sport structures.

Other key developments

Equality, inclusion and diversities, sustainability and digitalisation are also seen to be impacting the traditional European Sports Model in terms of bringing about changes in their governance structures, policies, activities, and projects. While the level of ambition and the progress of sport organisations towards these trends differs across sports and countries, evidence suggests that they are likely to remain very high on the agenda of all sports. The latter, are progressively transitioning towards increasing the representation of women in participation and governance, becoming more sustainable and capable of tapping into digitalisation opportunities.

Key findings: Survey findings

As indicated above, the aim of the survey was to gather stakeholder views on the relevance of the main traits of the European Sport Model and key trends that affect the evolution of the model. The survey was disseminated across a representative sample of respondents from international and national authorities, sport federations and civil society across all EU Member States. A total of 235 responses were received, mostly from national sport federations, sport clubs, national, regional or local governments, and from 19 Member States. Respondents either answered the survey as somebody involved in or who has an interest in a specific sport; or somebody who has a general involvement or interest in sport in general. The survey questionnaire was structured around three main points:

- The extent to which the main features of the European Sport Model are relevant to specific sports/the organisation of sport in Europe;
- The extent to which the identified trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model for the organisation of the specific sport/organisation of sport in Europe; and
- Measures/good practice initiatives that are aiming to address those trends.

The majority of respondents indicated that the main features of the European Sport Model (i.e., pyramidal structure of sport, principle of open competition with promotion/relegation system, reliance on voluntary work, principle of financial solidarity, autonomy and independence of sporting organisations) are either very relevant or relevant to the specific sport identified or the organisation of sport in Europe. There are different views across the different identified trends and threats (i.e., internationalisation, commercialisation, practices in organising competitions, concentration of revenues in elite level sport/less redistribution to lower-level competitions and grassroots, development of good governance practices, number of volunteers, participation habits, social development goals) on whether such trends and threats show a movement away from the European Sport Model or not. There seem to be however, consensus on what the essence and soul of European sport and the European sport model are. This includes openness and solidarity

as opposed to a model based on the pure profit. Moreover, some measures/good practice initiatives that aim to address those specific trends were also highlighted by the survey respondents (for example, the Act on Sport in Slovakia which offers to people volunteering in sport compensation for the time spent at a sport event, without taxation (maximum €500 per year), and there is a movement in the Netherlands towards hybrid models where a growing numbers of professionals within associations support, guide and complement volunteers with knowledge and expertise).

Key conclusions

The research review suggests that the application of the European Sport Model's key features are evolving with continuing scope to reflect good practice principles in gender equality, sustainability and digitalisation development, in addition to integrating additional elements such as increased transparency, strengthened solidarity mechanisms, and better embedding the core values of the European Union as such. Importantly, through the study, several voices raised the need to involve more broadly the sport movement around discussions on the European Sport Model, including grassroots sport organisations and representatives of athletes to strengthen the accountability and representativeness of the Model.

The exploitation of economic opportunities because of global interest in European sport that can be served more easily, thanks to new technology developments and opportunities including new media, can be seen as an enabling factor as well as a threat. At the same time, there is evidence of reduced volunteering and capacity for sport federations. This appears to be happening in parallel with growing expectations to cater for public values and principles, equality, sustainability and participation in sport. The research has also highlighted a risk that new developments favour economic opportunities to the detriment of interests of key stakeholders such as clubs, players and fans while actions to counter this is less explicit.

A key question that remains therefore is how far the features of the European Sport Model can help to preserve sport as a public good and realise policy goals through sport. By implication there is a question of who should be the guardian or provide stewardship to preserve the public interest values and ensure coaches and support staff are equipped to meet all new expectations. The European Sport Model assumes a central role for the sport federations here but with conditions attached. The research raises an underlying question however of whether promotion of good practice standards, or even more stringent regulation are needed to define who and via what processes such values are applied should be ensured.

The research has also raised a specific question of whether more public money and resources are also needed to ensure the preservation of sport as a public good, realise policy goals through sport, and ensure the sustainability of the grassroots sports sector. As identified through the study, good practice initiatives including cooperation with private competition organisers should be applied. More strategic alliances with health providers could also be developed. Pressure for more physical activity as a preventive medicine can thus help create a new business case, other than those purely commercially driven actors selling tv-rights. Moreover, sharing good governance principles, and promoting multisport cooperation on common challenges such as solidarity, transparency and monitoring and evaluation approaches through multisport initiatives (i.e., letting smaller federations benefit from the expertise developed in larger federations) should also be applied.

1.0 Introduction

This section outlines the purpose and objectives of the study, the study methodology and work carried out, in addition to key research considerations.

1.1 Purpose and objectives of the study

The European Union's Work Plan on Sport 2021-2024 identifies the European model of sport as a key topic and mandates the European Commission to study the impact of closed sport competitions on the system of organised sport, taking into account the specificity of sport and looking at the possible challenges faced by European sport organisations and federations. In this context, the overall aim of the study is to provide more informed evidence and background on what is happening to the European Sport Model at large, with a focus on the impact of economic developments and the organisation of sport competitions in line with the European Union's Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024. The study's objective is to undertake a mapping of the evolution of sport governance regulations, finances and practices in different places and different sports over time, and to examine how the European Sport Model is adapting to the differing conditions and contexts affecting different sports and Member States across the EU. It is important to highlight that this study focuses specifically on how the European Sport Model applies to organised and competitive sports only. It does not address more informal sport and physical activity participation activities.

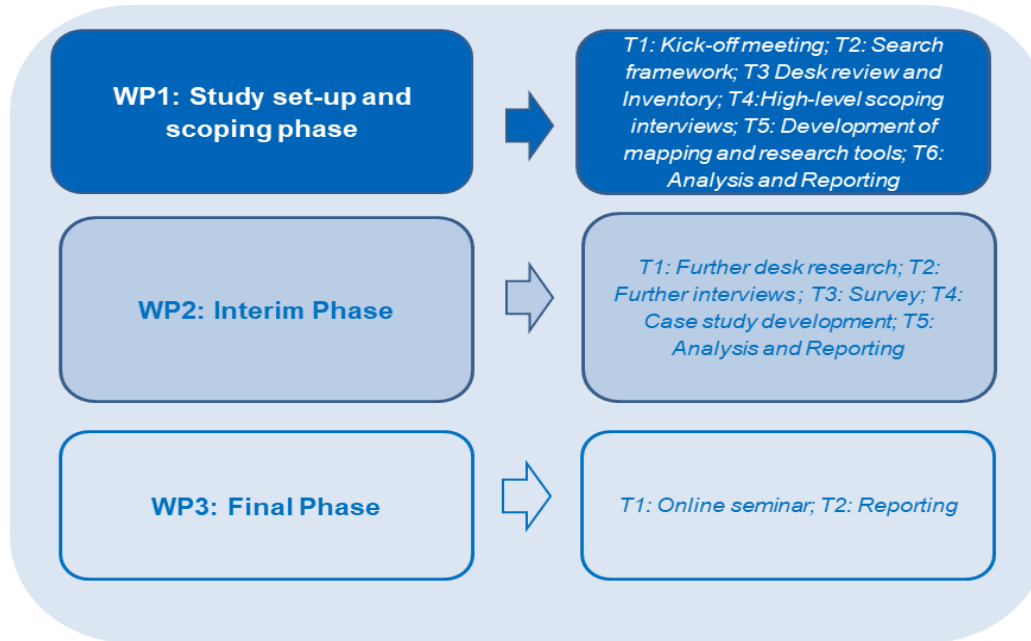
The study comes at an important moment as the European Sport Model has recently been discussed extensively at the Council of the European Union where the Council of Ministers in November 2021 approved a resolution on the key features of a European Sport Model in light of the increasing commercialisation of professional sport, which is making sport increasingly profit-oriented. This is further described in Section 2.1 below. As a result, Member States and the European Council are politically interested in the results of the study. The study therefore feeds into political discussions at a European level by reiterating the common understanding on what the model aims to represent, examining how the European Sport Model is evolving and its continued value in response to recent economic and societal trends. The study aims to provide transparency for authorities, the sport movement and other stakeholders in the field.

It should be noted that while the Council of the European Union refers to "a" European Sport Model in its resolution instead of the often-referenced European Sport Model(s), the terminology issue is still being discussed at EU level. For the purposes of this study, however, the model is understood as the key features of a European Sport Model.

1.2 Methodology and work carried out

An overview of the methodology for the various work packages of the study is presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Methodology overview



Work Package 1: Study set-up and scoping

The *kick-off meeting* between the Ecorys and KEA team and the Directorate-General (DG) for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC) was followed by development and finalisation of the search framework for the focused literature review, scoping interviews with high-level stakeholders, the conduction of a literature review and production of an inventory.

At the scoping stage of the study *interviews* were conducted with a small number of sport federations and academics with specific expertise in the topic. A *literature review* was also undertaken which identified and summarised existing literature (in English, French, German, Spanish and Italian) on the relevant contextual elements of the European Sport Model, aspects where the European Sport Model diverges in significant ways and the main trends that influence the changing understanding of the model. Based on the literature review, the review team identified the most relevant and best quality papers and literature which illustrate the current understanding and evolution of the European Sport Model which was included in a short *inventory* and annexed to Interim Report 2 (see Work Package 2 and Annex 2 below).

Information obtained from the interviews, desk review and inventory fed into the *development of the mapping tool, topic guide(s) for the interviews, survey questionnaire, the case study template and guidance note* for the case study process. The mapping tool took the form of a spreadsheet format covering the different contextual elements of the European Sport Model, detailing different types of trends, country differences and commonalities, and there is a spreadsheet for each of the 15 selected sports (see Work Package 2 below for further information on the selected sports).

Based on the information collected, the study team then conducted an *analysis* and produced a summary overview paper (i.e., *Interim Report 1*). This short paper summarised and contextualised the main elements of the European Sport Model based on the specificity and autonomy of sport, the openness of competitions and the value of merit, solidarity and interdependence between elite and grassroots sport, and the pyramidal structure of sport. It also summarised the common traits observed across Europe in different sports and countries which form the main core of a European model. It highlighted the aspects where European models diverge in significant ways and based on the analysis conducted,

listed the main trends that influence the changing understanding of the European Sport Model.

The paper was *presented* at the Sport Directors Meeting in Bled, Slovenia on the 22nd and 23rd of September 2021.

Work Package 2: Interim Phase

This Work Package focuses on the steps involved in completing a comprehensive reporting of the European Sport Model and how they evolve over time, with a focus on 15 selected sports. This Work Package comprises of five tasks: *further desk research, further interviews, survey, case studies, analysis and reporting*.

The *selection of the 15 sports* listed below was based on the initial desk research conducted during the scoping phase of the study and the systematic recommendations provided by the high-level experts during the scoping interviews. It was also based on a number of criteria namely:

- Team sports vs individual sports;
- Popular vs. less popular sports (in terms of numbers of participants across different parts of Europe);
- High funding levels and investment;
- Existing or potential for internationalisation and commercialisation (i.e., sports that have or are likely to attract global attention and are seeing growth in international audiences and markets beyond Europe, and have seen already or have the potential for increasing international investment);
- Existence of good governance practices/reforms in sport federations;
- Balance between male/female competitions (for example broadcasting time, popularity, promotion of both competitions);
- Other interesting developments.

The 15 selected sports that were extensively researched during this phase were the following:

- Archery
- Athletics
- Basketball
- Cycling
- Football
- Handball
- Ice Hockey
- Ice Skating
- Judo
- Rowing
- Rugby
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Triathlon
- Volleyball

Once the 15 sports had been agreed upon, the study team conducted further and more extensive *desk research* in order to identify and categorise how the key features of the European Sport Model applied to each sport. The research collected under this task covered the European sport federations, all EU Member States and the 15 representative sport sectors selected. The study team looked into relevant sport law, regulatory documents, guidelines, reports, analyses and studies, and other documentation on the organisation of the European sport federations and competitions, the financial distribution models, the participation of athletes and fans and other relevant practices.

In parallel to the desk research, the study team also undertook a suite of approximately 2-4 stakeholder *interviews* per sport. These included the European and national federations for the different sports, EU Athletes, International Sport and Culture Association, European and national leagues, Ministries of sport, and Players Union representations for the different sports.

The study team also produced and disseminated a wider *survey* of stakeholders to confirm their understanding of the main traits of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the models. The survey was disseminated across a representative sample of respondents from international and national authorities, sport federations and civil society across all EU Member States. The survey was sent to a primary list of contacts to complete and disseminate to their networks, this included the sport ministries in each Member State, European federations for the specific sports, EU Athletes, Play the Game, European Clubs Association, European Observatoire of Sport and Employment, European Sports NGO, among others. The survey went live on 2 November 2021 and was closed on 10 December 2021 and received a total of 235 responses. Further information on the survey results is described in Annex 4.

Based on the information collected through the desk research, interviews and survey, the study team produced short *sport fiches* for each of the 15 selected sports. The sport fiches provide an overview of the main traits of the sport model relating to the specific sport, in addition to the main trends that affect the evolution of the particular sport. These are provided in Annex 1 below.

The study team compiled *six case studies* of different sports that comprehensively illustrate the diversity of sport models as they evolve over time against the backdrop of the main trends that have been identified. Some of the case studies focus on the European/international perspective and others focus on national situations. The following case studies were selected based on the research, interviews and survey results and in consultation with DG EAC. These are listed below and detailed in Annex 3 below.

- Archery: reliance on role of volunteers and related challenges (EU level);
- Athletics: 'Your Sport for Life' manifesto (EU/international level);
- Basketball: closed league (EU level);
- Football: financial sustainability and solidarity mechanisms (EU level);
- Ice Hockey (Finland);
- Tennis: more liberalised organisational structure (EU/international level).

The study team then analysed the information collected at European level, in the Member States and in the 15 selected sport sectors that was collected in the mapping tool. This included an analysis of the main traits of the European Sport Model and main trends that affect the evolution of the model.

Based on the analysis, *Interim Report 2* was produced which provides a comprehensive description of the European Sport Model and how they evolve over time.

Work Package 3: Final Phase

The aim of this Work Package is to check and validate the findings with high-level experts in the field and finalise the report. It thus consists of two main tasks: *online seminar and reporting*.

The study team organised an online seminar involving all relevant members of the study team, DG EAC, and high-level stakeholders and experts in the field from international and national public authorities, the sport movement and civil society. The study team presented the provisional summary findings, the survey results and case studies in order to gather feedback from participants. After the seminar, a short report summarising the main discussions and feedback provided during the seminar was produced and shared with the participants. This is provided in Annex 5 below.

Based on the feedback provided, the study team then produced and finalised the full study findings and produced this Final Report.

1.3 Research considerations

As mentioned in Section 1.1. above, the objective of the study was to provide an overview of the evolution of sport governance regulations, finances and practices in different places and different organised and competitive sports over time, and to examine how the European Sport Model is adapting to the differing conditions and contexts affecting these different sports and Member States across the EU. This involved covering all 27 Member States by the literature review, interviews and survey. This representative sample, while not providing an in-depth comprehensive analysis of all Member States, does provide a relevant picture of these sports at large.

Similarly, while some information on different sports was provided through the survey and research tasks under the scoping phase, the in-depth research focused on the 15 selected sports listed under Section 1.2 above. While it was not feasible to provide an in-depth comprehensive analysis of all sports, this representative sample does give an overall relevant picture of how competitive sports are financed, governed, organised, etc.

Another variation and limitation to the sport specific research can also be highlighted. Finding consistent information, particularly on evolving trends, across the 15 sports was difficult. While some of the most popular sports are well documented and a large amount of information is available on them (for example basketball, football, tennis), for other sports with a smaller fan base (for example archery, judo) not much information is available online. Stakeholders interviewed did try to provide missing information, particularly on evolving trends, where possible. Nevertheless, there is a variation in the level of information across these sports, which makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions on particular sports in places. The range of stakeholders consulted for each sport was also limited to a maximum of four per sport, and the type of stakeholders who were reached by interview varied but mainly comprised of European and national level federations, sport ministries and leagues, and players representatives.

As a result of these variations and limitations, the report focuses on commonalities and differences found in the sports across the Member States. It highlights where stakeholders or the research suggested that there were particularly interesting traits, interesting trends that affect the evolution of the different sport models, any threats or challenges that a particular sport and its model experienced, and any good practice initiatives or measures that have been put in place to address such challenges.

2.0 Background

This section describes the policy and legal context regarding the development and purpose of the European Sport Model, in addition to providing a summary overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and introduction to the main identified trends that may affect the evolution of the model. These main features and trends are then considered in further detail in Sections 3 and 4.

2.1 Legal and Policy context

Sport in Europe is often organised in different ways to suit national cultures and traditions. Whilst there are shared principles, common features and certain values and traditions of European sport that should be safeguarded and promoted, the European Commission's White Paper on Sport¹ highlighted that in light of the diversity and complexities of European sport structures, it would be unrealistic to try to define a unified single model of the organisation of sport in Europe. These common features and values are reflected in the 2007 White Paper on Sport and under Section 2.2 below. These include the specificity and autonomy of sport, the openness of competitions and the value of merit, a solidarity and interdependence between elite and grassroots sport, and the so-called pyramidal structure of sport. Together, they form the key pillars of the European Sport Model, which was developed as a democratic model with the aim of ensuring that sport remains open to everyone. The European Sport Model concerns all levels of professional and amateur sport and is underpinned by the principles of financial solidarity and openness of competitions with promotion and relegation.

While this concept of a unified European Model of Sport was first put forward in the European Commission's White Paper on Sport in 2007,² it started to take shape in the wake of the *Union Royale Belge v Bosman* (*Bosman*) ruling in December 1995.³ The *Bosman* case resulted in a landmark ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) which applied the right of free movement to professional footballers (and by implication other sportsmen) by allowing them to transfer players without impediments to another club at the end of their existing contract. The case brought important changes to the legal and commercial landscape of the international sport movement and caused difficulties for many public sport authorities.⁴

The long-term implications of the *Bosman* case were significant but also amounted to confirmations of previous decisions by the European Court of Justice (*Walrave*⁵, *Donà*⁶). It led to the creation of a single labour market in football⁷ (and by extension all sports), and confirmed that international sport federations' regulatory powers are subject to compliance with EU law. In general terms, it placed sport in the remit of the Treaty of the Functioning

¹ European Commission (2007) *White Paper on Sport*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0391&from=EN>

² European Commission (2007), *White Paper on Sport* {SEC(2007) 932} {SEC(2007) 934} {SEC(2007) 935} {SEC(2007) 936}, COM/2007/0391 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52007DC0391>.

³ *Union Royale Belge v Bosman*, Case C-415/93 Judgment of 15.12.1995 – Case C-415/93, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:61993CJ0415&from=EN>

⁴ Miège, C., (2021) *Where does the "European model of sport" stand, 25 years on from the Bosman ruling?*, <https://www.sportetcitoyennete.com/en/articles-en/where-does-the-european-model-of-sport-stand-25-years-on-from-the-bosman-ruling>

⁵ B.N.O Walrave and L.J.N. Koch v Association Union cycliste internationale, Koninklijke Nederlandsche Wielren Unie and Federación Española Ciclismo, Case C-36/74 Judgment of 12 December 1974, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A61974CJ0036>

⁶ Gaetano Donà v Mario Mantero, Case 13/76 Reference for a preliminary ruling: Guidice conciliatore di Rovigo-Italy, 1976, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A61976CJ0013>

⁷ Teasdale, A. (2012) *'The Bosman Case' in The Penguin Companion to European Union*, https://penguincaniontoeu.com/additional_entries/bosman-case/

of the EU (TFEU)⁸ and thus within the EU's regulatory framework⁹. This resulted in discussions within the sport movement around the traditional foundations of the organisation of sport in Europe. The discussions concluded that a unified European Sport Model was needed in order to promote the social and cultural dimensions of sport and to build a common European identity while respecting the so-called autonomy and the diversity of sport across Member States.

More specifically, the *Bosman* case drew attention to the relationship between sport and EU law. It refuted the belief that due to the specific nature of sport, EU competition law could not be enforced on sporting activities. In the wake of this ruling, sport issues started to gain traction in EU policy. The Treaty of Amsterdam¹⁰ recognises in a Declaration on Sport that sport is socially and culturally significant, in particular through its role in shaping identity and bringing people together. However, the text also stresses sport's commercial significance, making it clear that sport must comply with EU law – a position still held today.

Additional CJEU rulings have taken place in the context of ongoing discussions around reconciling the economic and socio-cultural dimensions of sport within the structure of the European Sport Model. The *Deliège* and *Lehtonen* rulings are of most relevance to this debate.¹¹ These cases are seen as a recognition from the CJEU of the specific regulation and autonomy of sport in certain areas where sport governing bodies are required to retain their authority and competence to regulate the disciplines for which they are responsible¹². In both cases, while no reference was made to EU competition law, the CJEU made reference to the Treaty of Amsterdam's Declaration on Sport, which has undoubtedly informed the European Commission's current approach to sport¹³ and thus, the recognition of the European Sport Model.

A further landmark ruling, the *Meca-Medina* case¹⁴, has contributed to legal certainty not by clarifying the scope and nature of specific "sporting rules", but by establishing that no "purely sporting rules" exist to be excluded from the scope of Articles 81 and 82 of the TFEU. The "specificity of sport" has to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and thus determine if the scope of Articles 81 and 82 still applies.

In the *Olivier Bernard* ruling¹⁵, the CJEU referred for the first time to Article 165 of the TFEU and stated that the specific nature of sport must be taken into account when considering the legality of a sporting measure designed to foster training. Sport governing bodies qualified this judgment as a "breath of fresh air for the European Sport Model".¹⁶

⁸ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, OJ C 326 26 October 2012, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012E%2FTXT>

⁹ Parrish, R. (2003) *Sports law and policy in the European Union*, Manchester University Press, pp.109-159.

¹⁰ Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty of the European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts, European Communities, 1997, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:11997D/TXT>

¹¹ Christelle Deliège v Ligue francophone de judo et disciplines associées ASBL and others, Case C-191/97 Judgment of the Court 11 April 2000, in Joined Cases C-51/96 and C-191/97 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:61996CJ0051&from=EN>; Jyri Lehtonen and Castors Canada Dry Namur-Braine ASBL v Fédération Royale belge des sociétés de basketball ASBL and others Case C-176/96 Judgment of the Court 13 April 2000, in Case C-176/96, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:61996CJ0176&from=EN>

¹² Bell and Turner-Kerr (2002), apud Richard Parish *op.cit.*, (2003), p.104

¹³ Richard Parish *op.cit.*, (2003), p.105

¹⁴ Judgment of the Court 18 July 2006, Case C-519/04 P, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/showPdf.jsf?text=&docid=57022&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&oc=c=first&part=1&cid=8407096>

¹⁵ Case C-325/08 *Olympique Lyonnais v. Olivier Bernard*, Judgment of 16 March 2010, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62008CJ0325>

¹⁶ Zylberstein, J., (2010), *The Olivier Bernard judgment: a significant step forward for the training of players in European Sports law and policy bulletin*, 1/2010, p.51-66, http://www.sportslawandpolicycentre.com/Bulletin%20I_2010.pdf

The *International Skating Union (ISU)* case (International Skating Union v Commission, Case T-93/18)¹⁷ was another legal challenge which helped to further clarify the scope of application of EU competition law to sport. The case resulted in a decision not to authorise a 2014 speed skating competition which was organised by a private company. While the ruling confirms the regulatory function of sport governing bodies, it strongly states that the authorisation systems must provide for an objective, transparent and non-discriminatory procedure which pursues legitimate objectives.¹⁸

More recently, the Council of the EU approved a resolution¹⁹ on the key features of the European Sport Model in light of the increasing commercialisation of professional sport, which is making sport increasingly profit-oriented. Whilst commercialisation of sport does result in increased financial resources for a greater number of athletes, it simultaneously presents a risk towards the values of sport such as good governance, safety, integrity, solidarity and the health and safety of athletes. Ministers expressed their wish that this resolution will encourage continuing discussions between Member States and sport stakeholders on the key features of a European Sport Model.

In the past, calls for guiding principles on the application and understanding of the specificity of sport have been considered impractical due to the broad range of sport disciplines that exist and the differing conditions affecting each discipline and each country. Moreover, the features of the European Sport Model are not absolute and are affected by social, economic, and technological trends over time. Thus, rather than trying to define all components of one model in a single definition, this study aims “to map the features, traditions and links of how sport is organised in Europe and how Europeans engage with sport”,²⁰ as well as understand how the main features of the European Sport Model evolved and adapted to the social, economic and technological changes in the last decades.

2.2 Key features of the European Sport Model

This section provides a general overview of the key features of the European Sport Model, as originally defined by the European Commission. A more detailed analysis of each of the key features is provided in Section 3 below.

As highlighted above, the European Commission’s White Paper on Sport sets out the key features of the European Sport Model. Whilst being subject to EU law, the Paper acknowledges the specificity and autonomy of sport, and the fact that competitive sport is organised hierarchically following a **pyramid structure** of competitions from grassroots to elite level²¹. This structure is characterised by a top-down approach and participation, ‘with members adhering to organisational rules and the possibility of electing governing bodies’.²² Within this structure, grassroots federations and clubs lay the foundation of the pyramid; they are linked to local initiatives and amateur sport, often rely on unpaid/voluntary staff and realise the social function of sport (‘bringing people

¹⁷ Judgment of the General Court, 16 December 2020 in Case T-93/18, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:62018TJ0093&from=en>

¹⁸ General Court of the European Union, Press Release No 159/20, Luxembourg, 16 December 2020, *The General Court confirms that the rules of the International Skating Union (ISU) providing for severe penalties for athletes taking part in speed skating events not recognized by it are contrary to EU competition law*, <https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2020-12/cp200159en.pdf>

¹⁹ Council of the EU (2021) *Sport: Council resolution stresses key features of values-based sport model*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/11/30/sport-council-resolution-stresses-key-features-of-values-based-sport-model/>

²⁰ European Commission (2021). Terms of Reference: Study on the European Model(s) of Sport.

²¹ European Commission (2007) *White Paper on Sport*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0391&from=EN>

²² Miège, C. (2021) *Where does the “European model of sport” stand, 25 years on from the Bosman ruling?*, <https://www.sportetcitoyennete.com/en/articles-en/where-does-the-european-model-of-sport-stand-25-years-on-from-the-bosman-ruling>

together').²³ Above the grassroots level of the pyramid are the regional sport federations which organise sport at a regional level (for example regional championships). The next level is the national sport federations, which regulate and organise national championships, and represent their branch in European and international federations. Each country has only one national federation per sport, giving national federations a monopolistic power over their territory. European sport federations constitute the top level of the pyramid.²⁴

Another feature of the European Sport Model which is applied by many European sports is the **principle of promotion/relegation**. Many European sports competitions are organised at all levels according to a system of open competition based on the principle of promotion/relegation,²⁵ by which clubs must qualify to play at the next level of any given championship. Participants either win and are promoted to the next level or lose and are relegated. This system is meant to ensure the opportunity of participation for all, with no discrimination.

The grassroots structure at the base of the pyramid is sustained by the principle of **financial solidarity** which facilitates financial transfers between its different levels and operators,²⁶ specifically from the top to the bottom of the pyramid. In accordance with the financial solidarity mechanism, income generated by federations at international, continental or national level should be distributed to those at the bottom of the pyramid in order to ensure the sustainability of financing for the sporting activities taking place in non-profit structures based on voluntary activity.²⁷

The **reliance on voluntary work** represents another important trait of the European Sport Model, since European sport is mainly run by non-professionals and volunteers, which is reflective of the model's grassroots approach.²⁸ The White Paper on Sport affirmed the European Commission's intention to involve young people in sport-related volunteering activities through the sub-action European Voluntary Service in the 'Youth in Action programme, then the Erasmus+ programme (now the European Solidarity Corps programme)²⁹ in fields such as youth exchanges and voluntary service for sporting events', claiming that volunteering in sport organisations can contribute to social integration through reinforcing 'active citizenship'.³⁰

Finally, the **autonomy and independence** of sporting organisations and representative bodies are considered as another common feature of the European Sport Model. Sport federations and governing bodies should have enough autonomy to conduct the organisation of sport as they see fit, but within the limits of EU law.³¹ It is then of uttermost importance that sport federations and governing bodies have the ability to self-regulate and to be guided by **good-governance principles and practices** in sport governance, with national, European and international regulators acting merely as facilitators only if and where necessary.³²

²³ European Commission, *op.cit.* (1998), p.4

²⁴ European Commission, *op.cit.* (1998), pp.2-4

²⁵ European Commission, *op.cit.* (1998), p.4

²⁶ European Commission (2007) *White Paper on Sport*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0391&from=EN>

²⁷ European Commission (1998) *The European Model of Sport*, consultation document of DG X, https://www.sportaustria.at/fileadmin/Inhalte/Dokumente/Internationales/EU_European_Model_Sport.pdf;

European Commission (2011) *Communication from The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions – Developing the European Dimension in Sport*,

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ European Solidarity Corps programme includes volunteering activities in physical education activities and sport. See: https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/young-people/about_en

³⁰ European Commission (2007) *White Paper on Sport*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0391&from=EN>

³¹ European Commission (2007) *White Paper on Sport*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0391&from=EN>

³² *Ibid.*

2.3 Main trends of the European Sport Model

A number of trends have been identified through our research that are considered to be influencing the changing understanding of the European Sport Model. It can be seen that there is a complex interaction of trends and pressures that bring into question the continuing relevance of the key elements of the European Sport Model and how far the model might need to adapt to address the emerging issues. This section presents an overview of these main identified trends. A further analysis of these trends and how they are affecting the European Sport Model are described in Section 4 below.

A major trend that is seen to be influencing the changing understanding of the model is increasing **globalisation and commercialisation**, which often go hand-in-hand with **digitalisation**. These trends manifest through increasing global audiences, wider media coverage of events and competitions and the increasing role of multinational companies, private equity, hedge funds and venture capitalists in investment and sponsorship. The internationalisation of audiences in particular encourages sports to exploit this increasing market potential through higher sponsorship deals, increasing merchandise sales and higher value broadcasting rights. With the financial interest in sport becoming larger, it is argued that many of the sport's traditions and core principles are being challenged.³³ For example, such trends appear to concentrate on a few sports and major events. Amongst other issues, this may widen existing inequalities in revenue streams between sports that are well-placed to tap into these opportunities and those that are not, creating a market with a few winner-take-all sports.

There is evidence that the increasing commercialisation of sport and concentration of wealth is influencing the **practices in organising sport competitions** as it is increasing the pressure for commercially driven club owners and financial backers to favour totally or partially closed competition structures. There appears to be an increasing tendency for national championships and qualification for European competitions to be limited to a smaller pool of teams. Some argue that this trend already undermines the model's promotion/relegation principle,³⁴ while at the same time creating an incentive for more commercially driven elite clubs to develop proposals for privately sponsored non-affiliated competitions that are separated from the pyramid model.

Another relevant trend is the extent to which commercialisation is undermining the European Sport Model's **solidarity principle**, particularly the **redistribution of revenue** to lower leagues and down to grassroots sport. Position papers from a number of international sport movements have questioned whether funds and investments are trickling down to grassroots and community sport in acceptable proportions.³⁵ The Covid-19 pandemic has also heavily disrupted the redistribution of revenues, particularly the redistribution mechanism in the Olympic Movement given the postponement of large events such as the Olympic Games.

There are emerging and new practices in the governance of sport that aim to address organisational and management concerns around democracy and accountability as well as more specific integrity topics, such as the fight against corruption and protecting athletes from abuse. The study suggests that such **good governance principles and practices** are high on the agenda of sporting bodies, with several of them making progressive steps towards those objectives.

Other trends such as in **volunteering and participation habits** are seen to be influencing the European Sport Model. There are fears that a decline in the number of people volunteering could undermine the European Model of Sport given its reliance on strong volunteering support for sport. In turn, changes in participation habits also point to

³³ Parrish, R. (2005) *Professional Sport in the Internal Market*, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2005/358378/IPOL-IMCO_ET\(2005\)358378_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2005/358378/IPOL-IMCO_ET(2005)358378_EN.pdf), p.33.

³⁴ Cattaneo, A. and Parrish, R. (2020) *Sport Law in the European Union*, Kluwer Law International.

³⁵ IOC (2020) *The European Sport Model, A call for the sports movement and public authorities to join forces*, <https://rm.coe.int/the-european-sport-model-paper-by-the-ioc/1680a1b876>

a shift away from the competitive / competition dimension as a main driver to engage in sporting activities.

Finally, **social and other significant societal developments** also appear to affect the evolution of the model. In recent years it is increasingly recognised that sport plays an important role in shaping people's attitudes to social issues such as gender and racial inequality and sustainability. As a result, sustainability, equality, and digitalisation appear to be at the forefront of sporting federations agendas, with the latter addressing them either through revisiting their constitutions as well as through rolling-out new strategies, policies, and projects and initiatives.

3.0 Key features of the European Sport Model

This section of the report examines how the main features of the European Sport Model apply to sports in the European Union largely based on the detailed sport reviews. It also considers discussions and debates around the legitimacy of the model focusing in particular on the key features of the model, as set out in the previous section.

3.1 Organisational structure

The organisational structure of European sports includes several core elements, including the principle of one federation per sport, and a pyramidal model with federations organised in a hierarchical structure from the international level to the most local level.

All of the European sports analysed as part of this study follow a model where the international and national sport federations are the main governing body for a given sport and are generally responsible for the organisation and development of amateur sport. In team sports, federations generally work closely with sport leagues in the organisation of professional sports. The interrelationships between federations and leagues are generally formalised through specific agreements. The picture is slightly different when it comes to individual sports, as in most cases leagues are not formally involved in the decision-making processes and the organisation of competitions.

Importantly, sport federations are also responsible for all activities contributing to the development of a given sport, including for example trainers and coaches' certifications, or the overall management of referees.

In terms of the organisational model, sport federations tend to be overseen by the following bodies:

- A general assembly making all statutory decisions;
- An executive board meeting regularly;
- A secretariat general, tasked with the day-to-day management of the sport federation;
- Technical committees which deal with specific matters, including notably refereeing, calendar of competitions, health and injury prevention, integrity and anti-doping procedures for the most common types of committees across European sports.

The composition of these bodies varies from one sport to another (and within sports depends on country-specific arrangements). A comparative study shows that European football tends to follow a cooperative model, with overall a strong involvement of different types of stakeholders and a balanced representation model.³⁶ The study analyses several indicators to discuss the level of bargaining power of the different stakeholders involved, including the League voting power in national association general assemblies, which ranges from 12% in Italy to 37% in Germany (for the EU countries covered in the study), as well as the type of stakeholders involved including: regional associations, lower professional leagues, amateur football, national association governing body representatives, and interest groups (for example players, referees, coaches). An important finding of the study is that amateur football – through its own representatives, but also through regional associations and interest group representatives – often has voting power in the main governing bodies of the national associations largely superior to the one of professional football. This is due to the fact that amateur football representatives are the most common and highly represented stakeholder in the national association general assemblies as the large majority of football players come from the amateur world.³⁷

³⁶ Boillat, C. & Poli, R., (2014) *Governance models across football associations and leagues*. Editions CIES.

³⁷ Ibid.

Some sports have adopted specific organisational arrangements in their management structure, reflecting the overall structure of their sports. The International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) for example includes different categories of membership. The first category is IIHF Full Member. These are nations having their own independent ice hockey association separate from a winter sports federation and they participate annually in the IIHF championship programme. The second category is IIHF Associate Member. These are nations that either do not have fully independent national associations or who have independent national associations but participate to only a limited extent in IIHF championships. Only full members have voting rights at the IIHF Congresses.³⁸

The sport federations themselves generally follow a pyramid model in line with the European Sport Model, with the international federation at the top, followed by regional federations (confederations representing the European level or other continents), and national ones. It should be noted that there have been criticisms regarding the representation issue of different voting powers of confederations in some sports such as cycling, with Europe currently having more voting power (15 votes) at the *Union Cycliste Internationale* (UCI) against other continents (for example Africa, America and Asia, each with 9 votes, and Oceania, with 3 votes).³⁹ Moreover, only 17 (out of 128) global rugby unions have voting power on the World Rugby Council, which means that decisions are often made which suit those established larger rugby unions with voting power, according to stakeholders.⁴⁰

There is evidence that the role and influence of European federations with respect to international federations varies in practice. To some extent this relates to how competitions are organised and their relative importance and commercial value at the international and European levels. In a limited number of sports some tensions are apparent in the relationships between international and European federations. This tends to occur when there are calendar clashes between competitions and player welfare issues come to into question.

In handball, for example, the number of games is much higher across Europe compared to the rest of the world. Interviewees notably report that the ability to maintain fair national team competitions in this context, where players need to play a significant number of club games and end up injured or in poor physical condition. The pyramidal nature of sport federations is shown to be important here since the European Handball Federation puts forward a different approach and notably involves a player committee in all decisions related to player's health.

In many sports cooperation between international and European federations appears to work efficiently. In rowing, for example, there appears to be a seamless relationship between European and world level competitions. The European Rowing Confederation (referred to as European Rowing) is the organisation that represents the 46 European national rowing federations and is recognised by World Rowing as the Continental Confederation for Europe. European Rowing manages the European Rowing Championships, the European Rowing Junior, U23, Indoor and Championships and other European Rowing events. It also supports the development and promotion of rowing across the European continent and between European national federations and works closely with World Rowing on dates of competitions to ensure a coherent calendar of events for the sport.⁴¹

³⁸ International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) (n.d.). *About the IIHF Member Structure*.
<https://www.iihf.com/en/associations>

³⁹ Freeburn, Lloyd. (2012). The unrepresentative and discriminatory governance structure of cycling: what role for the International Olympic Committee?, *International Sports Law Journal*. 2012. 27,
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lloyd-Freeburn/publication/283296847_the_unrepresentative_and_discriminatory_governance_structure_of_cycling_what_role_for_the_International_olympic_committee/links/56314be608ae506cea6792e8/the-unrepresentative-and-discriminatory-governance-structure-of-cycling-what-role-for-the-International-olympic-committee.pdf.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

In certain sports and countries, sub-national level federations may also play a crucial role in the organisation of sport. For example, the role of local/regional federations in French tennis are particularly important in terms of the organisation of club competitions, whereas in most sports those tend to be managed at national level. There are also examples of more fragmented organisational structures where there is a much looser relationship with the pyramid structure. Tennis has a more liberalised and flexible organisational structure with its governance model comprising of seven main bodies. This is described further in the box below and in Case Study 6 in Annex 3.

Box 1 : Tennis – a more fragmented organisational structure

In tennis, conflict between professional and amateur tournaments led to the formation of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and Women’s Tennis Association (WTA) syndicates which manage the highest professional level of tennis alongside the International Tennis Federation (ITF) who manage national team competitions. Theoretically the four grand slam tournaments belong to ITF but in practice they work closely with the pro-tours. This flexible organisational structure means that the joint governance of tournaments is weaker, with no unified body representing all tournaments. The liberal nature of tennis governance also makes it easier to launch new competitions and open up opportunities for structural changes to existing competitions.

Consequently, there is no collective sales of TV rights, which means that tournament organisers struggle to adequately monetise their content on TV or online (except the four Grand Slams). As a result, the ATP has put forward a plan to restructure the governance model of tennis and is seeking to increase cooperation between tennis tournaments, review the current arrangements for collective selling of TV rights, and develop a new revenue-sharing model between players and tournaments.

Main divergences in the organisational structures across European sports

While the broad organisational arrangements are fairly similar across European sports, they however show discrepancies in terms of 1) the involvement of athletes’ representatives in the organisational structures of European sports; and 2) the level of concentration in terms of commercial negotiations, and in particular concerning TV rights. Across many sports in Europe, the involvement of athletes is generally regarded as an area where there is some scope for development. Fans are also generally not formally involved in any formal organisational structure. A few federations such as World Triathlon do however include athletes within their decision-making structure. At World Triathlon, the Athletes Commission chair and vice-chair are also members of the Executive Board.⁴² In Europe Triathlon, while athletes are not members of the Executive Board, they have the role to advise it on matters relating to elite athlete performance and racing in Europe Triathlon events.⁴³

In volleyball, although athletes are not directly involved in decision-making, federations have recently developed consultative mechanisms to involve them in policy-making. While this is a positive development, stakeholders believe that there continues to be scope to improve engagement with athletes and to incorporate their views in decision-making.⁴⁴ A similar system is in place in handball and to some extent in football, where the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) has a long history of cooperating with representative organisations of clubs (European Club Association), leagues (European Leagues), players (FIFPRO Division Europe) and fans (SD Europe, Football Supporters Europe) including under specific protocols and memorandums of understanding.⁴⁵ Player reps and fan reps are largely involved in decision making in rowing, and at international

⁴² World Triathlon (2022), *Constitution*,

https://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/World_Triathlon_Constitution_2022.pdf

⁴³ Europe Triathlon (2018), *Articles of Association*, <https://europe.triathlon.org/downloads>.

⁴⁴ Information obtained through consultation with the stakeholder.

⁴⁵ The different versions of these Memoranda of Understanding are available here: <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/documentlibrary/stakeholders/>

level there is an Athlete Commission that is elected by the current athletes, and the chair of the Athlete Commission sits on the Executive Committee.⁴⁶

Athletes may also be represented in the decision-making process through collective bargaining agreements. The Spanish Basketball Players Association, for example, is in charge of advising and supporting professional players who play in the *Asociación de Clubs de Baloncesto* (ACB) league (top men's division which is independent from the Federation). They sign (four-year) agreements with the ACB where they negotiate a collective bargaining agreement between players and the ACB dealing with matters of insurance, wages, health). Player representatives however do not have any role in decision-making as such.⁴⁷

Organisational structure and commercial arrangements

With regards to team sports, at the national level, leagues typically handle commercial deals and especially broadcasting rights for professional sport. This is generally set out in the agreement between the league and the sport federation, where general principles for tendering broadcasting rights are set out. Such a model is applied in most sports, including tennis, football volleyball and handball. In a few cases, sport leagues and federations set up their own broadcasting service: Euroleague Commercial Assets, which runs the top men's European basketball competition broadcasts live matches itself across the world via its OTT platform EuroLeague TV.⁴⁸

TV rights for national team competitions and European club competitions are usually handled by sport federations themselves (either at national or European level). One exception is Six Nations Rugby, which is the official organising body of the annual Six Nations Championships and Autumn International Series and acts independently of Rugby Europe. Six Nations Rugby has responsibility for the promotion and operation of the renowned Six Nations Championships and Autumn International Series, as well as the negotiation and management of their centralised commercial rights.

In some cases, a more flexible model is put forward. For example, there is a central contract between the basketball league and State TV in Greece, but there is a lot of freedom for clubs in the Greek League to negotiate broadcasting rights, for example AEK Athens can sign additional TV deals as they see fit.⁴⁹

In smaller sports, very little broadcasting rights are available and federations typically handle the negotiations directly. In the case of rowing, the broadcasting rights for the national championships in France and Austria are negotiated by the national federation, for local events broadcasting rights would be negotiated by local organising competitions. For European championships, all broadcasting rights are done and negotiated through the international federation.⁵⁰

The limits of the European Sport Model in terms of organisational structure

Although the European Sport Model is intended to be standardised and replicated across the Member States, stakeholders have argued that there is no singular European Sport Model, but rather a diversity of models that can be specific to a country and its socio-economic realities.⁵¹ Survey respondents also indicated that the pyramidal structure was

⁴⁶ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Euroleague Basketball (2021) <https://www.euroleaguebasketball.net/euroleague-basketball/about>

⁴⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ EU Athletes Response to the Lobby for a European Sport Model (2021) <https://euathletes.org/eu-athletes-response-to-the-lobby-for-a-european-sport-model/>

not relevant for specific sports such as yoga and gymnastics and fitness clubs, for example, due to the specific nature of these activities. The difficulty in defining a single model of governance in European sport has raised questions regarding the adequacy of the standardised pyramidal structure to answer sports organisations' governance issues. Although some experts adopt a favourable view towards the European Sport Model structure on the basis that it 'offers scope for maximum participation',⁵² others have a different view on the issue, as discussed below.

The opportunities resulting from the exponential commercial growth of sport during the last decades has given rise to calls for a review of sport federations and the extent to which they are fit to govern sport on today's global scale.⁵³ Given this changing configuration, it is claimed that the pyramid structure -whilst vital to the organisation and overall functioning of some sports- might prove unsuitable to represent the full spectrum of European sports in all its diversity of practice and organisation. Since elite sport and grassroots sport follow different logics (the former being more commercially oriented, while the latter is more community-driven), this raises the question of whether the pyramid layout accounts for the different needs of these two different approaches to sport. Eichberg suggests that it is not enough to include 'grassroots sports' at the basis of the pyramid and that another model altogether would be needed to account for the specificity of this kind of practice.⁵⁴

This view was also confirmed by a few survey respondents who highlighted that the pyramidal structure is not inclusive enough as it does not reflect the reality of sport in Europe as not all sport organisations, stakeholders or athletes are adequately represented in this organisational structure. Another survey respondent also added that the pyramidal structure does not represent the interests of people practicing sport at non-competitive or grassroots level and it is not relevant at all for specific sport disciplines, such as yoga, gymnastics or fitness activities.

This potential inadequacy of the pyramidal structure to include all the different practices within European sport is causing instances of divergence from the model. In fact, some European countries, for example Denmark, currently acknowledge 'different forms of pluralism in national sport policies'.⁵⁵ The increasing autonomy and influence of athletes⁵⁶ in that they can determine their own terms of participation in sporting competitions, can also be seen as a form of divergence from the authority of sport federations, and thus from the European Sport Model. An interest group/ athlete's union, has been established in Germany by elite athletes, for example, (Athletes Germany), which is independent of the German Olympic Sports Federation (DOSB).⁵⁷

3.2 System of competition

The promotion-relegation system

Based on the pyramidal structure presented above, the European Sport Model is underpinned by the twin principles of promotion-relegation and financial solidarity. As indicated above, the principle of promotion and relegation emphasises an "open" competition model on which European sport is based. At the end of each season, teams who win competitions are promoted to a higher level, while those teams with the poorest record are relegated to inferior divisions. This principle provides every team, regardless of

⁵² Arnaut, J. (2006) *Independent European Sport Review*.

⁵³ The Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) (2009) *Future of Global Sport*, https://www.asoif.com/sites/default/files/download/future_of_global_sport.pdf

⁵⁴ Eichberg, H. (2008) *Pyramid or Democracy in Sports? Alternative ways in European Sports Policies*, <http://www.idrottsforum.org/articles/eichberg/eichberg080206.html>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ The Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF), *op.cit.*, (2009)

⁵⁷ Ibid

their size, with the opportunity to develop and advance and ensures fair and 'exciting' competitions at both ends of the leagues.⁵⁸ A key element of this principle is that the winners of national competitions are eligible to participate in pan-European competitions, ensuring the link between national and European levels.

Promotion and relegation constitute a commonly cited difference between European and North American sport systems. Leagues in North America are more likely to have a closed format where promotion and relegation does not exist and teams are 'invited in',⁵⁹ while in Europe, teams gain a place in the elite sports league 'on merit'. The two systems have been thoroughly studied, mainly to understand their impacts on players' wages, and overall incentives to provide a competitive balance (i.e., the level of competition between teams in the league). Analysis and debates over the promotion and relegation system in Europe are mostly known in the world of football, which has been recently shaken by a failed attempt of the owners of 12 more powerful clubs to form, in April 2021, a Super League,⁶⁰ which would circumvent the promotion-relegation concept (although the league promoters argued a few spots would be open for qualifying teams), bringing a so-called Americanisation to football.⁶¹ The attempt was highly controversial, causing a significant public and political backlash over its potential impact on the overall football ecosystem (including domestic leagues) and bringing concerns regarding the principle of open competitions.

In practice, the organisation of sports nonetheless varies quite significantly and this model is clearly not universally applied. We can observe a diversity of models depending on the nature of sport: while team sports generally follow the system of promotion/relegation and open competitions, individual sports often rely on more simple ranking systems. Finally, some sports may have a mixed model with the use of a promotion/relegation system for some competitions only. The section below provides a more detailed description of a few sports and presents a preliminary analysis of the consequences of the different models.

The main European (team) sport model – open competitions and a promotion/relegation system

The principle of open competitions is enshrined within the TFEU under Article 165(2), 'Union action shall be aimed at [...] developing the European dimension in sport, by providing fairness and openness in competitions and cooperation between bodies responsible for sports [...]'. The main European sports such as football strictly follow the pyramid structure of the open competitions model, with a clear promotion and relegation system ensuring access is open to all. This model is applied both at domestic and European levels, and to some extent to national teams' competitions: the recently launched UEFA Nations League follows a promotion/relegation system, with four tiers of competitions.

Within this open model, the UEFA club competition access structure provides access to qualifying rounds for clubs from all 55 National Associations while still allowing supporters to watch 'the best of the best,' in the UEFA Champions League. For each season just under 240 clubs qualify through their domestic league performances for UEFA qualifying and/or group stages. This open format creates the 'race for European qualification' which provides additional meaning to every domestic league and cup football throughout the season and reduces the number of 'dead matches' towards the end of the season, which is important for supporter interest and commercial rights values. Critics of closed league competitions

⁵⁸ Arnaut, J.L. (2006) *Independent European Sport Review*, http://eose.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/independant_european_sports_review1.pdf

⁵⁹ Reade, J. (2020) 'Why is there promotion and relegation in European soccer?', in *Forbes*, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesreade/2020/10/08/why-is-there-promotion-and-relegation-in-european-soccer/>

⁶⁰ <https://thesuperleague.com/>

⁶¹ Haring, B., (2021) 'How the European Super League will ruin football', in *Medium*, <https://medium.com/top-level-sports/how-the-european-super-league-will-ruin-football-efccdc38117>

underline that a closed or token access only format like the attempted European Super League would destroy this value and interest in order to afford greater security to a select few elite clubs. The broad level of competition access and club mobility in European club football is unprecedented in sport with 589 different clubs from all 55 UEFA National Associations competing in the two UEFA club competitions across the last ten seasons (2011/12 to 2020/21). In total across this same ten-season period, 208 different clubs from 38 different UEFA National Associations have participated in the group stages of UEFA club competitions. The number of countries and clubs is expected to increase in the next decade with the introduction of the Europa Conference League from 2021/22. The objective of this new competition has not been commercial gains but rather the desire to broaden the number of countries that experience the group stages of UEFA club competitions and responds to demand for more sporting opportunities.

Aside from football, rugby in France provides a good example of how the promotion/relegation principle is applied at the national level, as a third professional league was recently launched. Since the 2020/21 season, rugby has three professional leagues and there is a genuine battle for promotion and relegation between leagues (as opposed to England where there is a wider gulf between the top-tier and second tier due to significant funding differences). Second tier teams in France have well-maintained stadiums, pitches, and are required to have specific infrastructures such as a proper gym on site.⁶² The top six teams compete to win the top division (Top 14) via the play-offs. The bottom finisher gets relegated automatically, and the second bottom team plays off against the runner-up of the second division to fight for their right to stay in the division. Thus, one to two teams move divisions each season. The second division has 16 teams and the winner of the final gets automatically promoted. Two clubs get automatically relegated into the third tier each season. If the top two teams from the (newly formed) third division fulfil certain specifications, they will be promoted. The bottom finisher gets relegated. There are then three federal tiers, each of which is made up of pools. There are also various locally run territorial divisions, with 13 regional leagues.⁶³

At national level, all countries studied for football, basketball, rugby, handball and volleyball generally follow a similar promotion/relegation system. The main variations concern the number of professional leagues, and the number of local/regional divisions. It is worth noting that this applies for both male and female sports. For the different team sports analysed, the system of competition for female sports largely mirrors the organisation of male sports (and vice-versa where female competitions were first created, such as handball in Denmark).

An important element in the promotion/relegation system is the impact of changes in membership (from professional to amateur, or to be more precise from league membership to non-league membership), which has a bearing in terms of infrastructures obligations (for example on stadiums safety and capacity requirements), as well as on youth training facilities for example, which are typically higher for professional clubs.⁶⁴ Financial solidarity mechanisms are sometimes foreseen (for example in football) to enable clubs to manage the transition between different leagues and support relegated clubs in better handling their costs.

Use of ranking / other qualification systems

Most individual sports covered in the study do not apply the promotion/relegation system but rather use a type of ranking system. This is not regarded as a departure from the

⁶² Rugby Network (2021), Is French Rugby the Gold Standard of Organisation, <https://www.rugbynetwork.net/main/worcester-warriors/s130/st201439/is-french-rugby-the-gold-standard-of-organisation>

⁶³ French Rugby Federation (2021) Règlements Généraux 2021-2022. <https://www.ffr.fr/ffr/publications-officielles/reglements-generaux> and Decathlon (2021). Rugby: How to Access the Upper Divisions?, <https://www.offload-rugby.com/rugby-comment-accedez-aux-divisiones-superieures>

⁶⁴ Boillat, C. & Poli, R. (2014) *Governance models across football associations and leagues*. Editions CIES.

European Sport Model necessarily as ranking systems generally conform to the principle of open competition.

In cycling, riders accumulate ranking points by participating in competitions falling under the responsibility of the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI). The UCI's ranking system decides who qualifies for the events as part of the World Tour Series, including the Tour de France, which are organised by a private company ASO through a three year licencing system.⁶⁵ In tennis, pro tours have qualification mechanisms based on players' rankings, invitations and qualifying tournaments.

In triathlon, international competitions follow the same model of Formula 1, a "World Championship Series", which consists in splitting the championship into a series of events (7-8 events across the year). The sport follows a ranking system, i.e., athletes compete (and select their spot, as F1 drivers would do in the "pole position") at events according to their ranking. All athletes are entered into competitions only via their National Federations.⁶⁶

It is worth noting that at International / EU level, triathlon competitions are organised by third parties, such as the Ironman (by the World Triathlon Corporation) and the Super League Triathlon (SLT), created by investors Chris McCormack and Michael Dhulst). Both of these organisations have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Triathlon Union (ITU). In both agreements, it is clear that Ironman and SLT acknowledge ITU as the governing body of triathlon.⁶⁷

Mixed models of competitions

This sub-section aims to discuss the other models where sports partly apply the general principles of the European Sport Model.

Tennis is an interesting example in this respect. Whereas it generally follows the above-mentioned model of individual sports, it applies a promotion/relegation system when practiced as a team sport at national level in some countries:

- In Sweden, the national tournaments are organised in a pyramid structure with a promotion/relegation model, with the Swedish Tennis League. This new structure merges together the Swedish Tennis Series, the elite series and division 1, the Swedish Junior Cup and most of the regional series under a single umbrella, with five main levels (elite, divisions 1-4, and local series).⁶⁸ The national tournaments are organised in three separate groups for the professional league in Croatia (around 10 clubs in each), and more local tournaments are also organised by clubs. No promotion/relegation system is used here, as there are very few professional clubs in Croatia.⁶⁹
- In Belgium, interclub competitions are organised 1) at national level (highest division) and then at regional level (eight divisions, then sub-categories per age groups). The promotion/relegation system works on the basis of the total points gained over a season (so no maximum clubs promoted/relegated).⁷⁰ The national teams do have an

⁶⁵ Union Cycliste Internationale (2018). Agenda 2022. The cycling of tomorrow is built today, <https://www.uci.org/cyclings-agenda-2022/20zIrXhazhxtIMRhclphxu> and UCI (2021). Regulations; General Organisation; Part I - General organisation of cycling as a sport, <https://www.uci.org/regulations/3MyLDDrwJCJJ0BGGOFzOat#part-i-general-organisation-of-cycling-as-a-sport>

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Triathlon.org (2017). ITU and IRONMAN agree to historic partnership, https://www.triathlon.org/news/article/itu_ironman_agree_to_historic_partnership

⁶⁸ Swedish Tennis Federation statutes and regulations, as well as website of the league structure: <https://www.tennis.se/seriespel/svenska-tennisligan/>

⁶⁹ European Handball Federation (2018): European Tennis Report, fourth edition. <https://www.tenniseurope.org/file/822778/?dl=1>

⁷⁰ Association Francophone de Tennis statutes and regulations: <https://www.aftnet.be/>; Tennis Vlaanderen statutes and regulations: <https://www.tennisvlaanderen.be/>; Royal Belgian Tennis Federation: <https://kbtb.be/>

element of promotion/relegation, with one world group (best 16 teams), and then a pyramid of lower-level groups with a promotion/relegation system.⁷¹

European basketball competitions offer a good example of such a mixed model, with parallel club competitions at European level: one based on open competition, and another one functioning as a closed league.

The European Basketball Champions League was established in 2016 as an independent and separate legal entity based in Switzerland. It is a joint partnership between the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) and 10 top European leagues, where teams qualify through their national leagues. It prides itself on promoting open competition, nurturing new European talent, protecting domestic leagues and protecting the integrity of the game. The 2021-22 competition consists of 52 teams including national champions from 30 European countries. Games are played on Tuesdays and Wednesdays to safeguard national league schedules and national team windows are integrated into the calendar.⁷²

Parallel to the European Basketball Champions League, the Euroleague was originally established by FIBA in 1958 and operated under its control until the year 2000. In the summer of 2000, FIBA changed its name and format by launching the FIBA SuproLeague. In response, the European Union of Basketball Leagues (ULEB), an independent organisation who represents the interests of its member national basketball leagues,⁷³ created and managed a breakaway competition – EuroLeague Basketball. This is described further in the box below and in Case Study 3 in Annex 3.

Box 2: Basketball Euroleague – evolution of structure

The EuroLeague was originally established by FIBA and operated under its control until the year 2000. In the summer of 2000, FIBA changed the name and format of the league. In response, ULEB created and managed a breakaway competition – EuroLeague Basketball. To avoid competing leagues, ULEB and FIBA Europe negotiated terms which allowed EuroLeague Basketball to run European professional club competitions under the guidance of the ULEB.

In 2006, ownership was passed onto a private company, EuroLeague Commercial Assets (ECA) who runs EuroLeague and a second-tier competition, EuroCup. EuroLeague has undergone a number of changes to its format and has become increasingly closed over the years. There is no longer an opportunity for teams to be promoted into EuroLeague from their domestic championships. Instead, the 18 EuroLeague places are granted at the discretion of ECA. Most (11) of these are ECA shareholders and have been granted long-term licenses which guarantee their participation in the league over a number of years. Euroleague games are supposed to be scheduled mid-week to avoid clashing with national leagues and to allow teams to compete in both, though some teams are decoupling away from their national leagues. EuroLeague also manages the EuroCup, where 24 clubs are automatically entered into the regular season. The champions and runners up are promoted to the EuroLeague - so there is a form of promotion and relegation between the two leagues owned by Euroleague Commercial Assets.⁷⁴

- In swimming, international competitions are divided by the International Federation of Amateur Swimming (FINA) into the following tiers: Major World Aquatics Competitions - the Olympic Games, FINA World Championships, FINA World Swimming Championships (25m);
- Other FINA World Competitions - World Junior and Youth Championships in each discipline, World Cups, World Leagues, World Series and other FINA competitions;
- Continental and Regional Competitions - Continental or Regional MultiSport Games, Competitions organised by Continental or Regional Organisations;
- Member Federation's International Competitions - Events organised or sanctioned by a Member Federation in which other FINA recognised Federations, clubs or individuals participate;

⁷¹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁷² Basketball Champions League (BCL) (2021) <https://www.championsleague.basketball/21-22/presentation>

⁷³ ULEB (2022) *History*, <https://www.uleb.com/history>

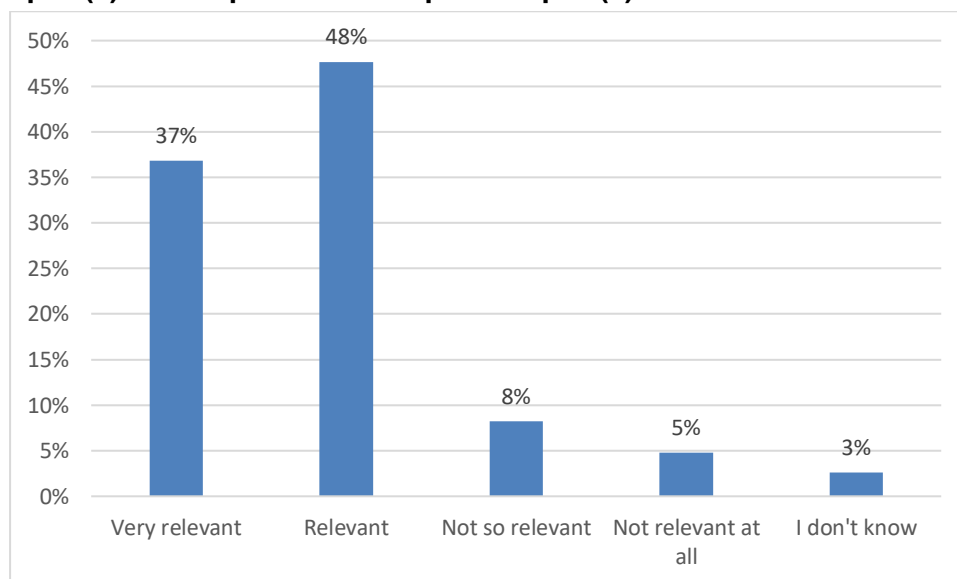
⁷⁴ Euroleague Basketball (2021) <https://www.euroleaguebasketball.net/euroleague-basketball/about>

- Other competitions of major international importance as defined by FINA.⁷⁵

A new international competition (International Swimming League - ISL) was proposed by private investors in 2017 and initially was not recognised by FINA as an international event since the competition organised represented an international competition that required FINA approval within a six-month window. This window had already expired, which meant that the athletes participating in the Turin event would have been disqualified from one to two years by FINA and world records during the ISL events would not be recognised. Ten clubs registered to participate in the newly formed private ISL. Each team composed of a minimum of 24 swimmers (at least 12 men and 12 women) and max 36 swimmers (18 men and 18 women). Following this, ISL initiated a lawsuit against FINA for violating US antitrust laws, as it imposed athletes to not take part in another competition. FINA issued a statement to say that it would no longer ban swimmers and it has since given permission for the ISL competition to go ahead from October 2019. FINA responded by taking aspects of the proposed ISL competition format and launching a "Champions Series" in which the Olympic and World Champions, the world record holders and the prevailing world champion would compete in a new and unique showcase.⁷⁶

While most survey respondents found that the promotion/relegation system is highly relevant (37%) or relevant (48% of respondents) (Figure 2), some contributors indicated that greater flexibility should be considered: the organisation of competitions should focus on their attractiveness and their contribution to the development and sustainability of sport. According to some respondents, discussions on the format of competitions should include greater involvement of key stakeholders, such as the athletes, as well as ensuring accordance with law (incl. competition law) and good governance.

Figure 2: Relevance of the principle of promotion and relegation for the organisation of sport(s) in Europe or for the specific sport(s) selected



Source: Ecorys survey: *Study on the European Sport Model*. (2021) [N=231]. Q6: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the sport(s) you selected? AND Q7: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the organisation of sport in Europe?

⁷⁵ Federation International de Natation (FINA) (2021). FINA Constitution, https://resources.fina.org/fina/document/2021/06/15/dfdc5d34-5752-4155-b1c4-82495a2c6019/22_FINA-Constitution_05.06.2021.pdf

⁷⁶ Lord, C. (2019), International Swimming League wins latest round against FINA: Court backs 'discovery'. *Swimming World*, <https://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/news/international-swimming-league-wins-latest-round-against-fina-court-backs-discovery/>

Conclusions

The promotion/relegation system is broadly applied across European sports and especially European team sports, whereas individual sports tend to apply different models such as ranking systems. Generally speaking, the promotion/relegation system is applied more strictly by major sports (for example football and handball), where the number of practitioners and clubs call for a more structured approach to protect the whole ecosystem.

Open competitions are clearly the main model used across Europe, save for a few exceptions analysed above. In this context, it is worth noting that in a few sports such as triathlon, the emergence of new (privately organised) competitions led to some forms of cooperation with existing federations rather than conflictual situations as in the ISL case in swimming or the recent Super League project in football. Specific trends affecting the system of competition are explored further in Section Four.

3.3 Solidarity mechanisms

The principle of solidarity is affirmed in the 2007 White Paper on Sport, where the European Commission recognises the ‘specificity of the sport structure, including notably ... organised solidarity mechanisms between the different levels and operators...’. The European Sport Model recognises and aims to promote solidarity between different levels in sport (in particular between professional and amateur) as a fundamental aspect of sport. Sport federations are the guarantors of cohesion and thus have a central role in ensuring solidarity between the various levels of sport practice. The principle of financial solidarity operates to keep sport competitions varied and exciting and also to support the development of the grassroots sports with the revenues created by elite sports. In European sport, the redistribution of funds within the solidarity mechanisms happens at several levels. For instance, the distribution may be implemented between different sports (horizontal distribution), or it may be implemented between the different levels of the same sport within the pyramid structure (vertical distribution).

Experts from the sport sector have generally supported the solidarity mechanism principle, but have asserted that it should be reinforced and modernised so as to continue to ensure the development of the grassroots movement and to maintain the social and educational function of sport in Europe.⁷⁷

As mentioned above, the principle of financial solidarity through redistribution mechanisms is a core element of the European Sport Model. A solidarity mechanism thus highlights the redistribution of funds from one section of sport to another⁷⁸. This redistribution can be horizontal – when it happens between different sports or when it is equally shared to all clubs participating in the same competition⁷⁹ – or vertical. Vertical solidarity refers to the redistribution between different levels of the same sport: revenues generated through events and activities of the elite/professional level of a sport who claim the top of the pyramid structure are distributed to the amateur/grassroots level in the shape of development and educational programmes for players, coaches, officials, equipment, infrastructures and direct funding.⁸⁰

The redistributed revenues come not only from private funding obtained through the management of commercial rights to sport events by national and international sport associations. An important share of revenues in all sports is secured through public funding

⁷⁷ See Arnaut, J.L., op.cit., (2006); Expert Group on Sustainable Financing of Sport, op.cit., (2012); ENGSO Policy Programme (2018); Andreff, W. et.al. (2009) ‘A European model of sports financing: under threat’, in *Revue Juridique et Économique du Sport*, 90, 75-85.

⁷⁸ Expert Group on Sustainable Financing of Sport, *Strengthening financial solidarity mechanisms within sport*, December 2012, <https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/sport/library/documents/xg-fin-201211-deliverable.pdf>

⁷⁹ Survey

⁸⁰ Andreff, W., Dutoya, J., & Montel, J. (2009). A European model of sports financing: under threat. *Revue Juridique et Économique du Sport*, 90, 75-85.

such as national governments and international bodies, such as the EU. There are currently several EU funding streams which are relevant for the funding needs of sport organisations at all levels. While the European Commission has long put in place actions dedicated to developing the sport sector in Europe (such as Erasmus+), other EU funding streams could support sport-related initiatives at national, regional or local levels which contribute to over-arching EU policy objectives.⁸¹ However, the available extensive funding opportunities at EU level are rarely known by stakeholders at national and local levels.

Given the acknowledged autonomy of sport governing bodies to organise themselves in the way they think best reflects their objectives, it remains difficult for external bodies such as national or international governments to impose solidarity mechanisms to ensure that funds within a sport organisation flow in a particular direction. However, governments can define or influence sport bodies' actions when the latter are in receipt of public money to fulfil specific policy objectives, as already mentioned above. As such, sport bodies agree to use available funding in particular ways, mostly in the benefit of grassroots sport, to enhance youth participation, health or equality and fight against discrimination.⁸²

There are many examples of solidarity mechanisms in sport across Europe highlighted by existing literature and by the current research. An example of a horizontal mechanism comes from Portugal, where the redistribution happens at the level of large professional clubs, which are multi-disciplined (they can accommodate up to 20 sports at professional and grassroots levels). As there is no cross-funding from sponsorship or media rights, amateur disciplines benefit from brand association with larger professional disciplines from the same club, thus making it easier to get sponsorship and media contracts.⁸³

World Rugby's revenue is reinvested into the development and growth of the sport, directly and indirectly. World Rugby directly runs programmes aimed to support participation, coaching, volunteering, and business.⁸⁴ They also allocate funding to member unions to use on their own grassroots and development initiatives, and countries who participate in the men's Rugby World Cup get a proportional dividend.⁸⁵ This leads to variation in the amount of funding available for grassroots sport and the way in which it is spent, which is governed by each country's rugby union. In France, solidarity mechanisms are felt to be effective thanks to a tax which requires sport federations who benefit from the sale of TV rights to return 5% of rights collected to the National Sports Agency.⁸⁶ In the case of rugby, revenue from TV broadcaster Canal+ is thought to be well-distributed to clubs at different tiers of the French league system.⁸⁷ Rugby Europe can also apply for World Rugby funding which is largely spent helping members fulfil international fixtures – particularly in elite level men and women competitions outside of the Six Nations championship.⁸⁸

Cycling also benefits from solidarity schemes. In particular, UCI receives funding from the International Olympic Committee⁸⁹ and redistributes this funding to its confederations and national federations through solidarity programmes.⁹⁰ Solidarity programmes offer in-kind as well as financial support to national federations with the aim to reduce inequalities. For

⁸¹ More information on the available EU funding programmes relevant for sport in SHARE initiative paper Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027: how can the sport sector benefit? <https://keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/SHARE-background-document-Next-Generation-EU-guidance-FINAL.pdf>

⁸² Expert Group on Sustainable Financing of Sport, *op.cit.*, 2012

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ World Rugby (2019) *Impact Beyond: Programme Report*, https://resources.world.rugby/worldrugby/document/2020/09/01/94599f5e-bcce-40e6-a991-d6854ceb6b21/2020-ImpactBeyond-2019_Report-ENG.pdf

⁸⁵ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁸⁶ Vie Publique (2021) *Who finances sport in France?*, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/274760-qui-finance-le-sport-en-france>

⁸⁷ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ UCI.org (2021), *UCI publishes its 2020 UCI Annual Report*, <https://www.uci.org/pressrelease/the-uci-publishes-its-2020-uci-annual-report/5Am7h0QBW85bWro7yzL2RR>

⁹⁰ UCI (n.d.), *UCI Solidarity Programme - Guidelines*, https://www.uec.ch/resources/solidarity/00_2020%20UCI%20Solidarity%20Programme%20Guidelines.pdf

example, in Europe, there is an annual solidarity scheme from UCI and the *Union Européenne de Cyclisme* (UEC) made-up of two parts:⁹¹

- One part dedicated to the education of riders, coaches, and referees (commissaires);
- One part dedicated to infrastructure projects.

The scheme is open to national federations based on a ranking system, in order to help the least developed federations to grow.⁹²

Moreover, World Triathlon has different solidarity schemes (e.g., scholarships, sponsorships, etc) directly benefitting national federations. For example, through its sponsor, Asics, World Triathlon detects and supports talented athletes whose national federation cannot financially support, to qualify for the Olympic Games. World Triathlon also helps confederations through providing them with educational material, helping them cover anti-doping test costs in competitions, etc.

In addition, World Triathlon distributes funds to Europe Triathlon, who then makes them available to national federations. In particular, in 2021 Europe Triathlon provided approximately €195,000 to national federations⁹³ for activities including development camps, technical official courses, coaching courses, youth festivals, etc.⁹⁴ To reduce inequalities between advanced and lagging federations, funding was open only for federations meeting certain eligibility criteria.⁹⁵ Europe Triathlon also reserved a small part of funding to help national federations to support para-triathlon in order to maintain the sport's position at the Paralympics.

The IIHF also has various solidarity mechanisms in place, through which it supports member national associations (MNAs), and particularly the least developed associations. The federation has a number of open-access resources that MNAs can use to train coaches, attract young people to the sport, etc., while it also has several development initiatives providing financial or equipment support to MNAs. For example, IIHF runs two global camps helping MNAs to upgrade and to operate quality development and education programmes within their countries: IIHF Hockey Development Camps and IIHF Women's High-Performance Camps. MNAs can also apply for individual development programmes as well as receive equipment support. Between 2016 and 2020, equipment worth \$1,378,000 has been received by 27 out of the 81 MNAs, with seven to ten MNAs, having received equipment worth \$190,000 to \$240,000. Solidarity mechanisms also exist within MNAs.

The International Skating Union has also put in place solidarity programmes, namely an extensive Development Programme, which is an essential tool for the promotion and development of the ISU sports. The Programme has the goal to improve the skating activities of ISU Members in a sustainable way. Within a budget set by the ISU Council, the Development Programme supports training programmes for skaters and coaches, education for officials, acquiring state-of-the-art equipment or effective programmes for grassroots skating. It also supports development initiatives identified by Members, Technical Committees, Commissions and the Council that fall within ISU criteria.

Perhaps the best known (and most analysed) example showcasing the redistribution of funds from European to national and grassroots levels is represented by UEFA's European football competitions.

⁹¹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁹² UCI (2020). *UCI Annual Report 2020*, <https://assets.ctfassets.net/76117gh5x5an/6vcY4Oi10QENInBqoPOnxi/ce34be6a60bdeb394d93a680a69ebb68/2020-uci-rapport-annuel-inside-english-web.pdf>

⁹³ World Triathlon's share of this budget is approximately €135,000. For more information, please see: https://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/ET_2021_Development_Agreement.pdf

⁹⁴ Europe.triathlon.org (2021), *Development*, <https://europe.triathlon.org/development/>

⁹⁵ For more information, please see: https://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/NF_Survey_Report_2020_Digital.pdf

The revenues generated from the UEFA Club Competitions and UEFA National Team Competitions are used to fund European football's solidarity objectives, whether at continental or national level. Established financial solidarity mechanisms in football help to establish, maintain and reinforce the necessary link between professional and amateur sport, as well as finance less profitable competitions (e.g., women's and youth tournaments) which are essential for the long-term development of and access to sport. The financial support flowing throughout European football through the established pyramid ensures the proper development and training of referees, coaches and football administrators. It provides assistance to national associations in the form of business development, club licensing implementation, and improved professionalisation. It helps to protect and guarantee safeguards for both players and fans such as the proper training of sports doctors, fighting against anti-doping, and ensuring players receive appropriate education and health support. It funds social and societal programmes and campaigns such as anti-racism campaigns, programmes to promote inclusivity and football opportunities for marginalised groups.

These solidarity and redistribution mechanisms are based on a system of exclusivity and collective selling that supports financial solidarity between elite and grassroots football across the continent. Around 60% of the media rights UEFA competitions is redistributed to national federations with the specific objective of developing grassroots projects. This is an equitable split, therefore smaller European countries would be impacted much more if the value of the rights diminished.⁹⁶ The gross commercial revenue from the 2019-2020 UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and UEFA Super Cup was estimated at €3.25 billion. Of this gross amount, 7% (€227.5 million) made up for solidarity payments. Of the net revenue of €2.73 billion, 93.5% was distributed to participating clubs. As such the total amount available for distribution to participating clubs in 2019-2020 was €2.55 billion, of which €2.04 billion was distributed to clubs competing in the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Super Cup and €510 million was distributed to clubs participating in the UEFA Europa League.⁹⁷

In the 2021-2022 season, the gross commercial revenue from the above-mentioned UEFA tournaments is estimated at €3.5 billion, of which €140 million (4%) will be set aside for solidarity payments. An additional €10 million will be allocated to the UEFA Women's Champions League distribution scheme. Of the resulting net revenue of €2.92 billion, the same percentage of 93.5% will be distributed to the participating clubs. As such the total amount available for distribution in 2021-2022 will be €2.73 billion⁹⁸ – a 7% increase from the 2019-2020 season. This is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: UEFA solidarity payment redistribution

Season	Gross revenue	Total amount allocated for redistribution
2019-2020	€3.25 bn	€2.55 bn
2021-2022	€3.5 bn	€2.73 bn

The spread and scale of revenues that UEFA club competitions bring across the whole European football pyramid should not be underestimated. Across the last ten seasons, seventeen different countries received more than €200 million in UEFA club distributions, and a further fourteen countries received between €50-200 million. Even in the lowest ranked UEFA National Associations where players are often semi-professional, every

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ 2019-2020 UEFA club competitions revenue distribution system, 2019, <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/stakeholders/news/0253-0f8e6d83afa2-0904576faee6-1000--2019-20-uefa-club-competitions-revenue-distribution-system/>

⁹⁸ 2021-2022 UEFA club competition revenue distribution system, 2021, https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/0269-125fde34ba54-30a4c9aeea13-1000/20210520_circular_2021_35_en.pdf

country received more than €10 million across the last ten seasons.⁹⁹ With solidarity increasing and UEFA Europa League and Europa Conference League prize money more than quadrupling in ten seasons, this broad revenue distribution is set to continue as long as the pyramid can be protected.

Furthermore, the UEFA Champions League is a major source of funding for other competitions and youth development. For 2021-24 the level of cross-subsidy from the UEFA Champions League to the UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League is projected at more than €400 million. In addition to these cross-subsidies, from 2021/22 between €245 million and €280 million will be paid in direct solidarity to clubs (€105 million for qualifying round payments and €140 million-€175 million for youth investment to non-participating clubs).

In the last decade the commercial revenues generated by the UEFA Champions League have partly funded youth development at 1,660 different non-participating clubs and youth academies further down the pyramid. The values increase each commercial cycle but in the last ten seasons just under €967 million has been paid out for clubs to invest specifically in their youth training and education.

Overall, UEFA returns approximately 95% of UEFA club competition revenues (meaning all revenues other than the costs of organising competitions) back into football. Claims made by the leaders of the European Super League project that they would triple solidarity were widely rejected and criticised as wildly misleading in the 2021 European Club Football Landscape report.¹⁰⁰

Despite these positive figures, survey respondents from the European football sector believe that while the existence of a financial solidarity mechanism is a fundamental pillar of the European Sport Model, there remains areas for substantial improvement in its implementation across several sports, including football. For example, some stakeholders believe that insufficient resources are redistributed from elite leagues to the amateur levels, whilst others believe that clubs should be given the autonomy to pursue revenue-generating activity as they see fit.

Another important aspect in controlling and improving solidarity mechanisms and an overall sustainability of the sport is effective control of expenditures to enhance profitability, which has not been done consistently in the world of football. UEFA is currently working to overhaul its Financial Fair Play Regulation¹⁰¹ with a view to enforce a more effective system of checks and balances to monitor and control club spending.

While in football the question of solidarity payments and revenues is a well-researched topic with extensive information available, other sports do not boast the same extent of publicly available information (and figures). This is the case of well-developed sports with international influence, such as basketball or handball. Information about financial data in European basketball remains limited and most of the numbers are not public. The specificity of this sport is that most European clubs are registering negative profits, thus being unable to redistribute revenue top-down. Exceptions are basketball teams connected with football clubs like Barcelona, Fenerbahçe or Bayern München, whose financial losses are compensated by the high gains from the football events.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ The only exceptions were Kosovo whose clubs joined UEFA part way during the decade and Liechtenstein who receive less as there is no domestic league, only a national cup.

¹⁰⁰ European Club Football Landscape Report 2021, https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/026a-128c5dffdb5f-64d49e6e5300-1000/210615_ecfl_pandemic_eng.pdf

¹⁰¹ UEFA (2018) UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations, 2018, <https://documents.uefa.com/v/u/MFxeqLNkelkYyh5JSafuhg>

¹⁰² 'European Basketball Economics', in eurohoops.net, 2019, <https://www.eurohoops.net/en/trademarks/840834/european-basketball-economics/>

The overall imbalance between investments and revenues in the elite level and their redistribution towards the grassroots level is felt not only in football but in other sports as well, such as athletics, basketball, but also smaller sports.¹⁰³ As a matter of fact, operational budgets for the majority of grassroots sports come to a great extent from own revenues made by membership fees or sometimes local sponsorship deals.¹⁰⁴

The Olympic Games constitute an important source of revenue for many European sports. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) redistributes more than 90% of the Olympic Games marketing revenue (broadcasting rights, sponsorship, ticketing) to the organisations belonging to the Olympic Movement (i.e., the International sports Federations (IF) and the National Olympic Committees (NOC)) to promote sport around the world at grassroots levels. This percentage is equivalent to a daily amount of \$3.4 million distributed to support athletes and sport organisations at all levels worldwide. The IOC retains only 10% of Olympic revenue for IOC activities to cover operational costs of governing the Olympic Movement.¹⁰⁵ The international Olympic solidarity budget foreseen for 2021-2024 amounts to \$509 million, a 17% increase on the previous period 2017-2020.¹⁰⁶

For the majority of the sports within the scope of this research, the financial solidarity principles remain an important part of the European Sport Model, with concrete implications for the development of the sports at local levels. However, survey respondents claim that more transparency and accountability is needed in the redistribution process, to ensure that a fair share of profits made at elite level reach the grassroots level and fund training and educational programmes. A significant share of survey respondents claim that this is not yet a reality in the European Sport Model, as financial transfers from elite to grassroots level are in reality rather limited and thus rarely match the real needs of the sports at local level. The survey also highlighted that in terms of solidarity, the model should not overlook the importance of fair remuneration for athletes' work and performance.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, financial solidarity is a reality mostly for larger sports, which claim big revenues from advertising and media rights, such as football or tennis. The grassroots level of many smaller sports is funded mostly via membership subscriptions as mentioned above, as these sports do not benefit from large international media coverage. In addition, municipalities support local sport clubs to a large extent, through the development of facilities or local activities. Therefore, for some sport stakeholders, the financial solidarity principle is not necessarily a core element of the survival of their sport and thus, not relevant to the construction of a European Sport Model.¹⁰⁸

3.4 Autonomy and good governance

The autonomy of sport concept forms an important pillar of the European Sport Model and is an aspect of the model that has been thoroughly discussed in recent years by academics, policymakers and sport organisations themselves.¹⁰⁹ The autonomy of sport is arguably justified as an important tool through which the values inherent in sport can be

¹⁰³ Survey

¹⁰⁴ Survey, stakeholder interviews.

¹⁰⁵ International Olympic Committee, How are the Olympic marketing revenues distributed?,

<https://olympics.com/ioc/faq/olympic-marketing/how-are-the-olympic-marketing-revenues-distributed>

¹⁰⁶ Olympic Marketing Fact File, 2021 edition, https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/International-Olympic-Committee/IOC-Marketing-And-Broadcasting/IOC-Marketing-Fact-File-2021.pdf?_ga=2.139153459.1299943252.1643638567-1726099689.1643370678

¹⁰⁷ Survey

¹⁰⁸ Survey, interviews

¹⁰⁹ Notably a 2010 study by the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) from the IDHEAP (Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration), which is associated with the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) to discuss the different interpretations, common points and approaches to the autonomy of sport through extensive surveys to national governments, and sport federations.

safeguarded from political, legal, and commercial influences.¹¹⁰ Sporting autonomy refers to a range of sporting competences including the ability of a sporting body, without undue external influence, to establish, amend and interpret sporting rules, to select sporting leaders and governance styles and to secure and use public funding without disproportionate obligations.¹¹¹

This sub-section discusses the main characteristics of this concept and the different discussion points around these. The autonomy of sport is therefore discussed in terms of political autonomy, legal autonomy, financial autonomy, but also in terms of the inter-relationship between sport federations and public authorities.¹¹²

Political autonomy

The word “autonomy” appeared for the first time in the 1949 Olympic Charter.¹¹³ ‘in order to be recognised by the IOC, the NOCs must be free from any interference from national authorities’.¹¹⁴ This concept was adopted by all of the main international sport federations, albeit with different approaches, according to the sport and the subject concerned. Similarly, the autonomy of the continental associations in relation to the international federations for their sport varies greatly. In most European countries, NOCs are politically independent however the level of autonomy of a NOC varies from one country to another in different parts of the world. There are several situations where NOCs are controlled by the national government. In some situations, notably in African, Asian and Latin American countries, the NOC is “an annex to the Ministry of Sport”¹¹⁵ and the NOC president is the Minister of Sport, or even the President of the country.

The IOC exercises greater scrutiny over the autonomy of the NOCs than over that of the international federations. At a general level, political autonomy primarily concerns autonomy vis-à-vis governments, although other third parties are also taken into consideration.¹¹⁶ In practice, several studies highlight previous cases of interference both across sport federations, or between sport federations and national governments. For example, in 2008 FIFA (*Fédération Internationale de Football Association*) suspended the national football federations of Albania and Madagascar.¹¹⁷

The sports world has also taken a strong stance against the Russian invasion in Ukraine. Fans have been seen to hold Ukrainian flags and wear shirts calling for peace at sports events, and sports stars around the world have united in their condemnation of the invasion. World Athletics, said it is “appalled” by the crisis in Ukraine, and President Sebastian Coe offered the Ukrainian Athletics Federation whatever practical support they can give.¹¹⁸ A large number of sporting events involving Russia have also been cancelled. For example, UEFA announced that its Champions League final would no longer be held in St. Petersburg, while the Polish, Swedish and Czech football associations issued a joint statement urging World Cup play-off matches not to be held in Russia.¹¹⁹ In Germany, the

¹¹⁰ Parrish, R. (2016) *The Autonomy of Sport: A Legal Analysis*. Sport & Citizenship Journal n°35, June 2016.

¹¹¹ Chappelet, J.L. (2010) *Autonomy of Sport in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

¹¹² Geeraert, A., Scheerder, J. and Bruyninckx, H. (2013) *The governance network of European football: introducing new governance approaches to steer football at the EU level*, International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics, 5:1, 113-132.

¹¹³ International Olympic Committee (1949), *Olympic Rules*, https://stillmed.olympic.org/Documents/Olympic%20Charter/Olympic_Charter_through_time/1949-Olympic_Charter.pdf.

¹¹⁴ Mrkonjic, M. and Geeraert, A. (2013) *Sports organisations, autonomy and good governance. Working paper for Action for Good Governance in International Sports Organisations (AGGIS) project*

¹¹⁵ Chappelet and Kübler-Mabbott (2008) *The International Olympic Committee and the Olympic System: The Governance of World Sport* p. 55

¹¹⁶ Chappelet, J.L. (2010) *Autonomy of Sport in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ Campbell, C. (2022), *How the Sports World is Responding to Russia's Ukraine Invasion*, TIME Magazine, <https://time.com/6151390/sports-russia-ukraine-f1-football/>.

¹¹⁹ CBC news (2022), *Poland, Sweden, Czech Republic refuse to play Russia in World Cup playoffs*, The Associated Press, <https://www.cbc.ca/sports/soccer/poland-sweden-refuse-to-play-russia-world-cup-playoffs-1.6365880>.

second-tier league Schalke announced it was removing the logo of its main sponsor, Russian state-owned energy giant Gazprom, from players' shirts, while Manchester United terminated its sponsorship deal with Russia's national airline, Aeroflot.¹²⁰

Legal autonomy

The legal autonomy of a sporting organisation can be defined as the private autonomy of the organisation to adopt rules and norms that have a legal impact in a legal framework imposed by the State,¹²¹ be it at national or at international level. At national level, the legal autonomy of sport organisations can be under the scope of civil law for organisational structures, fiscal law for tax exemptions or corporate law for contractual issues. All of the main international federations that are seated in Switzerland are non-profit associations (except the World Anti-Doping Agency which is incorporated as a foundation). They fall under the provision of the Swiss Civil Code (Article 60ss) which provides minimum requirements for an association to be created, such as writing and adopting statutes, having an ideal objective.¹²²

For other sport federations, the European Commission 2007 White Paper on Sport notes that "European sport is characterised by a multitude of complex and diverse structures which enjoy different types of legal status and levels of autonomy in Member States". It also notes that the autonomy of sport organisations needs to be recognised and protected, within a framework that ensures the implementation of good governance principles such as democracy, transparency and accountability.

Financial autonomy

The financial autonomy of sport federations is ambiguous. While they can generate revenues of their own, public funding remains a crucial income for most of the sport federations, and especially sports which benefit from less media exposure.¹²³ According to a pan-European survey launched by the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport of the Council of Europe, all European countries confirmed that they financially support their sport movements, which, in the majority of cases, could not exist or would be far smaller without this support. While financial support does not undermine the financial autonomy of the sport movement, the use made of these funds were subject to complex or less complex forms of government scrutiny across European countries. Some sport federations noted that this scrutiny represents a limitation to their autonomy.¹²⁴

Financial autonomy is clearly an area of concern for sport federations. Many national sport federations have full autonomy in terms of their particular sport but a low capacity to truly act autonomously as they need to comply with certain requirements coming from various government authorities.¹²⁵

Some authors make a distinction between the level of state involvement as a compass to assess the degree of sport autonomy, painting a spectrum of models between the liberal model in northern Europe and the interventionist model in Southern Europe (including France). The differences between liberal and interventionist models has tended to fade however due to a reduced level of state involvement in sport (for example the rolling back

¹²⁰ Campbell, C. (2022), *How the Sports World is Responding to Russia's Ukraine Invasion*, TIME Magazine, <https://time.com/6151390/sports-russia-ukraine-f1-football/>.

¹²¹ Oswald, D. (2010) *Associations, fondations et autres formes de personnes morales au service du sport*. Peter Lang

¹²² Mrkonjic, M. and Geeraert, A. (2013) *Sports organisations, autonomy and good governance. Working paper for Action for Good Governance in International Sports Organisations (AGGIS) project*

¹²³ Andreff, W., Dutoya, J., & Montel, J. (2009). *A European model of sports financing: under threat*. *Revue Juridique et Économique du Sport*, 90, 75-85

¹²⁴ Chappelet, J.L. (2010) *Autonomy of Sport in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

¹²⁵ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

of the state in both former communist countries and in southern Europe). This reduced level of involvement shows a weakening of certain natural levels of protection of public interests and the sport federations' link to policy. Our research on the main trends affecting the European Sport Model also shows that the lack of public funding hinders the capacity of smaller federations to play a broader role in society and engage with less structured sport activities (i.e., activities developed beyond sport clubs; see also Section 4.7 below). It could be argued that the impact of globalisation on the economics of sport, and in particular the fact that federations now have commercial functions on top of their historical power of regulation is arguably increasing the autonomy of sport federations while weakening their inter-relationship with public authorities.¹²⁶

Conditional or negotiated autonomy

As pointed out in the above section outlining the different legal developments around the European Sport Model, a series of important cases have set out several important considerations linked to the autonomy of sport. While sport organisations are autonomous, they do need to respect EU rules including those governing competition or the internal market. These legal developments acknowledge the autonomy of sport as an important concept for the organisation of sport. Several studies point out that this autonomy is subject to a set of conditions, including especially good governance principles. Several models for the adoption and monitoring of good governance principles have been put forward, and other studies provide an overview of such models, often set up by sport federations themselves or by public authorities.¹²⁷ Overall, the acceptance of such principles is binding and conditions the adhesion of national federations to international ones. The development of good governance initiatives is considered further in the next section.

Horizontal and vertical autonomy of sport

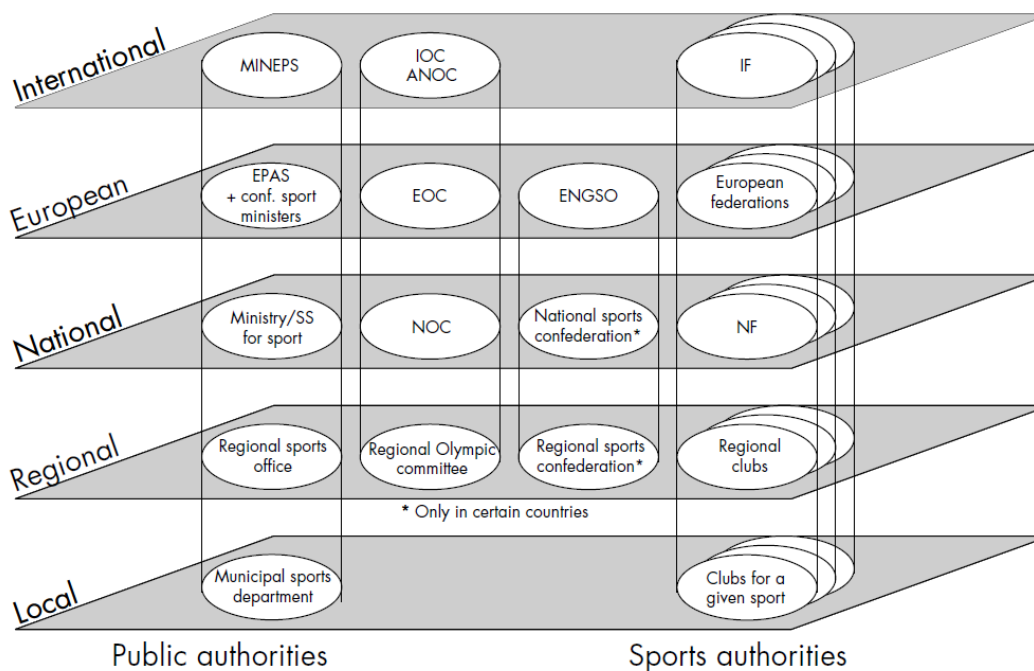
Overall, the autonomy of sport is actually taking place at different levels and inter-relationships exist both from a vertical and horizontal perspective: horizontal autonomy is that enjoyed at a given level by a sport organisation in relation to its corresponding public authority of the same level, for example a club in relation to its city, while the vertical autonomy concerns the relationship between lower-ranking sport organisations in relation to higher-ranking ones within the same sport or on the occasion of a multi-sport competition.¹²⁸ This is illustrated in the figure below:

¹²⁶ Miège, C. (2008) *Le modèle sportif européen existe-t-il ?* Sport and Citizenship Journal, n°3, June 2008; Lefebvre-Rangeon, F. (2014) *L'émergence d'un modèle sportif européen. Contribution à l'étude de la construction juridique européenne*. Université de Limoges, Ecole Doctorale N° 88, Droit et Science Politique.

¹²⁷ See for example Mrkonjic, M. and Geeraert, A. (2013) *Sports organisations, autonomy and good governance. Working paper for Action for Good Governance in International Sports Organisations (AGGIS) project*; Michaël, M. (2016) *A review of good governance principles and indicators in sport*.

¹²⁸ Chapelet, J.L. (2010) *Autonomy of Sport in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Figure 3: Horizontal and vertical autonomy of sport



Source: Chappelet (2010)

This approach requires important considerations: horizontal autonomy above all calls for good co-operation between public and sport authorities of the same level within the legal framework of that horizontal level, especially where sport organisations heavily rely on public support and subsidies, while vertical autonomy is limited by the fact that international federations set out similar rules across countries, with few deviations and local adaptations. This can lead to challenging situations such as overcrowded calendars of matches.

Good governance

Survey respondents indicated that the autonomy and independence of sport federations need to be connected to good governance and effective oversight by law to prevent scandals and corruption. There is a general recognition that sport federations must earn their autonomy through accountability and transparency. In other words, autonomy should be conditional upon the application of a number of core principles. While many federations are proactive in the development of good governance approaches, the research has shown that there is also a role for government in influencing federations to adopt such practices. In some of the sports and countries analysed for this study, good governance principles are monitored by governments and are a condition of funding. Federations in Belgium, for example, apply good governance principles including equal pay for men and women; financial transparency; controlling risk behaviour for example scenarios where Board Members might have an affiliation with a company and others. Federations have to show that they progress year-by-year, otherwise they might (at worst) lose government funding.¹²⁹

Similarly, all French sport federations and associations need to prepare development plans as part of their Conventions with the National Olympic Committee (for Olympic sports) and the French government. This is one of the guiding criteria to allocate subsidies for different sports and seeks to advance on several strategic priorities, including advancing women sports, promoting social inclusion through sports, and respecting good governance

¹²⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

principles. The plan for the Handball Federation is very detailed and touches upon a variety of issues.

- Strengthen the professional structures of handball and clear objectives in terms of national teams performances;
- Co-development of actions between the federation, the handball leagues, clubs and relevant committees (regional leagues).¹³⁰

Several initiatives towards upholding good governance principles are also set up by European and international federations. As one of the leading sport federations, UEFA has a standard-setting role in terms of good governance and multiplies efforts across the different criteria. Many such examples can be found in progressive amendments to the UEFA Statutes, including:

- Introduction of term and age limits for the UEFA president and the members of the UEFA Executive Committee. According to the amended version of Article 22(1) of the UEFA Statute, the UEFA president and the members of the UEFA Executive Committee may now serve for a maximum of three four-year terms (whether consecutive or not whereas partial terms count as full terms).¹³¹
- Requirement that candidates for (re-)election to the UEFA Executive Committee must hold an active office (president or vice-president) in their respective national association.
- Granting of two full member positions on the UEFA Executive Committee to representatives of the European Club Association and one full member position on the UEFA Executive Committee to a representative of the European Leagues (EL).
- Strengthening of the UEFA Governance and Compliance Committee through the appointment of two additional, independent members to the previously three-member body.
- Inclusion of a specific article to ensure that venues for all UEFA competitions are selected in a fully objective manner through a transparent bidding process (Article 50.1 of the UEFA Statute).
- Inclusion of a specific article to make ethics and good governance a statutory objective of UEFA (Article 2 of the UEFA Statute). Authorisation for experts from national associations to chair UEFA committees.¹³²

UEFA also specifies some good governance principles as recommendations for its national associations. This is set out in a circular letter (No. 58/2018) on 12 October 2018.¹³³ In summary, the ten good governance principles are:

- *Clear strategy*: In addition to running their daily business, associations should have a clear, transparent business strategy, which should be the result of an inclusive internal and external strategy development process. The strategy should be evaluated on a regular basis and, for the sake of transparency, be published. *Statutes*: In the same way as the UEFA good governance reforms of 2017, the UEFA member associations are encouraged to revise and modernise their statutes. In this respect, particular attention is placed on: a. the recommendation to establish fixed terms and/or age limits for presidents and board members, to avoid excessive power being concentrated on single persons through a system of checks and balances; and b. to

¹³⁰ 2020 Development plan for the Handball Federation - towards 2024,

https://www.handball-idf.com/images/DocsLigue/ANS/2020/PSF_FFHandball-CAP_2024.pdf

¹³¹ UEFA (2021) UEFA Statutes; Rules of Procedure of the UEFA Congress and Regulations governing the Implementation of the UEFA Statutes. 20 April 2021, <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/documentlibrary/about-uefa/>

¹³² UEFA (2021) UEFA Statutes; Rules of Procedure of the UEFA Congress and Regulations governing the Implementation of the UEFA Statutes. 20 April 2021, <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/documentlibrary/about-uefa/>

¹³³ UEFA (2018) Circular letter (No. 58/2018). 12 October 2018 and Law in Sport (2019) A guide to UEFA's Good Governance Reform. 17 January 2019.

ensure balanced gender representation not only on the association's board but also in the corresponding league and club bodies.

- *Stakeholder involvement*: National associations are called to recognise and consult regularly their various stakeholders, both those that belong to the football family (i.e., clubs, leagues, players, coaches, referees and supporters) and other interest groups such as political bodies, media and relevant NGOs who are important partners for the overall development of football at national level. UEFA has decided to include representatives of the European Club Association and the European Leagues as full members of its Executive Committee. In this respect, national associations are free to decide on the precise degree of stakeholder involvement, be it at board/executive committee, standing committee or working group level.
- *Promotion of ethical values, integrity and good governance*: National associations are invited to include ethical values, integrity rules and good governance as priority objectives in their statutes. Moreover, with respect to ethical matters, associations are free to decide whether they want to address them in their disciplinary regulations or by means of a specific code of ethics.
- *Professionalism of committee structures*: An association's committees also have a very important role; therefore, not only are clear stipulations regarding the work, responsibilities and composition of every committee strongly recommended, but also fair gender representation and a balance of interests.
- *Administration*: The key element here is to guarantee that the administration, i.e., those who run the association's day-to-day business, is protected from undue political interference.
- *Accountability*: Under this heading, UEFA addresses the need to safeguard national associations from mismanagement. Therefore, double signature systems, proper risk management programmes, appropriate tender processes, budgeting, and definition of duties and responsibilities are all deemed as essential.
- *Transparency in financial matters and corporate documents*: The need for transparency is highlighted, especially in financial matters. National associations are therefore called upon to have transparent financial structures and strict financial controls, both internal and external. Moreover, for the sake of transparency towards the various stakeholders, certain documents should be made publicly available.
- *Compliance*: UEFA also recommends that associations implement a strong compliance policy and culture to ensure that statutes and regulations are adhered to. *Volunteer programmes*: Considering that an association's overall goal should be to stimulate participation in football, associations are recommended to have effective grassroots and volunteer programmes to boost active involvement, especially among young people.

The implementation of these ten good governance principles at national level, is incentivised with up to €100,000 per season. Additionally, UEFA's national associations can apply for up to €80,000 per season to finance good governance projects. The governance framework applicable to UEFA's national associations will be reviewed and further strengthened.

The IIHF has been named among the top-ranked winter-sports federations in an independent International Federation Governance review. From 2016 to 2020, the IIHF successfully implemented the following good governance actions:

- Separation of Powers between an operational office and a strategic Council;
- Clearer and more robust Council Eligibility requirement, Council Campaigning Procedures and Rules, and Council election requirements (minimum votes required to be elected and vetting by an independent auditor);
- Council Term Limits;
- Creation of an Independent Ethics Board with members elected by the Congress (Ethics Board mandate takes effect in 2021 due to COVID-19);

- Clear requirements and procedures for organisations to become IIHF members and detailed accountability requirements for MNAs once they become members (IIHF Audit rights)
- Procurement Policy and Procedures for the IIHF and Hosts of IIHF Championships;
- Financial clarity and transparency;
- Creation of a clearer, more robust and accountable Integrity Programme (Anti-Doping, Match Fixing, Abuse and Harassment – including racism, and Ethics) – Integrity Hub; and
- IIHF Environmental and Social Responsibility Guidelines and Manual for IIHF Championship Hosts.

IIHF Code of Conduct includes a clear set of six rules regarding ethics, conflicts of interest, manipulation of competitions; betting and inside information, venues responsibility for fan behaviour, rules violations and disciplinary measures.¹³⁴

Finally, several EU-funded projects are working on the topic of good governance for sport organisations; for instance, the “Support the Implementation of Good Governance in Sport” (SIGGS) Project created a self-evaluation toolkit.¹³⁵ The use of the toolkit was followed up with clear feedback on which areas required attention and educational material was provided. A roadmap of how to use these tools, a benchmark of organisations with the same level of good governance standards were also provided. The project also facilitated meetings with similar organisations to help improve the governance of sport federations.¹³⁶

Overall, good governance principles are strongly supported by sport federations themselves. Stakeholders within the Olympic Movement indicated in their survey responses that they continuously set up structures, policies, processes and programmes to improve integrity in competitions and within their own organisations. Furthermore, the Olympic Movement has already worked and is continuing to work with and support the various stakeholders, including the EU, to enhance governance across all levels, better protect its athletes, continue to fight corruption and doping, and become more transparent.¹³⁷

The main focus of all these activities was to strengthen sport organisations' administrative capacities, guarantee full transparency in decision making processes, establish proper accounting systems, or support schemes for equality at all levels. Issues including fight against corruption and protecting athletes from abuse, have also been high on the agenda.

In the context of evidence of cases of mismanagement of major sporting bodies, it is worth noting that the General Assembly of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federation (ASOIF) in 2016 mandated the ASOIF Governance Taskforce (GTF) to assist the 28 summer IFs to promote and ensure a culture of good governance within their structures. The GTF has developed a full set of governance principles and indicators tailored to the specific characteristics and needs of sport organisations. This mechanism helps to jointly evaluate the current status of each Summer Olympic International Federation and regularly monitors progress.¹³⁸

3.5 Role of public sector

The role of the public sector is essential in terms of promoting and funding European sport. It has a key role to play for example in funding grassroots participation, providing access

¹³⁴ IIHF.com (2020). IIHF a leader in good governance, <https://www.iihf.com/en/news/20453/iihf-a-leader-in-good-governance>

¹³⁵ <https://www.siggs.eu/home> the project was led by the EOC EU Office and was referred to as a good practice by several interviewees.

¹³⁶ <https://www.siggs.eu/home> the project was led by the EOC EU Office and was referred to as a good practice by several interviewees.

¹³⁷ Survey responses

¹³⁸ Ibid

to all participants to sport, and providing sport within the education system- key underlining features of the European Sport Model.

The research has shown that public funding continues to play a paramount role in sustaining smaller sports. For example, the public sector has a huge role to play in funding rowing at European level (it is estimated that 99% of funding support for the sport's development comes from public sources). The actual role of the public sector in relation to rowing varies from country to country.¹³⁹ Many Member States play a role in funding grassroots participation, access, and provide rowing classes within the education system. The public sector is hugely important and has a big role to play in the promotion of rowing in Ireland, for example, (for example Get Going Get Rowing programme was implemented into the Irish education system in schools from public funding). Rowing Ireland have also used public funding for encouraging participation in rowing and have implemented campaigns around getting active with rowing.¹⁴⁰

The two main roles of the public sector in rugby are around promoting the personal and mental health benefits of rugby (in particular providing reassurance around the risk of injury), and financing or supporting facilities.¹⁴¹ Support from the public sector varies between countries. For example, in France some councils own their local club's stadium and contribute financially to the upkeep and training facilities; or in other cases local government has used public funding to build playing facilities.¹⁴²

In tennis, tennis clubs and tennis courts are largely supported by public bodies, be it through national sport funding or through local authorities. However, the interactions between professional and amateur tennis are quite low in most EU Member States. Club tournaments sometimes involve a mix of players of amateur and professional levels. However, when it comes to individual tournaments, there are clear barriers between professional and amateur tennis due to the level of competition, the limited number of ranked positions and the required investments (staff and equipment) to go professional. This means that the support to amateur tennis infrastructure, where public support plays an important role, does not have a direct impact on professionals once they start generating sufficient revenues. It may still contribute to lower the costs and barriers to entry for professional players, for example by covering some of the costs for coaching and maintenance of equipment. In other words, public funding plays a foundational role for the tennis ecosystem as a whole, and a more limited role for established tennis players¹⁴³. Public subsidies at national (for professional players) and regional (for young players) levels exist in all EU Member States, albeit with different amounts.¹⁴⁴

While data is scarce at EU level, more detailed information is available at national level. In Sweden, public funding is channelled through the Swedish Sports Confederation which currently receives almost SEK 2 billion in annual funding from the state. A total of SEK 15.5 million was allocated to tennis, for example, in 2020, including SEK 6.3 million for core funding to tennis associations and clubs, and SEK 9.2 million on infrastructures and specific projects.¹⁴⁵

In basketball, it is worth noting that the FIBA cannot receive any public funding at all, as specified in its statutes - with a view to preserving the autonomy of the federation. At national level, the public sector plays a more important role. Basketball, a 'sport of national

¹³⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid

¹⁴² Rugby Network (2021) *Is French Rugby the Gold Standard of Organisation*, <https://www.rugbynetwork.net/main/worcester-warriors/s130/st201439/is-french-rugby-the-gold-standard-of-organisation>

¹⁴³ Balliauw, M., Verlinden, T., Van Den Spiegel, T. & Van Hecke, J. (2017) Towards a sustainable financial model for professional tennis players. University of Antwerp, Department of transport and regional economics RESEARCH PAPER 2017-006, MAY 2017.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Swedish Sports Confederation (2021) Annual report 2020, <https://www.rf.se/globalassets/riksidrottsforbundet/nya-dokument/nya-dokumentbanken/rfs-verksamhet/verksamhetsberattelse-2020.pdf?w=900&h=700>

priority' in Greece, is one of the larger federations and receives the highest portion of sport-related public funding but has been hardest hit by austerity measures mainly driven by cutbacks in high-performance subsidies. In 2007 basketball received €5,272k funding, whereas in 2014 they received only €2,030k a reduction of over a half. Based on the annual national budget, the General Secretariat of Sport (GSS) housed under the Ministry of Culture and Sport allocates certain amounts to federations, which in their turn finance sport clubs and associations. The main criterion for budget allocation on behalf of the GSS relates to the success of the clubs in promoting sport for excellence (i.e., number of elite athletes).¹⁴⁶ The Government taxes 35% of the revenues of sports betting companies in Greece, and for the first-time last year they decided to distribute 2% of that commission to football, basketball and volleyball clubs respectively. For basketball this totals about €6-€7m (excluding EuroLeague teams) out of the €30m available. 50% of that subsidy must be spent on improvements to their arenas or on youth development.¹⁴⁷ A similar trend is observed in Spain, where the public sector's funding has declined in recent years since the financial crisis of 2008.¹⁴⁸

The role of local authorities is particularly important in supporting sport, especially since they have a lesser impact in terms of the autonomy of sport federations. For example, in France, the total intervention of public authorities amounts to €24 million for the top league clubs in handball. Within clubs, the highest intervention rate is 61% of the club's total budget. Public subsidies represent 23% of the budget average and 79% of the overall public intervention. Cities and metropolitan areas are by far the main funders, with €20 million invested for the latest year where data is available (2018).¹⁴⁹

Beyond funding, the role of the public sector is somewhat weakened due to the principle of autonomy of sport. Nonetheless, cooperation between public authorities and sport federations may happen on several ad-hoc issues. In recent years, UEFA has developed closer and positive ties with the EU, which has become a regular interlocutor. The EU and the European political authorities are a legal and political reality which have a significant impact on UEFA and its member national associations. UEFA itself puts forward topics of public interest such as the specificity of sport, financial fair play and the fight against match-fixing to the European authorities. UEFA also works closely with other sports federations on a number of these issues at both European and international levels.

The European Commission and UEFA signed their first Arrangement for Cooperation¹⁵⁰ in 2014, aiming to strengthen relations between the European Commission and UEFA based on cooperation towards European priorities and in key policy areas. That Arrangement was renewed and extended on 21 February 2018¹⁵¹ covering the period up to the end of 2020 to consolidate and strengthen EC-UEFA cooperation and to focus in particular on the importance of cooperation on the UEFA EURO 2020 European football championships. With the EURO 2020 postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the duration of this Arrangement was extended on 9 February 2021¹⁵² to last until the end of 2021. A new partnership is currently being developed focusing on Europe's greatest challenges, priority

¹⁴⁶ Giannoulakis, C., Papadimitriou, D., Alexandris, K. & Brgoch. S. (2017) Impact of austerity measures on National Sport Federations:evidence from Greece, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 17:1, 75-97, DOI: 10.1080/16184742.2016.1178795

http://www.easm.net/download/easm_essential_sport_management_collection/sport_funding_and_finance/Impact-of-austerity-measures-on-National-Sport-Federations-evidence-from-Greece.pdf

¹⁴⁷ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

¹⁴⁸ Puig, N., Martínez J. & García B. (2010). 'Sport policy in Spain', *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 2:3, 381-390, DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2010.519343, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19406940.2010.519343>

¹⁴⁹ Annual report of the French national handball league (Commission Nationale d'Aide et de Contrôle de Gestion):

<https://docs.lnh.fr/cnacg2019/14/>

¹⁵⁰ Commission Decision of 14.10.2014 adopting the Arrangement for Cooperation between the European Commission and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), C(2014) 7378 final

¹⁵¹ Commission Decision of 19.2.2018 adopting the Arrangement for Cooperation between the European Commission and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), C(2018) 876 final

¹⁵² Commission Decision of 9.2.2021 extending the duration of the Arrangement for Cooperation between the European Commission and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), C(2021) 727 final

goals and EU's strategic objectives. A similar document was also signed between UEFA and the Council of Europe.¹⁵³

3.6 Role of volunteers

Volunteering in sport plays a fundamental role in the organisation of sport across Europe and is certainly an essential element of the European Sport Model. There is generally a negative correlation between the level of professionalisation of sports and the involvement of volunteers which as highlighted under Section 4.6 below, is an important trend particularly as falling numbers of volunteers appear to coincide with higher demands on their capacity and responsibility. Nevertheless, even the most popular sports make great use of volunteers analysed under this study and heavily rely on the work of volunteers, regardless of the sports.

Interestingly, volunteers are represented in a very diverse range of ages. For example, volleyball has children from six years old involved as ball retrievers, as well as people in their late 60s or early 70s selling items (merchandising) or supporting officials.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, at the Volleyball Champion's League Super Finals in 2019 in Germany (last edition with a normal event), more than 200 volunteers took part in this event with a broad representation of age groups.¹⁵⁵

Volunteering takes many different shapes and many types of roles can be handled by volunteers across the different sports analysed in this study. Volunteers may in particular:

- Be involved in ad hoc sport events or competitions, especially large-scale competitions.
- Be involved in the day-to-day administrative and financial management of a sport club or organisation.
- Work as a coach, trainer, and support staff for the day-to-day organisation of training and sport competitions.

The following sub-sections further outline these different types of volunteering roles across European sports.

Volunteering and ad hoc competitions

This type of volunteering can be found across all sports, including the most popular ones and is generally linked to high-profile events including national team competitions and European club competitions. It encompasses a very diverse range of volunteering roles, including inter alia Information Desk, Media Services support, Ceremony Management support and Guide and Transportation services, accreditation, entertainment, game operations, guest management, medical, side events, national teams. These different volunteering roles were found across diverse sports such as basketball, swimming, rowing and football.¹⁵⁶

In terms of selection processes, most sport use a selection process managed by local sport federations and offer pre-event training sessions.

Some sports have a mixed approach in terms of event management. For example, in cycling, there are some professional organisations organising events (for example Tour of

¹⁵³ Council of Europe and UEFA (2018) Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and The Union of European Football Associations, https://www.uefa.com/MultimediaFiles/Download/uefaorg/General/02/56/17/27/2561727_DOWNLOAD.pdf

¹⁵⁴ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ See for instance FINA (2021). Fukuoka 2022 launches volunteer recruitment programme, <https://www.fina.org/news/2239301/fukuoka-2022-launches-volunteer-recruitment-programme> or FIBA Europe (2021) Volunteers Job Descriptions, <https://www.fiba.basketball/eurobasket/2022/VolunteerJobs-en.pdf>

Italy, Tour de France) but the majority of cycling events are run by volunteers who have no financial interest, but are doing this because of history and attachment to cycling events (some cycling events have a history of over 100 years).¹⁵⁷

Interestingly, the involvement of volunteers during ad hoc competitions often leads to sustained engagement in volunteering roles. In rugby, volunteers involved in the recent Paris Sevens fulfilled a variety of roles. During the 2007 Rugby World Cup, a team of 850 volunteers was deployed for each match at the Stade de France, 40% of whom are still on the volunteering roster 11 years later. In this case, the role of a committed volunteer manager was particularly important to make sure the volunteers felt part of the organisational team.¹⁵⁸

Swim Ireland developed specific guidelines for swimming clubs and its member organisations on how to retain and manage volunteers.¹⁵⁹ The guidelines provide suggestions on how to communicate with them, reward them and provide clear roles and tasks. In September 2021, Swim Ireland in collaboration with a volunteering organisation (Volunteer Ireland) delivered and facilitated a series of workshops on 'Fundamentals of Volunteer Engagement', a course providing members of club committees in Ireland with the opportunity to learn how to engage, recruit and manage club volunteers.¹⁶⁰

Volunteers' involvement in managing sport clubs and organisations

The vast majority of European sport clubs are run by volunteers, including in key managerial positions. This may even involve the management of sport federations themselves. For example, the organisational structure of the *Ligue Européenne de Natation* (LEN) strongly relies on the role of volunteers. Two of its main governing bodies, the LEN Bureau and LEN Committee are composed of members performing their duties without any compensation.¹⁶¹ As stated in the Constitutional rules, the Bureau and Committee elected members are volunteers and shall not receive any kind of remuneration other than emoluments as the Bureau shall approve from time to time to cover out of pocket expenses. All swimming competitions at any level are run through the support of volunteers. They are mostly supporting the different activities of a competition, while coaches are mostly part-time staff (paid).¹⁶²

The Bureau is responsible for establishing and publishing a Strategic Plan for its office and report to the LEN Congress, which might request the Bureau to perform specific duties (decide dates of events, control the conduct of LEN events, annually establish and monitor the LEN budget, appoint Members of the Committee and ad-hoc Commission, among the others). The Committee are divided into technical (swimming, water polo, diving committees, etc.) or special (marketing, legal, facilities committees, etc.). The volunteers members of the Committees are responsible for the promotion of their relevant discipline (swimming, water polo, etc.), any technical decision relating to the specific discipline, establish and recommend rules for the conduct of the events in each specific discipline and recommend for approval of the Bureau.¹⁶³

Even the most popular sports tend to rely on volunteers, especially when considering the lower leagues clubs. Rugby clubs are 95% reliant on volunteer workforces to run the game at grassroots level. Almost all clubs are run by volunteers who plays a role in various

¹⁵⁷ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

¹⁵⁸ French Rugby Federation (2021), *Volontaires Engagements Passionnes*, ffr.fr/actualites/federation/volontaires-engagements-passionnes

¹⁵⁹ Swim Ireland (2021), *Retaining Volunteers* <https://www.swimireland.ie/files/documents/Retaining-Volunteers.pdf>

¹⁶⁰ Swim Ireland (2021), *Volunteer engagement programme*, <https://www.swimireland.ie/news/volunteer-engagement-programme-2021>

¹⁶¹ Ligue Européenne de Natation (2018), *Constitutional rules*, <http://www2.len.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/LEN-CONSTITUTIONAL-RULES.pdf>

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

positions, from governance to team management. Federations try to support volunteers in this role, and for instance World Rugby make as many resources as possible publicly available in as many languages as possible for example on how to set up and manage clubs.¹⁶⁴

The role of volunteers in running sport activities

While sport-specific studies and reports are not necessarily available, all interviewees and the survey responses unanimously flag the importance of volunteers in the day-to-day life of sport clubs, and a few sports clearly mentioned their reliance on the support of volunteers. For example, almost all people working in rowing are a volunteer. At then elite and high-performance level, Olympic and Paralympic teams in most countries will have professional staff and coaches thanks to public support. At grassroots level, other than a few of the big clubs who are generally speaking connected with the elite side, most people are volunteers. The volunteer structure within each Member State is slightly different for rowing and there are specific areas with specific training (for example umpiring, classification for para-athletes will have proper CPD and training, the organising committees that work together over a long time and have regular regattas and events- for example Lucerne in Switzerland regatta - largely volunteer led and they organise regular training for them).¹⁶⁵

In triathlon, technical delegates, i.e., "everybody at the race" including technical officials, assistant technical delegates, technical delegates, head referees, are also volunteers. They sometimes might also need to cover their expenses.¹⁶⁶

In a few cases, this volunteering role is partly substituted by the public sector. For instance in Spain, the strong intervention of the State in organised sport means there is no umbrella organisation for the voluntary sport sector unlike many other European countries. Public authorities are responsible for setting out the procedures, working methods, rights and duties of sport support staff, thereby lessening the role of volunteers in the organisation of sport.¹⁶⁷

Nurturing and sustaining the role of volunteers

The role of volunteers in the organisation of sport has also spurred some criticism, especially around the substitution of volunteering roles over paid staff. According to survey respondents, in high performance sport work needs to be paid and it is important to distinguish between actual volunteers and people who should be paid for their work but are not. Such concerns make clear reference to labour law and state that fundamental principles and rights at work should be protected and respected in the sport sector, especially as the sport sector is increasingly professional.

In some cases, volunteers may receive a compensation for their work. For instance, in cycling, members of the UEC Management Committee receive small allowances for travel and subsistence costs (around €2500 / year).¹⁶⁸

Additionally, in several sports, federations have tried to address the issue by offering training and skills development opportunities for volunteers, including sport-related training around Coaching, Refereeing, Athletic Development, Performance Analysis, Medical & Player Welfare, Public Relations, but also around Anti-Bullying, Anti-Doping.

¹⁶⁴ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Puig, N., Martínez J. & García B. (2010). 'Sport policy in Spain', *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 2:3, 381-390, DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2010.519343, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19406940.2010.519343>

¹⁶⁸ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

The Irish Rugby Football Union has recently launched a Youth Volunteering Award which aims to provide young people aged 16-24 with the opportunity to be recognised for their volunteering work within their club, school, or university. Bronze, silver, and gold awards are available. The award notably provides the opportunity to develop a wide range of volunteering skills through online modules and complete a number of practical hours within their own club.¹⁶⁹

All in all, there is a clear dependence on volunteers for European sports, and the development of these different programmes, in addition to the increased pressure to implement good governance processes and practice in sport demonstrates the need to cater to this important pillar of the European Sport Model.

Importantly, and as described under Section 4.6 below, survey respondents noted that volunteering in sports has dropped dramatically in the last year and a half since the pandemic. The need to develop programmes at various levels to re-engage the population in volunteering in sports was clearly flagged by respondents, as well as the added value of campaigns promoting volunteering, and schemes to support existing volunteers (including fiscal incentives).

3.7 Gaps in the European Sport Model

Our research has shown that the main features of the European Sport Model generally apply well to the organisation of European sports. Nonetheless, several gaps and areas of improvements were identified.

Scope of the European Sport Model

Many stakeholders have raised concerns over the representativeness of the European Sport Model, which does not necessarily consider the diversity of sport organisation for example non-organised sport, organisations that do not belong to a national umbrella organisation.

Other stakeholders also note that the European Sport Model does not make a clear distinction between club and national teams' competitions. The European Sport Model does not really deal with national teams' competitions, with mainly some light references to the "positive narrative" around them.

The preservation and valorisation of national teams' competitions could be a stronger pillar of the model. The narrative around these competitions could be for instance linked to their benefits towards encouraging sport and physical activity, to the European dimension they have, and to the positive values of sport they can contribute. This approach could potentially fit in well with the model, by highlighting a better juxtaposition of clubs & national team competitions, or by discussing calendar windows and audiences' exposition to different competitions.¹⁷⁰

Finally, some perceived gaps concern the wider role of sport in society were raised by survey respondents. The European Sport Model could make a clearer link between sport and health and recognising the positive effect of sport on public health. Moreover, the European Sport Model could benefit from a greater emphasis on how European sports are in fact an important success and could play a role in terms of diplomacy, or set an example on the success of Europe as a cooperative project.

In short, the model can work well as a general policy framework but grasping specificities is equally important.

¹⁶⁹ IRFU (2021). IRFU Announce Youth Volunteering Award For 2021/22 Season, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/2021/08/12/irfu-announce-youth-volunteering-award-for-2021-22-season/>

¹⁷⁰ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

Towards a value-based European Sport Model

Several stakeholders indicated that the European Sport Model lacks specificity in terms of reflecting particular European values that should be promoted. It is regarded that certain values promoted by the model such as fairness and solidarity, while they cannot be criticised, are not necessarily particularly specific to Europe. Some stakeholders therefore suggest that more specific European values (for example, democracy, labour rights and human rights) ought to be reflected in the European Sport Model in a more explicit way. This is an important finding in terms of raising expectations towards the sport federations on their civic responsibility. Such values are already part of European sport, both at grassroots and professional levels, and overall, a greater alignment between the articles of the TFEU and the European Sport Model could inspire the core values that should be promoted.

It is also considered that the model does not particularly seek to ensure the active participation of multiple stakeholders. This is an important issue in some sports such as handball as they are becoming more and more popular and attracting willingness to develop new competitions, friendly matches, etc. All in all, several voices call for athletes' rights to be an integral part of the European Sport Model, with strengthened collective rights and a greater role in decision-making (on boards, through stakeholder consultation, collective bargaining).

Many respondents consider the principles of good governance and ethics to be essential for the European Sport Model. Human values should come before economic and financial interests. Value-based sport organisations are losing ground to purely profit-oriented goals of commercial sport providers, according to several respondents. While both parties can co-exist and benefit from each other, for example through cooperation and the adoption of certain ideas and innovations, it is considered that the European Sport Model must also be defended against a market-oriented model that places too much emphasis on pure profit motives and strengthened to that end. Consequences can be seen, for example, in the United States with its closed - and above all, profit-oriented - professional leagues. Except for the respective draft systems, the top leagues do not manage any youth training schemes (except for Major League Soccer and its MLS Next leagues for under 15 and under 17 players).¹⁷¹ According to survey respondents, this again jeopardises the vision of an ethical, inclusive and safe sport for all, contributing to address the challenges facing society.

Some stakeholders call for ensuring compliance of existing legislation (social policy, criminal law, fundamental principles) to the organisation of sport and sport events, for example by promoting values in sport and supporting only those sport organisations, which are governed in compliance with the principles of democracy, transparency, integrity, solidarity, gender equality, openness, accountability, accessibility, social responsibility and respect for fundamental and human rights. Finally, some stakeholders call for a greater focus on a few key topics: financial transparency, openness of sports governing bodies, and good governance. These three themes are linked to the model and could potentially be more clearly interwoven in a "value-based" approach to the European Sport Model.

Clearer guidelines towards redistribution and solidarity mechanisms

While solidarity mechanisms are in place in all sports, several stakeholders call for improving the financial support and development of grassroot projects, the promotion of voluntary work, amateur sport and children and youth activities, and greater collaboration between schools and sport organisations. In other words, the European Sport Model could include additional references to solidarity beyond the sport movement itself.

¹⁷¹ <https://www.mlssoccer.com/mlsnext/>

Even for elite sports, strengthening redistribution mechanisms and lowering the financial “barriers to entry” could play an important role for highly competitive individual sports such as tennis. For example, researchers suggest increasing development opportunities and possibilities to gain experience for younger players by installing a parallel junior tour. This should guarantee the inflow of talent to tennis and reduce the financial risks of engaging in professional tennis to an acceptable level.¹⁷²

Conclusions

The European Sport Model is evolving and could still evolve towards integrating additional elements such as increased transparency, strengthened solidarity mechanisms, and better embedding the core values of the European Union as such. Importantly, several voices raised the need to involve more broadly the sport movement around discussions on the European Sport Model, including grassroots sport organisations and representatives of athletes to strengthen the accountability and representativeness of the European Sport Model.

¹⁷² Balliauw, M., Verlinden, T., Van Den Spiegel, T. & Van Hecke, J., (2017) Towards a sustainable financial model for professional tennis players. University of Antwerp, Department of transport and regional economics RESEARCH PAPER 2017-006, MAY 2017 .

4.0 Main trends affecting the evolution of the Model

This section examines some key trends that are influencing the changing understanding of the European Sport Model. It can be seen that there is a complex interaction of trends and pressures that may bring into question the continuing relevance of the key elements of the European Sport Model and how far the model might need to adapt to address the emerging issues.

4.1 Internationalisation

There appears to be a consensus that the internationalisation of European sport is a key trend to consider in the changing understanding of the European Sport Model given its far-reaching effects on the organisation of sport across the EU. Internationalisation can manifest through increasing global audiences, wider media coverage of events and competitions and the increasing role of multinational companies in investment and sponsorship. Internationalisation trends are considered separately from commercialisation here though it could be argued that the two trends are inextricably linked. The internationalisation of audiences encourages sports to exploit this increasing market potential through higher sponsorship deals, increasing merchandise sales and higher value broadcasting rights.

Internationalisation of audiences

Specific evidence on the internationalisation of audiences has been identified for a number of sports. In basketball, Euroleague content reached a worldwide audience of two billion by 2015, which is an increase of over 10 times on the league's inaugural 2000/01 season. Some 22,000 hours of coverage – a sixfold increase since the league's creation in 2000 – was provided by 73 broadcasters serving 201 territories, while a worldwide audience of some 50.7 million – up 695% – accessed Euroleague content online.¹⁷³ A growing internationalisation of audiences is also seen in volleyball, with the 2019 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) attracting a cumulative global audience of more than 1.5 billion. The event has also seen a significant increase in its streaming and Digital Media figures.¹⁷⁴ Cycling is also growing in terms of its viewership which has been helped by UEC launching in 2021 the UEC TV.¹⁷⁵

The European Handball Federation (EHF) also reports positive international audience trends. According to its latest business report, the EHF Champions League 2021 season achieved a cumulative audience of 530 million. The season also had a digital reach of 400 million, with 750,000 followers of EHF Champions League channels responsible for 11 million engagements and a combined 60 million video views. The EHF's OTT platform, EHFTV, also attracted more than 250,000 global subscribers in its first season after its relaunch in summer 2020. Subscribers were able to access and enjoy matches free of charge, in addition to all highlights and special features.¹⁷⁶

There are concerns that the increasing internationalisation of club sport and clubs' focus on strengthening their global fan base may pose a threat to the idea of 'supporting your local club' or may compromise clubs' focus on its local support base and local identity.

¹⁷³ Long, M. (2015) *European basketball in rude health as the Euroleague turns 15*, https://www.sportspromedia.com/analysis/european_basketball_in_rude_health_as_the_euroleague_turns_15/

¹⁷⁴ FIVB.com (2019) *1.5 Billion Global Audience Tune In To Watch 2019 VNL*, <https://www.fivb.com/en/about/news/15-billion-global-audience-tune-in-to?id=89623>

¹⁷⁵ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

¹⁷⁶ European Handball Federation (2021) *2021 Business Report*, <https://businessreport.eurohandball.com/>

Manifestations of this trend have been seen in proposals to hold matches at times which are less suited to local fans in order to meet the needs of overseas television, holding pre-match entertainments which are geared to international audiences or, as in the case of the Spanish La Liga, developing proposals to hold matches overseas. Where international audiences are increasing there is a general view amongst stakeholders for those sports that the internationalisation of the sport does impact on the role of the European Sport Model. This is mainly through the changing role of sport federations who have an increasing focus on maximising the commercial benefits from internationalisation (explored further below).

Transfers

The increasing number of international transfers in sport corresponds to the growing internationalisation trends in sport. In some of the sports reviewed for this study, the international movement of athletes between clubs does not appear to be an issue (for example archery, rowing) though this relates in a large part to the individual nature of the sports. In some of the team sports, however, there has been a significant increase in the number and value of international transfers affecting European leagues. In football, Europe has the largest transfer market in the world¹⁷⁷ as evidenced by an increasing number of international transfers and an increasing volume of transfer fees.¹⁷⁸ It is argued that the liberalisation of the labour market for professional players, following the *Bosman* ruling (detailed in Section 2.1), has increased their mobility and the internationalisation of recruitment, leading to increased concentration of talent and performance in the largest clubs¹⁷⁹ causing even greater revenue inequality¹⁸⁰ and threatening the uncertainty of results.¹⁸¹ In 2020, the top 80 transfers in football accounted for over 50% of the total transfer fees (\$2.5 bn).¹⁸² The growing polarisation has encouraged FIFA to look at ways of capping the profits from transfers¹⁸³ and to improve their redistributive impact.¹⁸⁴

There is evidence that other sports such as basketball, handball and rugby have recently seen an increase in the internationalisation and value of transfers. The *Bosman A* passport in basketball has led to a significant increase in mobility for overseas basketball players as they can play as a “domestic player” within many European Union pro leagues without being counted as part of a foreigner “import” quota. This makes *Bosman A* players more valuable to agents, coaches and managers across Europe. Some of the most competitive and highest-paying countries in European basketball are *Bosman A* countries including Spain, Italy, France, Greece and Germany.¹⁸⁵ Basketball has seen a significant increase in the number of international transfers since 2000. Although there had been a reduction in

¹⁷⁷ KEA (2018) *An update on change drivers and economic and legal implications of transfers of players*. Final Report to the DG Education, Youth, Culture and Sport of the European Commission. ISBN: 978-92-79-80995-8. DOI: 10.2766/873720.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Miege, C. (2009) *Deuxième chapitre. La prise en compte du sport dans le cadre communautaire* In: Les organisations sportives et l'Europe [en ligne]. Paris:INSEP-Éditions.

¹⁸⁰ Hoey, S., Peeters, T., and Principe, F. (2021) *The transfer system in European football: A pro-competitive no-poaching agreement?* International Journal of Industrial Organisation, Volume 75, 2021, 102695, ISSN 0167-7187, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijindorg.2020.102695>.

¹⁸¹ Liu, X.F., Liu, Y.-L., Lu, X.-H., Wang, Q.-X., Wang, T.-X. (2016) *The Anatomy of the Global Football Player Transfer Network: Club Functionalities versus Network Properties*. PLoS ONE 11(6): e0156504.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0156504>; Matesanz D, Holzmayer F, Torgler B, Schmidt SL, Ortega GJ (2018) *Transfer market activities and sportive performance in European first football leagues: A dynamic network approach*. PLoS ONE 13(12): e0209362. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0209362>.

¹⁸² FIFA (2020) *Global Transfer Market Report 2020. A review of international football transfers worldwide*, <https://www.fifa.com/legal/news/fifa-publishes-global-transfer-market-report-2020>.

¹⁸³ Reuters (2020) *FIFA to push on with new cap and rules for agents*, <https://www.reuters.com/article/soccer-world-agents-idINKBN27M0GQ>.

¹⁸⁴ Laskowski, J. (2019) *Solidarity compensation framework in football revisited*. Int Sports Law J 18, 150–184, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40318-018-0134-y>; FIFA (2022), *FIFA publishes International Transfer Snapshot (January 2022)*, <https://www.fifa.com/legal/news/fifa-publishes-international-transfer-snapshot-january-2022>

¹⁸⁵ Colorado, J. (2021) *What is the Bosman A Passport in Basketball?*, <https://www.josecolorado.com/blog/bosman-a-passport-in-basketball>

the number of international transfers in 2021, the proportion of foreign players remained high, with leagues in Spain, Germany, France, Italy, Greece and Israel all having more foreign players than nationals. Spain had the highest percentage of foreign players and the highest number of nationalities.¹⁸⁶

Stakeholders from Rugby Union suggested that the international transfer system tends to exacerbate the divide between the leading countries (i.e., the Six Nations but especially France) and other European countries who are developing in the sport. It is reported that this gap also exists at junior levels too and therefore the talent gap across leagues tends to start at an early age. In 2010 France introduced the 'JIFF' (*Joueurs Issus des Filières de Formation*) rule into its national league, which stipulates that 55% of squad players must have spent three seasons at a French club's youth academy before turning 21 or been licensed to play in France for five seasons before the age of 23.¹⁸⁷ Whilst this was effective in reducing the number of foreign signings, clubs have instead altered their recruitment policies to get around the rule by recruiting talented young players from other countries and enrolling teenagers into their academies.¹⁸⁸

Ice hockey has seen a rapid increase in the exchange of players between Europe and US. The US leagues (which are expanding) have become more reliant on European players with around one-third of the NHL pool of players now coming from Europe, primarily Sweden. One stakeholder was concerned that too many young and talented players are leaving Europe for the US while the migration of US players to Europe tend to be older players that are still good enough to compete in European leagues: "It's a "money and prestige" thing to compete at NHL, something like a dream (similar to a basketball player wanting to compete at NBA). US leagues can pay "10 times as much".

In other team sports such as volleyball, there is limited evidence of increasing internationalisation of transfers. One stakeholder commented that volleyball clubs are starting to put more focus on longer-term strategies to develop talent, and prefer to invest in youth development.

Ownership

Based on the evidence collected across the 15 sports, the development of international ownership appears to be largely confined to football where there has been a significant growth in recent years. In 2019, almost half of all European countries had at least one foreign-owned football club with six top division clubs in the period 2015-2017 taken over by Chinese investors.¹⁸⁹ Next to investors from Asia, recently US private equity firms are also increasing their investment interest in EU Sports in terms of acquiring shares in clubs and providing sponsorships. Investors see new digital technologies offering novel monetisation opportunities. These opportunities include for example, digital commerce, the use of data analytics to understand customers' habits, preferences, demographics and unlock new revenue streams by tailoring products and reaching fans in innovative ways.¹⁹⁰ In many of the sports reviewed for this study however the internationalisation of ownership is simply not relevant or is only happening on a very small-scale. In rowing for example, a model of member ownership of clubs continues to be the norm.

¹⁸⁶ FIBA (2021) International Basketball Migration Report, <https://www.fiba.basketball/documents/ibmr2021.pdf>

¹⁸⁷ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ UEFA (2018) *The European Club Footballing Landscape report. Club licensing benchmark report. Financial Year 2018*, <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/protecting-the-game/news/025f-0fe85ed2acf8-db382645ca21-1000--benchmarking-report-highlights-profits-and-polarisation/>

¹⁹⁰ Deloitte (2018) *A whole new ball game. Navigating digital change in the sports*

industry, <https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/gx-digital-transformation-and-future-changes-in-sports-industry.html>

4.2 Commercialisation

The development of commercialisation in sport has brought into question the key principles of the European Sport Model and in particular whether sport federations' increasing focus on commercial issues may conflict with their role as regulators of their sport, undermining their autonomy. The evidence collected for this study indicates that commercialisation affects specific sports to varying degrees and in different ways. As suggested by the survey responses, moreover, evidence is mixed on the extent to which the commercialisation of sports undermines the European Sport Model.

Partly driven by the growing internationalisation of sport, the increase in the value of media rights is often highlighted as a key factor in the increasing commercialisation of sport. The revolution of the audio-visual sector has led to increased competition to purchase the media and broadcasting rights to major sporting events and competitions, which has increased the value of these rights.¹⁹¹ The new audio-visual framework, which included the transition from analog to digital television, the appearance of many new broadcasters in Europe and the arrival of pay-per-view television, and its impact on competition for broadcasting major sporting events was already being highlighted as a particular issue for the European Sport Model in the 1990s.¹⁹² Further advances in technology in recent years including opportunities to view sport via the internet through the development of streaming services has added to the intensity of competition and led to further increases in the prices of broadcasting rights.

The trend of increasing competition and prices for broadcasting rights that started to build up in the 1990s has intensified in certain sports in recent years. For example, revenues stemming from broadcasting rights for the 'big five'¹⁹³ football leagues rose from €4.238 billion in 2011/2012 to €8.518 billion 2017/2018.¹⁹⁴ The German Bundesliga's current 4-year broadcast rights deals, for example, which started in the 2017/18 season, secured revenues of €4.6 billion, an 85% growth compared to the previous cycle.¹⁹⁵ The Spanish La Liga international rights deal brought the league an additional €4.485 billion in revenue, a 30% increase on the previous 3-season cycle.¹⁹⁶

Survey respondents highlighted that the current structure of the European market for football coverage can hinder clubs from Member States with smaller populations from developing themselves both domestically and at European level. There is some concern that the concentration of media revenues in the largest markets (Germany, Italy, France and Spain), and most notably in the United Kingdom, is at the expense of smaller countries with a strong footballing tradition (for example the Netherlands, Portugal or Belgium).

The biggest driver of revenue increases for Euroleague Basketball over the past three years has been media rights – particularly via new deals in Spain, Greece, Turkey and Israel. Euroleague Basketball now has 26 different marketing partners including in food and beverage, IT, insurance, clothing, banking, tourism, motoring, travel and collectibles. Sponsorship revenue has almost doubled since the creation of the joint venture with IMG and the launch of the new league format.¹⁹⁷ The rapid growth of sponsorship is attributed to three main factors: adopting a more data-driven approach; switching from a platform-based offering to one based on targeting specific demographics; and bringing in staff with the relevant expertise.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹¹ Miège, C. (2020) *Where does the "European model of sport" stand, 25 years on from the Bosman ruling?*, <https://www.sportetcitoyennete.com/en/articles-en/where-does-the-european-model-of-sport-stand-25-years-on-from-the-bosman-ruling>

¹⁹² European Commission (1998) *The European Model of Sport: Consultation document*.

¹⁹³ England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain

¹⁹⁴ Deloitte (2017) *Annual Review of Football Finance: Ahead of the Curve*. Sports Business Group.

¹⁹⁵ KPMG Football Benchmark

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Sport Business (2019) Euroleague Basketball's great leaps forward, <https://www.sportbusiness.com/2019/09/euroleague-basketballs-great-leaps-forward/>

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

In the case of Basketball, increasing commercialisation is linked to the development of the closed Euroleague competition. Eleven of the 16 EuroLeague clubs hold 10-year licences, guaranteeing their participation in the competition (also see Section 4.3). This has enabled broadcasters and brands to feel confident in increasing the scale and duration of their investments. The 50% increase paid by DAZN, for example, from 2019-20 is due to the streaming platform's confidence that the competition in Spain will remain strong with at least three Spanish teams competing every season.¹⁹⁹

The effect of commercialisation can also however manifest through the concentration of media revenues in the top leagues. In basketball, the ULEB have recently alleged that the Euroleague are excluding clubs from other national leagues to keep 90% of the media rights revenue generated by EuroLeague for the 11 shareholder clubs.²⁰⁰ Stakeholders argued that the national leagues which have no access to EuroLeague are struggling and rival clubs in the national leagues with EuroLeague clubs are at a competitive disadvantage. It is believed that this is putting a strain on the basketball eco-system in Europe which is based on the European model of sport where clubs participate in both national leagues and European club competitions.

There is evidence that other sports are focusing on increasing the commercial value of European competitions. The EHF, for example, aims to achieve this by optimising traditional revenue streams as well as identifying new and innovative sources of income. Ultimately, the EHF will aim to reinvest as much of the revenues as possible back into the European handball system.²⁰¹

Subscription streaming service DAZN has secured rights in Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Spain to the EHF's men's and women's Champions League competitions until the end of the 2025/26 season. Under the terms of the deal, which took effect at the start of the 2020/21 season. DAZN covers both male and female editions of the EHF European League and EHF European Cup club competitions. Infront and DAZN signed a ten-year marketing deal with the EHF worth €600 million (US\$668 million) in May which included the launch of a new digital ecosystem across all the governing body's platforms, as well as the management of rights to the biennial EHF Euros held between 2022 and 2030. Additionally, Pay-TV broadcaster Eurosport has secured the rights to handball's major European club and national team competitions in France and Poland as part of a new six-year deal.²⁰²

Stakeholders reported that the marketing value of Ice Hockey leagues across the EU is showing a marked increase, and this is reflected in recent central marketing deals, for example as seen in Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, to a certain extent in Germany. A stakeholder involved in ice hockey did not feel that this development is on the same level as sports such as football however particularly as ticketing continues to make a significant contribution to revenues and remains vital to the survival of elite clubs. In archery, there is evidence that the commercialisation of events is happening steadily, but as stakeholders suggest, not yet in a way that threatens the European Sport Model values that the sport is generally based on.

It would appear however that the significant growth in broadcast rights revenues is largely concentrated on a few sports and large events and the evidence suggests that certain sports such as basketball, football, rugby, tennis and handball continue to dominate the growth in revenues. In terms of potentially undermining the autonomy of federations, stakeholders are more concerned however about the increasing influence of private equity, hedge funds and venture capital companies that are buying up sports rights and "assets". This is because the motivation to buy up rights tends to be based on a pure profit model where there is only a duty to shareholders rather than the sport's stakeholders. The

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ ULEB (2020) ULEB files competition complaint before European Commission against EuroLeague organizer ECA

²⁰¹ European Handball Federation (2021) *2021 Business Report*, <https://businessreport.eurohandball.com/Global>

²⁰² EHF Business report 2018 and 2020, <https://www.ehfoffice.at/businessreport2018/LTF-Signing-of-deal-in-May-2018.html>

increasing popularity in international and domestic rugby competitions, for example, has recently attracted investment from private equity firm, CVC, who have bought a percentage of the Six Nations, United Rugby Championship (URC), and English Premiership.²⁰³ Since acquiring a 28% stake in the URC (formerly the Pro14),²⁰⁴ CVC has driven structural changes to the league and tried to 'maximise' its commercial potential by signing new paid-TV deals. In addition, the URC has launched a new global streaming service in partnership with Irish TV platform, RTE, in which consumers have the option to subscribe to a range of packages.²⁰⁵ It is reported that CVC is looking to capitalise on the revenue potential of the Six Nations by moving matches onto paid-for TV subscription channels.²⁰⁶

Implications for the European Sport Model

Overall, the literature review and evidence collected through this study indicates that the increasing commercialisation of sport, based in part on the growth in internationalisation explored in the previous section, has a number of specific implications for the European Sport Model:

- An increasing commercial role for sport federations requires awareness of the need to avoid conflicts with their regularity and solidarity roles (examined further in Section 4.4 below). Commercialisation in the form of enhanced revenues is generally not considered a threat to the model per se as in principle there is potential for increased revenues from commercialisation to trickle down to provide benefits for the sport as a whole. There is evidence that increasing revenues from broadcasting and sponsorship rights can help to strengthen solidarity funding mechanisms (horizontal and vertical) that are necessary to support the international development of sport and to encourage fair competition across nationalities irrespective of their federation's financial strength. The benefits of commercialisation are seen in sports such as volleyball where enhanced revenues have helped to reinforce the international federation's solidarity approach. For some of the more popular team sports, such as football, rugby and basketball, however, there is evidence from some countries that commercialisation is encouraging a greater concentration of wealth amongst a smaller group of elite clubs, leagues or nations. As highlighted above, some stakeholders are concerned that this concentration may be exacerbated where there is a pure profit motive for owners.
- There is a concern that only the "commercially attractive sports" (i.e., suited to television) will survive and smaller sports may suffer due to a lack of funding. This would be contrary to the horizontal solidarity funding principle of the model which promotes a fair distribution of resources across all sports.²⁰⁷ For some of the sports that were reviewed in detail for this study, particularly those with a lower audience reach such as archery and rowing, there was little evidence that media rights are having a significant effect on commercialisation potential. This was also the case at the national level for some sports where there is no suggestion that media rights are changing the commercial nature of the sport to any great degree at that level. The national federation for swimming in Ireland - Swim Ireland, for example, streams on YouTube and coverage of national competitions are provided on free to air channels. Swim Ireland does not make any significant revenues from media deals – streaming on YouTube mainly contributes to its marketing strategy since it promotes elite level

²⁰³ Chitty, T. (2021) *Private equity firm CVC lands \$509 million deal for international rugby tournament*, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/03/12/cvc-capital-partners-buy-share-in-rugbys-six-nations.html>

²⁰⁴ IRFU (2020) *Guinness PRO14 Announces CVC Capital Partners Strategic Investment*, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/2020/05/22/guinness-pro14-announces-cvc-capital-partners-strategic-investment/>

²⁰⁵ Carp, S. (2021) *'It needs to become an entertainment platform to grow': URC chief Martin Anayi talks taking club rugby in a new direction*, in 'Sports Pro Media', <https://www.sportspromedia.com/analysis/united-rugby-championship-rebrand-ott-streaming-platform-martin-anayi-interview/>

²⁰⁶ Dixon, E. (2021) *England v Scotland Six Nations clash peaks at 8.7m on ITV*, in 'Sports Pro Media', <https://www.sportspromedia.com/news/england-scotland-six-nations-2021-itv-tv-viewing-figures/>

²⁰⁷ Pulleiro Méndez, C. (2018). *La estatalidad del deporte internacional. Pasado, presente, ¿ futuro?* . Foro internacional, 58(2), 343-379. <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/599/59957257005/html/>

athletes and raises awareness of the benefits of swimming. More systematic comparative analysis of revenue growth is needed. At the same time, however, the interviews did not reveal any apparent concerns that these sports are falling behind the more commercially oriented sports as the federations continue to work within their means to promote their sport while benefitting in part from horizontal solidarity payments. In that sense, commercialisation across sports is not necessarily viewed as a zero-sum game though a more systematic review of the evidence on revenue trends would be needed to validate this.

- Owners and financial backers of commercially driven elite clubs having a pure profit motive can jeopardise the *promotion-relegation system in competition* (explored further below)²⁰⁸ and concentrate revenues and successful clubs in certain countries.
- It can bring about a number of new issues (for example doping, match-fixing, fraud, money laundering or any other form of corrupt or criminal activity) which may not be covered by the European Sport Model.²⁰⁹
- Increasing interdependence between sport federations and private TV networks with regard to broadcasting major sporting events and competitions may compromise the *autonomy of sport*.²¹⁰
- The increasing influence of media companies and sponsors as stakeholders which results in clubs distancing themselves from serving the interests of their fans in order to pursue more profitable business relationships.

4.3 Practices in organising competitions

Evidence from the literature review, mapping review, and stakeholder interviews has highlighted a number of instances where the organisation of competitions has diverged from the European Sport Model, both across the EU and within particular Member States. This sub-section will explain why and how competitions are diverging and what the implications of these changes are for sports and sport federations. Finally, it will examine what their response has been to these changes so far, and what the future implications might look like for the European Sport Model.

It is argued that the deregulation of professional sport has increasingly weakened the governance structure of sport and undermined the pyramidal structure of the European Sport Model.²¹¹ One of the catalysts for this trend was the *Bosman* ruling in 1990,²¹² after which the liberalisation of international transfers increased the authority of large clubs and undermined that of both national and European federations. Weakened or poor governance by sport federations has also led to private companies organising their own competitions. The creation of a private International Super League²¹³ in swimming, for example, was widely perceived to be a direct consequence of the international federation ineffectively redistributing revenues in a way which was not representative of athletes' interests.²¹⁴ This example also demonstrates how athletes have gained increasing autonomy and

²⁰⁸ Position paper (2020) on Further Developing the European Sports Model agreed by members of the EPAS Consultative Committee, <https://rm.coe.int/further-developing-the-european-sports-model-european-sport-charter-pa/1680a1b1cf>

²⁰⁹ Arnaut, J.L. (2006). *An Independent Review on European sport, with a focus on European football, setting out precise Terms of Reference to tackle the specific issues which this sport face*, http://eose.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/independant_european_sports_review1.pdf

²¹⁰ European Commission (1998) *The European Model of Sport: Consultation document of DG X*. Brussels: European Commission, https://www.sportaustria.at/fileadmin/Inhalte/Dokumente/Internationales/EU_European_Model_Sport.pdf.

²¹¹ Miège, C. (2009). 'Deuxième chapitre. La prise en compte du sport dans le cadre Communautaire', in *Les organisations sportives et l'Europe*, Paris:INSEP-Éditions.

²¹² Union Royale Belge v Bosman, Case C-415/93 Judgment of 15.12.1995 – Case C-415/93, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:61993CJ0415&from=EN>

²¹³ Lord, C. (2019). *International Swimming League wins latest round against FINA: Court backs 'discovery'*. *Swimming World*, <https://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/news/international-swimming-league-wins-latest-round-against-fina-court-backs-discovery/>

²¹⁴ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

influence, meaning they can determine their own terms of participation in sport competitions.²¹⁵

As referred to in Section 4.2, there is also evidence that the increasing commercialisation of sport and concentration of wealth is increasing the pressure for clubs to favour totally or partially closed competition structures. Top rugby union clubs from Ireland, Italy, Scotland and Wales for example, compete in a closed league (the URC) which was originally established in 2001, but the current name was adopted in 2021 when the league expanded to also include four South African teams.²¹⁶ Promotion to this league is not possible for clubs who compete in the second tier of rugby within these countries, who also are unable to qualify for European-wide club rugby competitions.

In some sports there appears to be an increasing tendency for national championships and qualification for European competitions to be limited to a smaller pool of teams. Some argue that this trend already undermines the model's promotion/relegation principle,²¹⁷ while at the same time creating an incentive for more successful clubs to develop proposals for privately sponsored non-affiliated competitions that are separated from the pyramid model, as seen in the recent failed attempt to create a European Super League in football.²¹⁸ This stability removes the financial risk of relegation for these clubs and ensures private leagues and their competing teams are more attractive to potential sponsors and investors, as exemplified by the URC which in 2020 attracted a large investment from a private equity firm.²¹⁹

Closed competitions tend to benefit larger and more successful clubs with the objective of showcasing the sport's top talent. The increased opportunity for investment and sponsorship income that closed competitions bring means that participating clubs can afford to compete at a level which is unobtainable to other clubs, further increasing the gulf between them. Furthermore, privately owned competitions which are separate to the pyramid model often have no established solidarity mechanisms, with no requirement to redistribute revenues to support grassroots sport. Stakeholders expressed concern that commercial event organisers often profit from sport federations' investment in talent development of players, officials, and coaches without contributing to the social mission of the sport.²²⁰

This is illustrated in European basketball where clubs who compete in a partially closed league (EuroLeague) also play in their national leagues (see Case Study 3 in Annex 3 for further information). However other clubs often struggle to compete with them because they do not have the same resources to spend on top players, coaches, and facilities. EuroLeague is considered the top level of European basketball, and so talented players are attracted to EuroLeague clubs which provide them with higher salaries and a chance to compete at the highest level. Clubs who have invested in developing those players from a young age are not compensated for the loss of talent and revenue generated from the EuroLeague is not redistributed to non-members, removing the capacity and incentive for these clubs to focus on talent development.²²¹ This also has notable implications on the organisation of fixtures. EuroLeague matches routinely clash with international fixtures, preventing players from playing for their national teams and reducing the attractiveness

²¹⁵ The Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (2019). *Future of Global Sport*, https://www.asoif.com/sites/default/files/download/future_of_global_sport.pdf

²¹⁶ United Rugby Championship (2021). *About URC*, <https://www.unitedrugby.com/about>

²¹⁷ Cattaneo, A. and Parrish, R. (2020) *Sport Law in the European Union*, Kluwer Law International.

²¹⁸ Weatherill, S. (2021). *Never let a good fiasco go to waste: why and how the governance of European football should be reformed after the demise of the 'SuperLeague'*, <https://www.asser.nl/SportsLaw/Blog/post/never-let-a-good-fiasco-go-to-waste-why-and-how-the-governance-of-european-football-should-be-reformed-after-the-demise-of-the-superleague-by-stephen-weatherill>

²¹⁹ IRFU (2020). Guinness PRO14 Announces CVC Capital Partners Strategic Investment, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/2020/05/22/guinness-pro14-announces-cvc-capital-partners-strategic-investment/>

²²⁰ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

²²¹ Ibid.

of these fixtures to spectators since the European Basketball Federation (FIBA Europe) does not have the authority to intervene.²²²

In European basketball and beyond, there is a clear division between clubs included and excluded from private competitions, with those profiting from them quick to defend them, and those excluded demonstrating the value of the European Sport Model. As one stakeholder summarised, backlash to the recently attempted European Super League in football has shown how athletes and fans value the system of promotion and relegation on the basis of sporting merit, the ability to play for national teams and a sports calendar that allows athletes and fans to follow both their favourite clubs and their national teams.²²³ As also highlighted under Section 3.2 above, this was reflected in the survey, where 85% of participants (n=195) considered the principle of promotion and relegation to be either very relevant or relevant to the organisation of sport in Europe.²²⁴

Over the years sport federations have attempted to exercise their autonomy and penalise athletes and clubs who choose to participate in non-affiliated events, as recently seen in cycling, basketball, swimming and football. However, their capacity to do so has been increasingly clarified by EU competition law, as was well-documented in a 2017 ruling against the ISU by the CJEU. The Court argued that ISU rules which prohibited athletes from participating in events not run by the governing bodies were in breach of EU competition law. The decision set a precedent for other future disputes in the sport sector, challenging the pyramidal organisation promoted by the European Model of Sport.²²⁵ More recently, in basketball ECA brought a case against FIBA Europe,²²⁶ claiming that they violated EU law by sanctioning those involved in non-FIBA approved competitions, which they argue was an example of a sport federation using their regulatory and sanctioning powers to gain a competitive advantage. Internationally, swimming's ISL brought a case against FINA in 2019 for violating the US antitrust laws, as it imposed athletes to not take part in another competition.²²⁷

Such cases have increasingly highlighted that the autonomy given to sport federations can often be contentious as it can be difficult to distinguish between legitimate supervision and anticompetitive conduct, particularly when their regulatory choices have direct commercial consequences. When strongly opposing the failed European Super League in football, for example, UEFA and the 55 national associations were acting to defend a European model that is founded on open competitions, solidarity and redistribution to ensure the sustainability and development of football for the benefit of all and the promotion of European values and social outcomes.²²⁸ Their stated aim was to preserve the integrity of the European Sport Model and the principle of sporting merit. In such cases, as already established by case law, governing bodies need to be clear and careful that they remain in line with applicable law and rules to avoid promoting their own commercial interests by preventing the emergence of a rival league.²²⁹ The literature suggests that sport

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model(s). (2021). [N= 231]. Q6: *To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model(s) relevant for the sport(s) you selected?* AND Q7: *To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model(s) relevant for the organisation of sport in Europe?*

²²⁵ Mittag, J. & Naul, R. (2021). *EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward*, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652251/IPOL_STU\(2021\)652251_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652251/IPOL_STU(2021)652251_EN.pdf)

²²⁶ Euroleague.net (2016). *Euroleague Basketball presents a complaint before the European Commission against FIBA and FIBA Europe*, <https://www.euroleaguebasketball.net/euroleague-basketball/news/i/6p8c54yjk66qsitp/euroleague-basketball-presents-a-complaint-before-the-european-commission-against-fiba-and-fiba-europe>

²²⁷ Lord, C. (2019). *International Swimming League wins latest round against FINA: Court backs 'discovery'*. *Swimming World*, <https://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/news/international-swimming-league-wins-latest-round-against-fina-court-backs-discovery/>

²²⁸ Statement of the UEFA Congress, 45th UEFA Ordinary Congress – 20 April 2021, <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/mediaservices/mediareleases/news/0268-1215f6bee879-def81eca96d8-1000--uefa-congress-condemns-breakaway-plans/>

²²⁹ Weatherill, S. (2021). *Never let a good fiasco go to waste: why and how the governance of European football should be reformed after the demise of the 'SuperLeague'*, <https://www.asser.nl/SportsLaw/Blog/post/never-let-a-good-fiasco-go-to-waste-why-and-how-the->

federations will come under increasing scrutiny to ensure that their rules and regulations do not illegitimately or unjustifiably block competing organisers.²³⁰

Another way in which some sports have increasingly attempted to combat the creation of private competitions is through establishing their own competitions to rival those created by private entities. This can be seen in basketball, where in 2016 FIBA Europe established the Basketball Champions League which was a European club competition designed to rival EuroLeague. Initially FIBA Europe tried to attract EuroLeague players back to clubs competing in the new Champions League by offering them higher salaries. Subsequently, in response to ECA's attempts to grant EuroLeague places to domestic leagues who committed their clubs to play in EuroCup instead of the Basketball Champions League, FIBA threatened sanctions citing anti-trust violations.²³¹ Similarly, after the ISL's recent successful lawsuit against FINA, in 2019 the international swimming federation launched a 'Champions Series' competition designed to rival the new ISL by taking aspects of their proposed competition format.²³²

In contrast, some federations have recently taken a much more collaborative approach towards privately funded and organised events. In triathlon, more and more commercial entities are organising competitions that do not fall within the pyramidal structure, and which attract athletes thanks to the higher prize money on offer compared to national competitions. World Triathlon does not have the power to sanction its athletes or compete with the prize money offered. Instead, their approach is to maintain open dialogue with commercial event organisers in the hope that it will establish respect for World Triathlon's role as the sport's governing body.²³³ This approach is described further in the box below. Such collaboration might be increasingly necessary, as a thought leadership piece forecasted that the trend of new leagues and competition formats will continue into the future, and so federations will need to find new ways of adapting, including potentially working with the private sector.²³⁴

Box 3: World Triathlon – encouraging open dialogue with private event organisers

Many triathlon competitions are organised outside of the federations by private entities who are backed by profit-driven investors. Examples include Ironman, Super League Triathlon, and the Professional Triathletes' Organisation. Athletes often prefer to participate in private competitions instead of national or European competitions due to the bigger prize money at stake and are free to do so without fear of sanctions by World Triathlon.

Instead, World Triathlon takes on a collaborative approach and works with private organisations to avoid league clashes and promote the development of projects that can benefit the sport as a whole. World Triathlon has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with these leagues who recognise its role as the sport's governing body; for example private competitions work together with national federations to use their referees and staff when organising an event in their respective country.

World Triathlon also encourages event organisers to work closely with national federations in organising competitions, for example by encouraging them to use local referees affiliated to national federations.

Moreover, La Liiga, a semi-closed ice hockey league in Finland, works closely with the Finnish Ice Hockey Association to develop the sport in the country through funding

[governance-of-european-football-should-be-reformed-after-the-demise-of-the-superleague-by-stephen-weatherill](#)

²³¹ Long, M. (2016) 'What Fiba's new Basketball Champions League means for European hoops' in *Sports Pro Media* https://www.sportspromedia.com/analysis/what_fibas_new_basketball_champions_league_means_for_europe_an_hoops/

²³² Lord, C. (2019). *International Swimming League wins latest round against FINA: Court backs 'discovery'*. *Swimming World*, <https://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/news/international-swimming-league-wins-latest-round-against-fina-court-backs-discovery/>

²³³ The Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (2019). *Future of Global Sport*, https://www.asoif.com/sites/default/files/download/future_of_global_sport.pdf

²³⁴ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

underage clubs and undertaking its own solidarity activities. This is described further in the box below and in Case Study 5 in Annex 3.

Box 4: Example of semi-closed league working with federation on solidarity

Liiga is the top professional ice hockey league in Finland. Created in 1975, it is run independently to the Finnish Ice Hockey Association (FIHA). The league is semi-closed with no relegation or automatic promotion from the second tier. Still, Liiga has certain obligations towards FIHA, and the two organisations work closely together to develop the sport and to address the challenges that it is facing. For instance, Liiga is mandated to have an affiliation with and fund youth clubs. Liiga clubs can use these underage clubs for talent acquisition and volunteering activities, but otherwise do not have a direct return in investment from them.

Stakeholders generally consider the trend towards closed competitions to undermine the European Sport Model. They insist that the principle of one federation per sport is crucial for managing competitions by coordinating the sports calendar and protecting the interests of athletes, fans, and the media and sport organisations. Whilst some think that the European Sport Model should allow for cooperation around new and innovative sport formats that appeal to changing consumer and audience behaviours, stakeholders warned that applying a purely market-based approach to sport would break up the link between grassroots and elite sport, and therefore the autonomy of sport federations is vital for the sustainable financing of grassroots activities. In order for commercial organisations to successfully collaborate with sport federations, stakeholders insist they must accept the existing rules established by that federation on solidarity schemes and the national calendar.²³⁵

4.4 Distribution of revenues and solidarity

As highlighted under Section 3.3 above, the principle of financial solidarity and redistribution of revenues from the top to the bottom of the pyramid is a key element of the European Sport Model, as it contributes to sustaining the grassroots structure at the base of the pyramid and ensuring the sustainability of financing for sporting activities taking place in non-profitable competitions. Principles of vertical and horizontal solidarity and mechanisms of redistribution of revenues are also key instruments to addressing the funding gap in grassroots sport.

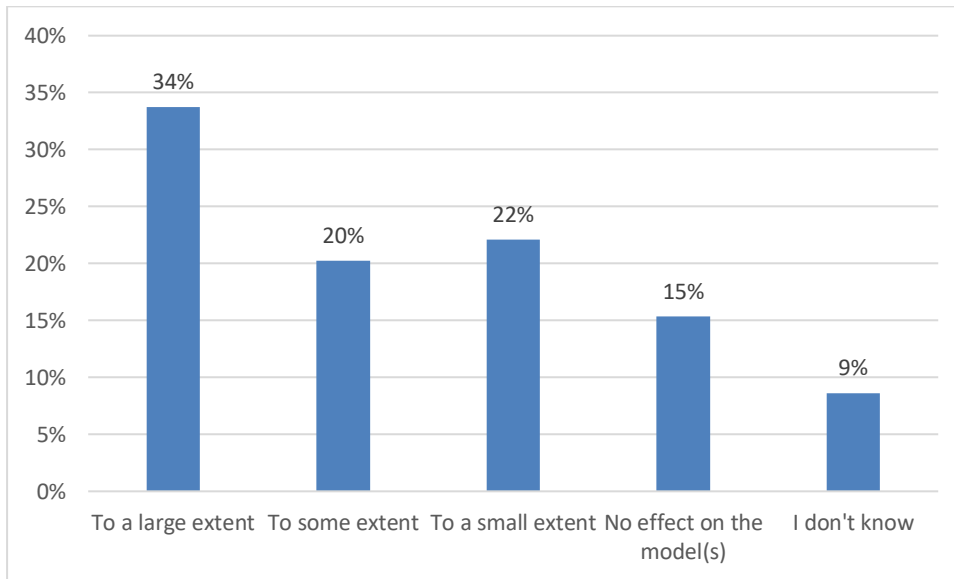
This section explores the extent to which concentration of revenues at elite level or in closed leagues (i.e., where the principle of promotion and relegation is not applied) is changing and undermining the principles of solidarity in lower-level competitions. It then identifies the main mechanisms being introduced at different levels to sustain grassroots level sports.

The principle of financial solidarity is generally considered as an important feature of the European Sport Model, as also demonstrated by the large number of survey respondents indicating that this principle is either very relevant (37%) or relevant (45%) for the organisation of sport in Europe.²³⁶ However, the concentration of revenues in elite level sport or the low redistribution of revenues to lower-level competitions and grassroots is deemed by over half of the survey respondents as a trend that is posing a threat to the European Sport Model. The figure below shows that over one third of respondents (34%) believe that the concentration of revenues at elite level reflects a movement away from the European Sport Model.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model(s). (2021). [N= 227]. Q6: *To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model(s) relevant for the sport(s) you selected?* AND Q7: *To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model(s) relevant for the organisation of sport in Europe?*

Figure 4: Extent to which the concentration of revenues in elite level sport / less redistribution to lower-level competitions and grassroots shows a movement away from the European Sport Model



Source: Ecorys survey: *Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=163]*. Q16: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected? AND Q17: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model?

As mentioned in Section 3.3 and by several survey respondents and a couple of stakeholders interviewed²³⁷ there are growing concerns regarding the actual impact of these mechanisms and the extent to which they contribute to sustaining grassroots level sports,²³⁸ as well as clubs and athletes at lower tiers of leagues or competitions in Europe. Moreover, international organisations such as the IOC have highlighted how these emerging trends may contribute towards undermining the European Sport Model principle of financial solidarity.²³⁹

Redistribution of revenues to lower-level competitions or outside of closed leagues

As argued by several survey respondents, elite level sports can benefit from a large share of revenues coming from broadcasting and media rights, commercialisation practices (including transfer of players) and sponsorships. However, they also believe that these revenues are not effectively redistributed to lower levels of the pyramid. In this context, the case of the solidarity mechanisms adopted in football transfers explains to what extent the concentration of revenues at elite level might prevent an effective redistribution of revenues to lower-level competitions, and thus potentially undermine the principle of solidarity enshrined in the European Sport Model.

The training compensation and solidarity mechanisms introduced by FIFA are aimed at fostering training and education of young players, as well as at strengthening the competitive balance of the football transfer market.²⁴⁰ The potential impact of these

²³⁷ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

²³⁸ Cattaneo, A., & Parrish, R. (2020). *Sports law in the European Union. Kluwer Law International BV.*

²³⁹ IOC (2020) *The European Sport Model, A call for the sports movement and public authorities to join forces*, <https://rm.coe.int/the-european-sport-model-paper-by-the-ioc/1680a1b876>

²⁴⁰ Laskowski, J. (2019) *Solidarity compensation framework in football revisited. Int Sports Law J 18, 150–184*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40318-018-0134-y>; According to the 2021 FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, "training compensation is due when i) a player is registered for the first time as a professional; or ii) a professional is transferred between clubs of two different associations (whether during or at the end of his contract) before the end of the season of his 23rd birthday." In addition to this, a 5% solidarity compensation is deducted from the total amount of the transfer compensation and "distributed by the

measures to correct the imbalances of the transfer market has been questioned by researchers,²⁴¹ but also by the European institutions.²⁴² It was argued that while “football clubs spend around €3 billion a year on player transfers, only a very limited amount of money (less than 2% of transfer fees) trickles down to smaller clubs, further increasing the imbalance existing between clubs on the transfer market”.²⁴³ A 2013 European Commission press release²⁴⁴ also outlined that “the level of redistribution of money in the game, which should compensate for the costs of training and educating young players, is insufficient to allow smaller clubs to develop”, and to counteract the significant economic advantage that the biggest clubs and leagues have on football competitions.²⁴⁵ FIFA also confirmed in its recent on ten years of international transfers²⁴⁶ a sharp decline in solidarity contributions, with the 2020 amount (\$38.5 million) mirroring that of 2011 (\$38.0 million). This trend reinforces the need for the FIFA Clearing House, which FIFA expects to help enforce training compensation and solidarity payments up to an amount of approximately \$300 million per year.²⁴⁷

The concentration of revenues in elite level sports from existing closed leagues or competitions may also represent an important threat to the European Sport Model. In particular, it has been seen that the largest share of the revenue of closed competitions are not redistributed among clubs or other organisations that contribute to the development of talent, but they are instead mainly redistributed among the clubs participating in the closed league.

In the case of the European basketball closed league (Euroleague), a specific agreement has been introduced by FIBA Europe to allocate some of the revenues of the closed league to youth development programmes.²⁴⁸ The ECA, the private entity in charge of the Euroleague, agreed to pay €400,000 every year to fund a solidarity scheme that would redistribute revenues to lower-level clubs across Europe for the development of young talents.²⁴⁹ However, one year after the agreement the Euroleague decided to withdraw its support to the youth development programme as they claimed that the FIBA tournaments calendars infringed the agreement reached.²⁵⁰ The case was brought to the European Union and in January 2020, the Court of Appeal ruled that the FIBA calendar of events did not constitute a breach of the provisions of the Euroleague Agreement by FIBA Europe. ECA was ordered to pay FIBA Europe €900,000 plus interest (around €600,000) to fund the FIBA youth development programme.²⁵¹

The difference between the redistribution mechanisms in closed and open leagues also highlights how the increasing level of revenues in top-tier competitions can undermine the principle of solidarity in sport. On the one hand, the rugby closed league (the Six Nations)

new club as a solidarity contribution to the club(s) involved in his training and education over the years”, between the seasons of his 12th and 23rd birthdays.

²⁴¹ Laskowski, J. (2019) *Solidarity compensation framework in football revisited*. *Int Sports Law J* 18, 150–184, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40318-018-0134-y>;

Szymanski, S. (2015). *The economic arguments supporting a competition law challenge to the transfer system*. KEA & CDES (2013). *The Economic and Legal Aspects of Transfers of Players*, European Commission, <https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/sport/library/documents/cons-study-transfers-final-rpt.pdf>

²⁴² European Parliament Resolution of 29 March 2007 on the future of professional football in Europe, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-6-2007-0100_EN.html

²⁴³ Laskowski, J. (2019) *Solidarity compensation framework in football revisited*. *Int Sports Law J* 18, 150–184, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40318-018-0134-y>

²⁴⁴ European Commission Press Release of 7 February 2013, IP/13/95 *Commission blows the whistle over inflated football transfer fees and lack of level playing field*, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_13_95

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ FIFA (2021), *FIFA publishes report on ten years of international transfers*, <https://www.fifa.com/legal/media-releases/fifa-publishes-report-on-ten-years-of-international-transfers>

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ FIBA Press Release of 3 March 2020, *Luxembourg Appeals Court rules in favour of FIBA Europe in Euroleague case*, <https://www.fiba.basketball/news/luxembourg-appeals-court-rules-in-favour-of-fiba-europe-in-euroleague-case>

attracts more investments and revenues from broadcasting rights and sponsorships than World and European rugby championships.²⁵² The revenues of the Six Nations competition are redistributed only among the six national federations taking part in this competition.²⁵³ These revenues could also fund initiatives sustaining amateur rugby in the relevant member federations, but instead increases the financial gap between federations and prevents the development of the sport movement in the non-member federations. On the other hand, Rugby Europe, who is in charge of redistributing revenues among the member federations who are part of the open competitions, provides the same level of support to all levels (for example junior or male / female), with investments funding the development of talent, for example age grade programmes or camps.²⁵⁴

Redistribution of revenues to grassroots level

The solidarity mechanism within the European Sport Model promotes the idea that a certain proportion of the revenues created by elite sports should trickle down to ensure the financial sustainability of grassroots sport.²⁵⁵ A study on the funding of grassroots sports in the EU highlights how over half of the total budget for grassroots sport comes from households' contributions (56.3%), followed by local authorities' funds (32.6%).²⁵⁶ The research suggests how funds deriving from horizontal or vertical solidarity schemes do not constitute a considerable proportion of the available budget for grassroots sport. This finding was also corroborated by our mapping reviews on selected sports, that also highlighted how the imbalances in the solidarity mechanisms and the lack of self-generated revenues do not contribute to effectively redistributing sports revenue at grassroots level.

Redistribution mechanisms to fund grassroots level sport are in several cases directly implemented by the NOC through Olympic solidarity programmes (i.e., archery,²⁵⁷ basketball,²⁵⁸ judo²⁵⁹). Some of these solidarity and redistribution mechanisms are directly aimed at sustaining the grassroots level through funds for structural development and coach training, as well as scholarships for young talent development. Other solidarity and redistribution mechanisms are managed and implemented directly by the relevant international federations, as in the case of swimming (FINA) and triathlon (World Triathlon). In this context, the FINA Continental Support Programme is not entirely dedicated to sustaining the grassroots level, but also funds the organisation of events and the infrastructural development at elite level.²⁶⁰ The rationale behind the redistribution mechanism adopted by World Triathlon is instead quite particular as it ranks national

²⁵² Taylor, J (2012). *Rugby, rights and money*, *OMPI Magazine*, https://www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/fr/2012/01/article_0002.html

²⁵³ 75% of the revenues are distributed equally among the members, 15% of revenues are redistributed according to the tournament classification and 10% according to the size of each member federation; Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

²⁵⁴ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

²⁵⁵ ENGSO (2018). *ENGSO Policy Programme: From grassroots to societies: sport as an agent for a more active and healthy Europe*, https://0690ebf5-3596-4c37-9165-d3a4e8d20b85.filesusr.com/ugd/8ade9a_aa8bec62beab409184b35c44104f528f.pdf

²⁵⁶ European Commission (2013) *Study on the funding of grassroots sports in the EU*, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/50e6357c-6e20-43fc-8cf7-b7ca073b197c>

²⁵⁷ The Olympic Solidarity Programme funding is distributed for development projects through National Olympic Committees. World Archery's member associations can apply for financial aid for a range of projects including athlete support, coach education and the creation of a national sport system.

World Archery website, (2021), <https://worldarchery.sport/>

²⁵⁸ There are four Olympic Solidarity programmes that any of the FIBA Member National Federations can apply and benefit from: a) The Team Support Grant programme; b) The Development of National Sports Structure programme; c) The Technical Course for Coaches programme; and d) The Scholarship for Coaches programme. FIBA (2021) *Olympic Solidarity*, <https://www.fiba.basketball/national-federations/olympic-solidarity>

²⁵⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

²⁶⁰ The FINA Continental Support programme is mainly aimed at funding the following activities: a) Administration, Technology and equipment; b) Organisation of Continental Competitions. c) Promotional Activities for Aquatics (including Swimming for All –Swimming for Life Courses)

FINA (2021), *2020 Annual Report FINA Development Programme*, https://resources.fina.org/fina/document/2021/02/18/720fe652-d307-45eb-a24c-60e89d7c1703/Development_Annual_Report_2020.pdf

federations at five different levels, and they give support to federations only at level 2-3, as federations at level 1 are not enough developed to effectively use these funds and federations at levels 4-5 are advanced, thus not receiving financial support.²⁶¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has heavily disrupted the redistribution mechanism in the Olympic Movement, given the postponement of large events such as the Olympic Games and the social distancing measures imposed throughout the world. In 2020, the IOC had to provide financial support of \$150 million to the NOCs and the IFs, including basketball, hockey, judo, swimming, tennis, cycling, archery, athletics, rowing, rugby and sailing.²⁶²

The COVID-19 pandemic has put additional financial pressure on IFs which rely heaviest on the share of Olympic revenue from the IOC to survive. Some of them have called on the IOC for advances of the share of revenue from Tokyo 2020 (which was postponed to 2021) to help ease financial concerns. This is the case of World Athletics who in 2021 borrowed \$7.5 million (€6.4 million) from the IOC, which made for the highest advancement of payments that IOC pledged, from a list of 15 IFs to which it was lending money.²⁶³ World Rugby has also used an advance payment of \$2.5 million (€2.1 million) from the IOC from the Tokyo 2020 revenue share to create a fund to help countries which have qualified for the rugby sevens tournament prepare for the games.²⁶⁴

In addition to international schemes, different schemes are also adopted at national level. For instance, in many sports that do not generate a high level of revenue from commercialisation practices or other sources, the level of support provided by international or European federations would not be enough to sustain the grassroots level. In such cases, most of the financial support at grassroots level is provided by national or regional authorities. For instance, in Ireland the primary source of funding of the swimming national federation (Swim Ireland) is public (55%), followed by self-generated income (i.e., fees by associated clubs / members) and most of these funds are redistributed at grassroots level. Funds generated at elite swimming level and redistributed by the international or European federation are negligible and mainly re-allocated to sustain the elite level.²⁶⁵

Another interesting example is represented by rowing, where there is no redistribution of revenues at European or international level, due to the lack of revenues from other sources than events or club affiliation fees.²⁶⁶ Due to the lack of vertical or horizontal solidarity schemes, national federations tend to rely on the financial support of local or national public authorities to sustain and develop the sport movement at grassroots level. For example, in Austria the costs for organising events are usually sustained through public support at regional or national level.²⁶⁷ A solidarity scheme aimed at developing the sport in the country among young people and managed by the Austrian rowing federation was also funded by the Austrian Ministry of Sport.²⁶⁸

In ice hockey, IIHF, NOCs and in some cases national governments, fund federations to develop the sport. For example, in Sweden, the Swedish Hockey League (SHL) shares a percentage of its profits with the national federation, so that it can redistribute it to grassroots and other types of activities.²⁶⁹ In Finland, there is an agreement between the clubs participating at the top league (SM-liiga) and the federation. As part of this

²⁶¹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

²⁶² International Olympic Committee (2020), IOC has already provided around \$100 million of financial support to Olympic Movement, <https://olympics.com/ioc/news/ioc-has-already-provided-usd-100-million-of-financial-support-to-olympic-movement>

²⁶³ Owen, D. (2021), 'World Athletics borrows \$7.5 million from IOC but returns to profit through receipt of Russian doping fine', in *insidethegame.biz*, <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1113284/world-athletics-borrows-75-million-ioc#:~:text=World%20Athletics%20has%20borrowed%20%247.5,which%20it%20was%20lending%20money>

²⁶⁴ Morgan, L. (202), 'World Rugby offers financial support to Tokyo 2020 qualified nations', in *insidethegames.biz*, <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1097960/world-rugby-offers-sevens-support>

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid

agreement, clubs have a mandate to finance an affiliated junior team.²⁷⁰ In turn, clubs have used these junior teams to identify and acquire promising players. This helps to trickle down revenues from the professional, towards semi-professional and amateur sports. For example, the *Idrottsföreningen Kamraterna Helsingfors* (HIFK), one of the most historical teams in Finnish Ice Hockey, spends about 10% of its revenue on youth and women teams.²⁷¹

Finally, in a few of the considered sports there are reform plans in place to correct current imbalances in the mechanisms for the redistribution of revenues at grassroots level. The UCI included as an objective of its *UCI's Agenda 2022* to "strengthening its solidarity and cooperation programme".²⁷² In tennis, the PTPA raised the issue of the lack of redistribution to lower-tier events and lower-ranked players in the new ATP Strategic Plan.²⁷³ The ATP reported that since fans mainly prefer to see the top players competing against each other at the world's biggest events, the Plan mainly focuses on enhancing the premium product, and once this will be achieved, it will be possible to "distribute more resources down the pyramid into the lower tiers of professional tennis".²⁷⁴

4.5 Good governance practices

Evidence from the literature review, mapping reviews, stakeholder interviews and survey suggest the emergence of new practices in the governance of sport to address issues relating to the transparency and accountability of sport governing bodies, integrity of sport, safeguarding of athletes and inclusion in decision-making processes. This section highlights the attempts of the sport governing bodies to adhere to good governance principles, a fundamental trait of the European Sport Model, as well as detailing those practices which are seen to be posing a threat to the European Sport Model.

The literature review highlighted different sets of good governance principles and practices proposed by international organisations and experts.²⁷⁵ The definition of good governance provided by a dedicated EU Expert Group highlights the importance of ten principles that should constitute a "framework and culture within which a sports body sets policy, delivers its strategic objectives, engages with stakeholders, monitors performance, evaluates and manages risk and reports to its constituents on its activities and progress including the delivery of effective, sustainable and proportionate sports policy and regulation".²⁷⁶

There were mixed views on the extent to which the development of governance practices constitutes a movement away from the European Sport Model: approximately only 12% of the survey respondents believed that development of good governance affected the model to large extent. This could be interpreted as a majority of stakeholders believing that the model already promoted such practices (Figure 5).

²⁷⁰ Ibid

²⁷¹ Ibid

²⁷² Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) (2018), *Agenda 2022. The cycling of tomorrow is built today*, <https://www.uci.org/cyclings-agenda-2022/20zIrXhazhxtIMRhclphxu>

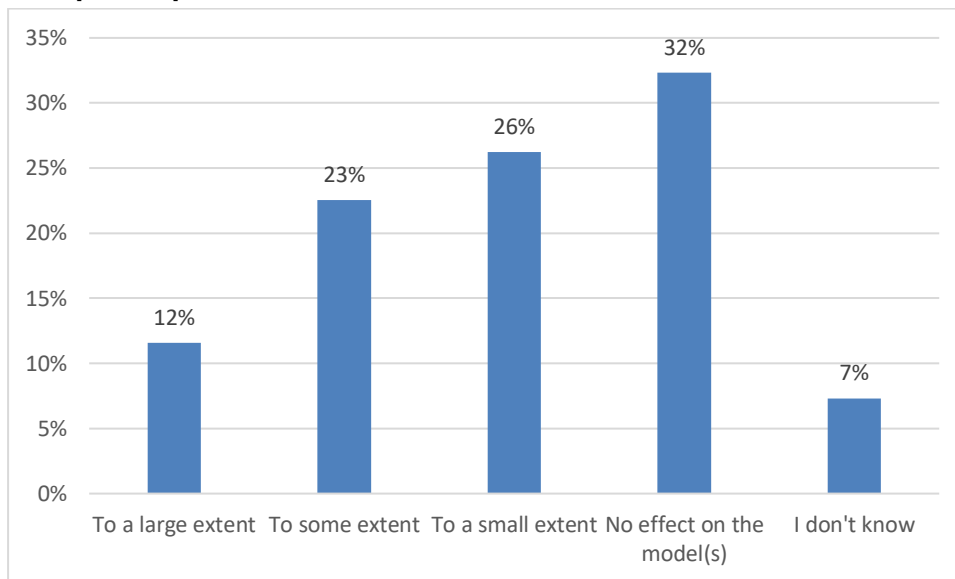
²⁷³ Myles, S., (2021), *The ATP Tour answers the PTPA's questions (well, some of them)*, <https://opencourt.ca/2021/06/30/the-atp-tour-answers-the-ptpas-questions-well-some-of-them/>

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Michaël, M. (2016), *A review of good governance principles and indicators in sport*; Dutch Olympic Committee, *Good Sports Board*, <https://nocnsf.nl/wat-doet-nocnsf/sport-in-nederland/goed-sportbestuur>; Mrkonjic, M. (2016), *A review of good governance principles and indicators in sport A mandate carried out on behalf of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) - Council of Europe, International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES), Neuchâtel, Switzerland September*, <https://www.icsspe.org/system/files/EPAS%20-%20Review%20of%20Good%20Governance%20principles%20and%20indicators%20in%20sport.pdf>.

²⁷⁶ European Commission (2013), *Expert Group on Good Governance - Deliverable 2: Principles of good governance in sport*, https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/sport/library/policy_documents/xg-gg-201307-dlvrbl2-sept2013.pdf

Figure 5: Extent to which good governance practices show a movement away from the European Sport Model



Source: Ecorys survey: *Study on the European Sport Model*. (2021) [N=164]. Q16: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected? AND Q17: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model?

The sport reviews nevertheless highlighted that the adoption of good governance practices are increasingly gaining relevance on the agenda of sport governing bodies, as code of conducts, ethic codes and practices fostering inclusion in decision-making processes have been developed or are being developed in an increasing number of sports. Some of the stakeholders consulted,²⁷⁷ as well as the survey respondents indicated however that good governance practices constitute a threat to the European Sport Model, arguing that more efforts are needed to ensure that principles relating to democracy, rule of law, human rights, stakeholder involvement and decision making are included in the governing practices of sport managing organisations.

Accountability and transparency of sport governing bodies

As pointed out by a consulted stakeholder, the management of sport by governing bodies is often considered as too opaque and lacking democratic controls.²⁷⁸ A report published in 2021 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), also stressed the importance of financial transparency to increase public confidence in the accountability, competency and efficiency of sport managing authorities, as well as to safeguard the public and private financial investment in sport.²⁷⁹ The lack of transparency and democratic processes within the main sport governing bodies might then constitute a threat to the European Sport Model, also due to the potential impact on other features of the model, such as solidarity schemes and practices in organising competitions.

²⁷⁷ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ UNODC (2021), *Global Report on Corruption in Sport*, https://www.unodc.org/res/safeguardingsport/grcs/index_html/SPORTS_CORRUPTION_2021_FULL_REPORT.pdf

For instance, the alleged lack of transparency by sport governing bodies has been recently used as a strong argument in favour of the creation of closed competitions in a few sports (swimming,²⁸⁰ football²⁸¹).

The sport reviews also highlighted the increasing importance of setting up term limits for the main elected roles in governing bodies. For example, the Ice Hockey International Federation elected in 2021 a new president after 27 years²⁸² and the International Swimming Federation appointed a new President and a new Executive Director after being governed by two presidents in the last 33 years and by an Executive Director in the last 34 years.²⁸³ In this context, different governing bodies have recently introduced time limits for the main position of responsibility in their organisations, such as UCI, FIFA, UEFA and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).²⁸⁴

In order to address the alleged lack of transparency and accountability in sport governing bodies, reforms have been undertaken in different sports by relevant managing bodies. For instance, the UCI adopted a code of ethics that applies to all parties within the pyramidal structure: officials, licence-holders, entities subject to the UCI Regulations, UCI and World Cycling Centre (WCC) staff and consultants.²⁸⁵ Moreover, in an attempt to bid for the presidency of the European Swimming Federation, the President of the Portuguese swimming federation presented a reform plan aimed at introducing good governance practices providing Member Federations with transparency of all the financial and business activities of the organisation.²⁸⁶

Integrity of sport and safeguarding of athletes

The Council of Europe *Consultative Committee of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport* (EPAS) described in its 2020 position paper that the sport governing bodies should play a key role in “preserving the integrity, health and safety of sport of all those participating in sport at all levels”.²⁸⁷ The European Union Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024 also includes protecting integrity and values in sport as one of its priority areas.²⁸⁸ As emerged from our sport mapping reviews, a large number of continental and international organisations have implemented measures and initiatives aimed at addressing issues such as corruption, doping and betting to safeguard the integrity of sport and the wellbeing of athletes.

A recent study commissioned by the European Parliament identified doping as one of the “most present and severe threats in the world of sport, challenging some of its core values”,²⁸⁹ as well as the main principles of the European Sport Model. In this context, the fact that all the European sport federations are compliant with the World Antidoping

²⁸⁰ International Swimming League (ISL), (2018), *FINA's threats put paid to Turin event*, <https://isl.global/2018/11/17/finas-threats-put-paid-to-turin-event/>

²⁸¹ Ingle, S., (2021), *Super League players face World Cup and Euros ban, warns furious UEFA chief*, *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2021/apr/19/super-league-players-face-world-cup-and-euros-ban-warns-furious-uefa-chief>

²⁸² Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

²⁸³ Lord, C., (2021), *Settlement talks stall in league & swimmers vs FINA dispute as global regulators legal bill approaches \$6 million*, *State of Swimming*, <https://www.stateofswimming.com/settlement-talks-stall-in-league-swimmers-vs-fina-dispute-as-global-regulators-legal-bill-approaches-6-million/>

²⁸⁴ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2018) *Resolution 2199 (2018) of January 2018: Towards a framework for modern sports governance*.

²⁸⁵ UCI – Union Cycliste Internationale (2021), *Code of Ethics*, <https://www.uci.org/regulations/3MyLDDrWJCJJ0BGGOFzOat>

²⁸⁶ Morgan, L., (2022), *Silva targets increased financial transparency in manifesto for LEN President*, *Inside the Games*, <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1117505/silva-len-swimming-president-manifesto>

²⁸⁷ Consultative Committee of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), (2021) *Further developing the European Sport Model(s)*, <https://rm.coe.int/further-developing-the-european-sports-model-european-sport-charter-pa/1680a1b1cf>

²⁸⁸ *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 January 2021-30 June 2024) 2020/C 419/01, OJ C 419, 4.12.2020, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42020Y1204\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42020Y1204(01)).

²⁸⁹ European Parliament, CULT Committee, (2021) *EU Sports Policy: assessment and possible ways forward*, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652251/IPOL_STU\(2021\)652251_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652251/IPOL_STU(2021)652251_EN.pdf)

Agency Code (WADA Code)²⁹⁰ shall be considered as a positive step towards the fight against doping and an example of how good governance practices might adhere to the principles of the European Sport Model.

Several federations and governing bodies have also taken important steps to safeguard the integrity of sport through specific governance practices and measures, which may contribute to aligning European sport governance with the good governance practices of the European Sport Model. For instance, the IIHF recently updated its disciplinary code in order to protect the integrity of sport and tackle corruption and doping in sport.²⁹¹ Similarly, the UCI Constitution defines as one of its objectives the need to “promote sportsmanship, integrity, ethics and fair play with a view to preventing all methods or practices such as corruption or doping”.²⁹² In this context, more efforts are also expected in swimming, where the FINA Reform Committee recently advocated for the creation of an Aquatics Integrity Unit that can reinforce FINA’s commitment to the fight against doping and take actions to “prevent competition manipulation, ensure high standards of ethical behaviour and safeguard the wellbeing of all involved in the sport”.²⁹³

World Rugby established a dedicated department, the ‘World Rugby Technical Services’,²⁹⁴ to look after functional areas such as laws, research, equipment approval, artificial turf, game analysis and anti-doping that might address integrity issues in the sport. The department is also responsible for training and educational programmes, such as the ‘Keep Rugby Onside’ initiative, which is aimed at tackling corruption in sport by educating those involved in the game about betting restrictions and other corruption offences and the penalties involved if those are breached.²⁹⁵ Moreover, World Rugby is also committed to safeguard players welfare, by adopting a research-driven approach to the support and protection of players at all levels of the game.²⁹⁶

The collaboration of sport governing bodies with the UNODC also represents an important attempt to tackle corruption in sport. A UNODC report on corruption in sport²⁹⁷ highlights the importance of the issue, by also mentioning how sport organisations are becoming more aware of the different corruption practices affecting the sport movement, such as the manipulation of sports competition and illegal betting.²⁹⁸ However, the report highlights important steps that will need to be taken in order to eradicate these practices from sport, including stronger international cooperation between sport bodies, law enforcement agencies and sport betting agencies, setting up anti-money-laundering units within gambling regulators, and organising awareness-raising sessions for employees from betting operators, government entities and sports organisations about the threat posed by competition manipulation.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁰ WADA, (2022), *Code Signatories*, <https://www.wada-ama.org/en/what-we-do/world-anti-doping-code/code-signatories>

²⁹¹ International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), (2021), *Rules and regulations*, <https://www.iihf.com/en/statichub/4719/rules-and-regulations>

²⁹² Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), (2021), *UCI Constitution and Regulations*, <https://www.uci.org/regulations/3MyLDDrWJCJJ0BGGOFzOat#constitution-and-standing-orders>

²⁹³ FINA (2021), *FINA shares key recommendations for future reforms, including establishing Integrity Unit*, <https://www.fina.org/news/2286902/fina-shares-key-recommendations-for-future-reforms-including-establishing-integrity-unit>

²⁹⁴ World Rugby, (2021), *Rugby Services*, <https://www.world.rugby/organisation/about-us/rugby-services>

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ World Rugby is directly involved in the development and dissemination of best-practice injury-prevention, the management and education guidelines across its federations, as well as in commissioning and partnering on research, notably in the area of brain injury.

World Rugby, (2021), *Rugby Services*, <https://www.world.rugby/organisation/about-us/rugby-services>

²⁹⁷ UNODC, (2021), *Global Report on Corruption in Sport*, https://www.unodc.org/res/safeguardingsport/grcs/index_html/SPORTS_CORRUPTION_2021_FULL_REPORT.pdf

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

Inclusion in decision-making process

An important good governance aspect that poses a threat to the European Sport Model and needs to be addressed by sport governing bodies relates to making their decision-making processes more inclusive, by ensuring that athletes or small federations are adequately represented in the relevant committees and executive roles.³⁰⁰ Our mapping reviews and interviews also highlighted the need to ensure gender equality in the governing boards or in executive roles.

Recent examples of measures aimed at ensuring adequate representation of athletes or small federations in the governing bodies' decision-making processes relate to the works conducted by the World Rugby Governance Working Group. This Working Group included in its recommendation the need to ensure player representation throughout all the committee structures, including the Executive Committee, to ensure player-centric decision-making.³⁰¹ Similarly, the programme proposed by the candidate to the presidency of the European Swimming League also highlights the need to "embed athlete representation into the LEN bureau and Technical Discipline Forum".³⁰²

In recent years, FIBA Europe has also recently established the Small Countries Commission, which ensures that all federations are represented at governance level.³⁰³ As pointed out by a stakeholder consulted, it is very important that all countries are represented, otherwise they would not have incentives to support the development of the sport in their country.³⁰⁴ However, our review has not identified other examples of ad-hoc committees or bodies ensuring adequate representation of smaller countries or federations in the relevant international or continental governing bodies.

Moreover, several documents and stakeholders consulted highlighted the need to foster gender equality and ensure proper representation of female athletes in sport governing bodies. The European Sports NGO position paper argues that, in order to develop sport into 'sport for all' it is necessary to engage both women and men "in all roles and at all levels of sports: in governing bodies, as coaches, in administrative and decision-making and other leading positions".³⁰⁵

In this context, different initiatives and good governance practices have been undertaken at international or national level to foster gender equality in sport governing bodies. For instance, the World Rugby Governance Working group recommended to include a target of at least 40% female representation on committees and ensure the promotion of women leaders in the sport.³⁰⁶ However, as pointed out by a consulted stakeholder, in sports like volleyball more progress is needed to bring equality on the governance and increase the number of women in the governing board.³⁰⁷

At national level, several good practice initiatives have been implemented in different sports to ensure female representation in sport governing bodies. For instance, the French

³⁰⁰ Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions, (2011), *Developing the European Dimension in Sport*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0012:FIN:en:PDF>

³⁰¹ World Rugby (2021). *World Rugby reveals interim findings of independent-led governance review*, <https://www.world.rugby/news/610992/world-rugby-reveals-interim-findings-of-independent-led-governance-review>

³⁰² Morgan, L., (2022), *Silva targets increased financial transparency in manifesto for LEN President, Inside the Games*, <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1117505/silva-len-swimming-president-manifesto>

³⁰³ FIBA Europe (2021), *Europe: Committees*, <https://www.fiba.basketball/europe/committees>

³⁰⁴ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

³⁰⁵ ENGSO, (2018), *From grassroots to societies: sport as an agent for a more active and healthy Europe*, https://0690ebf5-3596-4c37-9165-d3a4e8d20b85.filesusr.com/ugd/8ade9a_aa8bec62beab409184b35c44104f528f.pdf

³⁰⁶ World Rugby (2021). *World Rugby reveals interim findings of independent-led governance review*, <https://www.world.rugby/news/610992/world-rugby-reveals-interim-findings-of-independent-led-governance-review>

³⁰⁷ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

Handball federation (FFHandball) 2020 Development plan – towards 2024,³⁰⁸ reformed its national congress by establishing two new committees, the Men National Committee and the Women National Committee. The role of these committees is to reform the national federation bodies to uphold a balanced and harmonised system for male and female competitions.³⁰⁹

Finally, other important examples at national level are aimed at increasing female participation in sport. For instance, over half of the Lithuanian sport federations have implemented measures to increase the number of women and girls in sport - for example by offering equal access to sport facilities or by offering dedicated financial resources.³¹⁰ The Lithuanian Basketball Federation has also developed a policy/action plan to prevent and combat gender-based violence in sport. Gender equality is mentioned in basketball's business plan, and it has a specific policy for advancing towards gender equality in the sport.³¹¹

4.6 Volunteering

A further aspect of the European Sport Model that requires examination is the role of volunteers in sport. As indicated in Section 3.6 above, sports fundamental backbone is the involvement of millions of volunteers in sport. According to the latest Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity, there are 30 million (6% of the total population) volunteers in sport throughout Europe.³¹²

The 2010 EU study “Volunteering in the European Union” revealed some challenges, namely the variation in the numbers of sport volunteers across the EU with some countries increasing their numbers of sport volunteers and some reducing.³¹³ A subsequent survey on the share of people who volunteer in sport in the EU in 2013 and 2017,³¹⁴ by Member State shows that the number of sport volunteers in many Member States was reducing over this period. For example, research highlighted that the numbers of volunteers in sports clubs in Germany is declining,³¹⁵ the recruitment and retention of volunteers in football clubs is reported to be a challenge,³¹⁶ while Covid-19 has really affected the numbers of volunteers supporting rowing in Ireland mainly because volunteers are the older cohort.³¹⁷ A respondent from the survey conducted as part of this study also indicated that there are a very low number of volunteers in Czechia in ice skating (probably 20 in total). Moreover, an interviewee highlighted that the number of volunteers in volleyball also seems to have slightly decreased (for example for the Volleyball Champions League Super Finals in 2019 in Germany there were more than 200 volunteers, while the 2020 event in Verona there were over 100 volunteers).³¹⁸

³⁰⁸ Fédération française de handball (2020), *2020 Development plan for the Handball federation - towards 2024*,

https://www.handball-idf.com/images/DocsLigue/ANS/2020/PSF_FFHandball-CAP_2024.pdf

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Council of Europe, (2019), *Lithuania: Gender Equality in Sport*, <https://rm.coe.int/lithuania-gender-equality-in-sport-leaflet-2019-/1680971a61>

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² European Commission (2018), *Eurobarometer Survey Report on Sport and Physical Activity*, Special Eurobarometer 472, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2164>.

³¹³ European Commission (2010), *Volunteering in the European Union: Final Report submitted by GHK*, https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1018_en.pdf.

³¹⁴ Lange, D. (2020), 'Share of people who volunteer in sport in the European Union (EU) 2013-17, by country', <https://www.statista.com/statistics/602010/european-union-volunteering-in-sports-by-country/>.

³¹⁵ Breuer, C. (2017), *Sportentwicklungs-bericht 2015/2016 - Analyse zur Situation der Sport-vereine in Deutschland – Kurzfassung*,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317429146_Sportentwicklungsbericht_20152016_Analyse_zur_Situation_der_Sportvereine_in_Deutschland_Kurzfassung.

³¹⁶ Wicker, P. and Davies, L. (2021), *The UEFA GROW SROI Model: Valuing the Impact of Football Participation in Europe*, <https://www.knvb.nl/downloads/bestand/26276/uefa-sroi-final-report>.

³¹⁷ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

A number of factors are seen to be contributing to the reduction in sport volunteering in some Member States. Many survey respondents indicated that there are fewer volunteers for various reasons including changes in people's lifestyles (for example working longer hours, time constraints), socio-economic trends, lack of interest, lack of knowledge of opportunities, not enough flexibility for volunteers working time, the high demands placed on volunteers (e.g., in terms of their responsibility in ensuring safe sport, equality, sustainability, etc.), and the Covid-19 pandemic. Survey respondents indicated that volunteering in rugby is decreasing due to the increasing focus on consumerism and individualism and the increasing lack of interest in volunteering. Moreover, research indicated that volunteers in grassroots football experienced task frustration and social frustration as their hours have increased,³¹⁹ while an interviewee indicated that in Austria rowing clubs are losing volunteers due to work commitments and family ties, and as such people do not have the time to volunteer.³²⁰

The role of the volunteer is also seen to be changing. Volunteering is no longer intrinsically connected to grassroots sports, it is seen as operating at all levels, and as such we can see a development in how sport operates. For example, volunteers have a huge role to play in supporting the organisation of high-level European and national level sport events and activities, and many working in the national sporting federations and as coaches are also volunteers. This was particularly found to be the case for a number of the specific sports that were analysed as part of the study (for example rowing, rugby, triathlon and volleyball).

The demographics of volunteers can also be different across different sports and Member States and is also constantly changing. For instance, many volunteers in rowing and Rugby are the rowers/rugby players themselves, and many are part of the older cohort. For example, in Ireland, for every four people who play rugby, three are volunteers.³²¹ The downside of this is that it can be hard to then in some sports, like rowing, to find enough people to volunteer as many still want to race.³²² On the other hand, as indicated in Section 3.6 above, in volleyball, an interviewee highlighted that there are volunteers of all ages: "children from six years old being a ball retriever, to people in their late sixties and seventies selling merchandise or helping with officials".³²³

Some stakeholders are concerned that trends in volunteering are affecting the structure of sport and sustainability of grassroots sport. There are fears that a decline in volunteering and the changing role and demographics of volunteering could undermine the European Sport Model given its reliance on strong volunteering support for sport. For example, some survey respondents indicated for specific sports in specific Member States (for example athletics and handball in Portugal, basketball, ice hockey, judo and tennis in Austria, and handball in Poland and Czechia) that the numbers of people in volunteering in these specific sports affected the European Sport Model to a large or at least some extent. Some survey respondents also argued that the European Sport Model should be adapted to reflect the changing role of volunteers and support volunteer workers at all levels of the sporting world.

On the other hand, other stakeholders have been optimistic that the numbers of people volunteering in sport does not undermine the European Sport Model. For example, as indicated in **Figure 6: Impact of trends in volunteering on European Sport Model****Error! Reference source not found.** below, out of a total of 74 responses to survey question "to what extent does the numbers of people volunteering in sport constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model", over half of respondents did not see a big impact (35% indicated to a small extent and 22% indicated it had no effect on the model).

³¹⁹ Wicker, P. and Davies, L. (2021), *The UEFA GROW SROI Model: Valuing the Impact of Football Participation in Europe*, <https://www.knvb.nl/downloads/bestand/26276/uefa-sroi-final-report>.

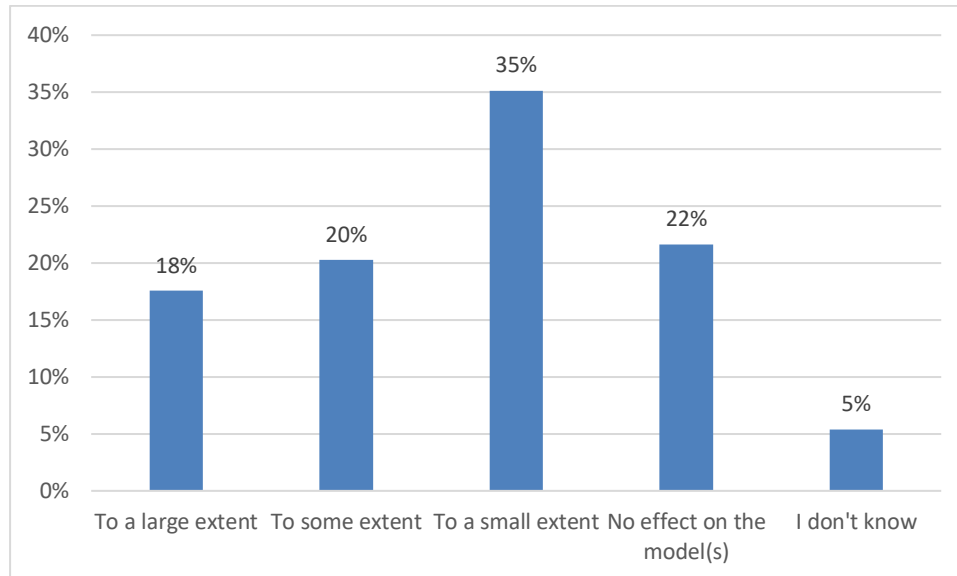
³²⁰ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

³²¹ Sport Ireland (2005), *Social and Economic Value of Sport*, https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/2019-10/social-and-economic-value-of-sport-report_1.pdf.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

Figure 6: Impact of trends in volunteering on European Sport Model



Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=74]. Q16: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected?

Moreover, survey respondents answering in relation to specific sports (i.e., athletics and football) and for specific Member States (for example athletics in Poland, archery in Germany and Poland, ice hockey, ice skating, judo and rugby in Czechia, swimming, tennis and triathlon in Portugal, volleyball in Poland) also agreed that the numbers of people volunteering in these specific sports only affected the European Sport Model to a small extent or not at all.

Sport, and particularly sport at the grassroots level, can only survive with the support of volunteers. In order to combat these declining numbers of sport volunteers, volunteers must be encouraged, socially stimulated, educated on the need and importance of their work, provided with training and skills development and reasonable benefits. Good examples from Slovakia and the Netherlands should provide inspiration for other Member States sport bodies. For example, the Act on Sport in Slovakia³²⁴ offers to people volunteering in sport compensation for the time spent at a sport event, without taxation (maximum €500 per year). A survey respondent also highlighted that in the Netherlands there is a movement towards hybrid models where a growing numbers of professionals within associations support, guide and complement volunteers with knowledge and expertise.

4.7 Habits and interests of citizens in practicing sport

The European Sport Model emphasises the role of sport clubs and federations in the organisation of sport activities. There is evidence that over the last two or three decades the trend is moving from participation in clubs and in team sports towards participation individually or in an informal group. The trend is confirmed empirically by the latest Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity according to which, a majority of the survey respondents are practising sports in settings such as parks or outdoors (40% of respondents) at home (32%) or during commuting times (23%), whereas the practice of sport within clubs and commercial health or fitness centres remains overall stable but encompass solely 12% and 11% of the interviewed Europeans.³²⁵ This marks a shift away

³²⁴ Act no 440/2015 Coll. on Sport (2015), (Zákon č. 440/2015 Zz o športe), <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2015/440/20191015>.

³²⁵ European Commission (2018), Eurobarometer Survey Report on Sport and Physical Activity, Special Eurobarometer 472, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2164>.

from the competitive/competition dimension as the main driver to engage in sporting activities.

This trend was also confirmed through the research conducted as part of this study. For example, one interviewee consulted highlighted that in France only one third of sport practitioners are affiliated to a club.³²⁶ Moreover, another stakeholder indicated that in Spain licensed triathlon members are estimated to be 35,000, while those practising triathlon informally outside the federation are estimated to be 50,000.³²⁷

A lack of public funding and resources has been a factor in contributing to changing habits in practising sport for certain citizens. For example, due to a lack of public funding in basketball in Greece, federations have had to introduce fees to their services, impacting member clubs and participants, especially from certain social groups, who are unable to afford registration fees, transport, and accommodation costs.³²⁸ Moreover, it was reported that swimming clubs at local level in Ireland need additional public funds, particularly after the pandemic, to survive, keep their infrastructures going and allow people to continue to swim.³²⁹

It is also important to consider the potential effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on sport and physical activity behaviours. As certain groups looked to alternative ways of engaging in physical activity during the lockdown, some commentators are already predicting a potential amplification of trends towards non-organised and informal contexts for participation. While there is widespread concern over the potential scarring effects of the pandemic on participation more generally, survey respondents indicated that lockdowns have encouraged people to engage even more in physical activity in different ways such as by increasing their participation in individual and outdoor sports for health and safety reasons. For instance, a lot of people started cycling during the pandemic.³³⁰ Nevertheless, it was reported that participation habits, even during the pandemic, in volleyball in Belgium appeared to have stayed within the pyramidal structure. An interviewee highlighted that this is due to the fact that people want to be part of a group and “sport” together, and the Belgian Volleyball Federation has now more members than before the pandemic.³³¹

Such trends undoubtedly have an impact on affiliation to clubs, on sport pyramids and on sport federations both at national and European levels.³³² Stakeholders also highlighted that this weakens the representativity and legitimacy of the organised sport movement. Moreover, as indicated in **Figure 7** below, out of a total of 73 responses to the survey question “to what extent do trends in sport and physical activity participation constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model”, over half of respondents did see that such trends constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model (36% indicated to some extent and 25% indicated to a large extent).

³²⁶ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Giannoulakis, C., Papadimitriou, D., Alexandris, K. and Brgoch, S. (2017), *Impact of austerity measures on National Sport Federations: evidence from Greece*, European Sport Management Quarterly, 17:1. 75-97, http://www.easm.net/download/easm_essential_sport_management_collection/sport_funding_and_finance/Impact-of-austerity-measures-on-National-Sport-Federations-evidence-from-Greece.pdf

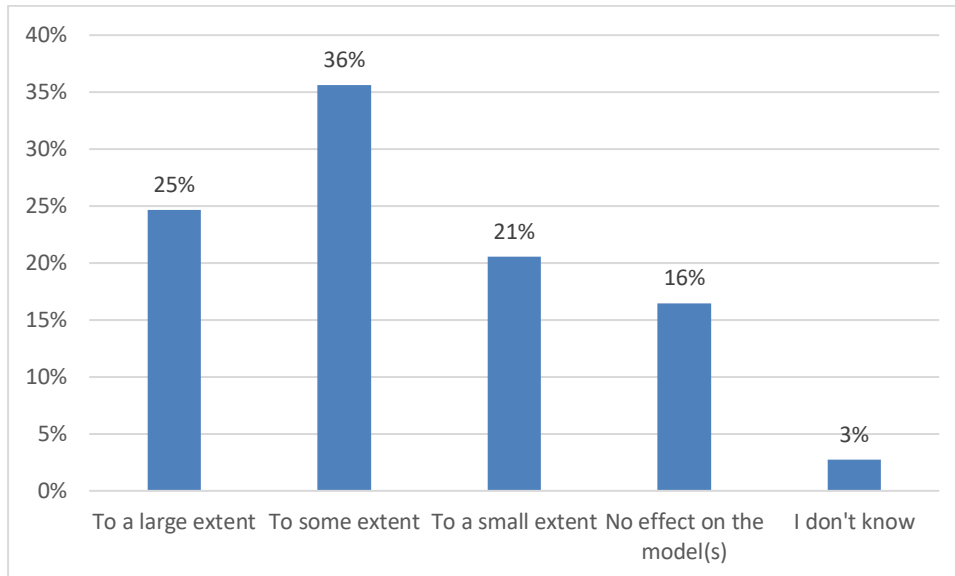
³²⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Ibid.

Figure 7: Impact of trends in participation and habits on European Sport Model



Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=73]. Q16: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected?

Some survey respondents also indicated for specific sports in specific Member States that these trends in sport and physical activity participation and habits constitute to a large or to some extent a movement away from the European Sport Model/their sport models (for example athletics in Poland and Portugal, basketball in Austria, handball in Czechia, Poland and Portugal, ice hockey in Austria and Czechia, tennis in Portugal). Nevertheless, some survey respondents did indicate for specific sports in specific Member States (for example archery in Czechia, Germany and Poland, ice skating, judo and rugby in Czechia, swimming and triathlon in Portugal, tennis in Austria and volleyball in Poland) that these trends in sport and physical activity participation and habits only affected the European Sport Model/their sport models to a small extent or not at all.

Participation at grassroots level continues to be a key objective of sport federations across Europe. Many initiatives that have been introduced recently to promote sport and physical activity often refer to new and attractive ways of practicing sport, taking place outside of the acknowledged sport structures (sport federations, sport clubs), and are more closely linked to individuals' personal environments (indoors and outdoors, at home, at work, during commuting time or leisure time)³³³. Nevertheless, some practical initiatives have been taken to increase citizens participation in particular sports clubs. For example, a core goal of the German Handball Association is membership development. Currently there are 760,000 members in over 4,200 clubs and 21,000 teams in Germany. The German Handball Association's main aim is to introduce children and young people to handball through their elementary school campaign days and the AOK Star Training.³³⁴ The Irish Get Going Get Rowing programme³³⁵ is another example of how young people in schools have got involved in rowing through Rowing Ireland bringing rowing machines to schools or schools partnering with a Rowing Ireland club to conduct classes. Over the five years that the Get Going Get Rowing programme has been in operation, it has engaged over

³³³ KEA (2021), Mapping of innovative practices in the EU to promote sport outside of traditional structures. A report prepared for the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d02e4ea2-9295-11eb-b85c-01aa75ed71a1>.

³³⁴ German Handball Federation Statutes (esp. Section 38 (4) DHB Game Regulations) Handball Bundesliga website and Statutes, <https://www.liquimoly-hbl.de/de/die-hbl/organisation/organisationsstruktur/>.

³³⁵ www.getgoinggetrowing.com.

100,000 participants, thus boosting club participation.³³⁶ Thus, sport federations and clubs have an important role in ensuring sport participation, as highlighted by the European Sport Model. Similar good practice initiatives should therefore be adopted by different sport federations/Member States to ensure continued participation of their sports at club and team level. However, given the evolving trends in habits and interests of citizens in practicing sport, the European Sport Model may also need to embrace other initiatives that take place outside of traditional sport structures.

The next sections examine how sports in Europe respond to social developments such as equality, sustainability, and digitalisation. In doing so, it aims to find out whether the general features of the European Sport Model need to develop to reflect the increasing recognition of sport's role in social development. Evidence collected through the study shows that the role of sport in supporting social development objectives has been an increasing focus of sport federations since the turn of the century. Sport federations in Europe are addressing such objectives in two main ways. First, through addressing their governance structures and second, through ensuring their policies, activities and projects align with such developments.

4.8 Equality

Equality is one of the main trends which is seen to be positively impacting the traditional European Sports Model. However, equality is not unidimensional. Rather, it has multiple layers. In the context of the European Sport Model, this section distinguishes two such layers:³³⁷

1. Equality in participation (incl. equal opportunities to visibility, prize money, medals etc.)
2. Equality in decision-making and leadership positions in sports

The common denominator in both layers is the principle that participation in sports and sport governance structures should be equal for all persons without discrimination of any kind for reasons related to race, colour, sex, economic background or any other social conditions. While all kinds of discriminations have their own merit, gender equality has increasingly been in the spotlight of many sport organisations, in response to the well-documented underrepresentation of women in sports and its governance structures.³³⁸

Gender equality is part of the Olympic Charter³³⁹ and a fundamental value for the IOC, re-affirmed in numerous policies,³⁴⁰ projects³⁴¹ and guidelines.³⁴² The evidence suggests that in a similar vein, several European and National Federations across different sports are increasingly gearing their efforts towards achieving gender equality in participation and governance. The most important steps appear to be in the field of equality in participation, with governance following. Often, as the majority of sports follows a pyramidal structure, the starting point of such steps takes place at the World Federation level and trickles down

³³⁶ Rowing Ireland website: <https://www.rowingireland.ie/rowing-for-all/about-rowing/>; Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

³³⁷ Authors' analysis based on information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

³³⁸ European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2020) Gender equality in sport: proposal for strategic actions 2014–2020, Publications Office, 2014, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/73626>

³³⁹ International Olympic Committee (2020) Olympic Charter, <https://olympics.com/ioc/olympic-charter>

³⁴⁰ For example, see IOC (2014) Olympic Agenda 2020, https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/IOC/What-We-Do/Olympic-agenda/Olympic-Agenda-2020-Closing-report.pdf?_ga=2.241587335.441459172.1643297854-amp-yW4apvTkdme94YPNhmYf4g

³⁴¹ For example, see the IOC (2017) Gender Equality Review Project, <https://olympics.com/ioc/gender-equality/advocacy-and-support/gender-equality-review-project>

³⁴² For example, see the IOC (2021) Framework on fairness, inclusion and non-discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sex variations, <https://olympics.com/ioc/news/ioc-releases-framework-on-fairness-inclusion-and-non-discrimination-on-the-basis-of-gender-identity-and-sex-variations>

to Confederations, etc. Nonetheless, a number of specific initiatives are being taken forward by European and national federations.

For example, cycling's world governing body, the UCI as part of its Agenda 2022 objective to strengthen the position of women in governance has amended its statutes to include an obligation on behalf of National Federations to ensure female representation on their executive committees.³⁴³ As part of the same agenda, the UEC has amended its statutes to include a 25% quota of women in its Management Committees.³⁴⁴

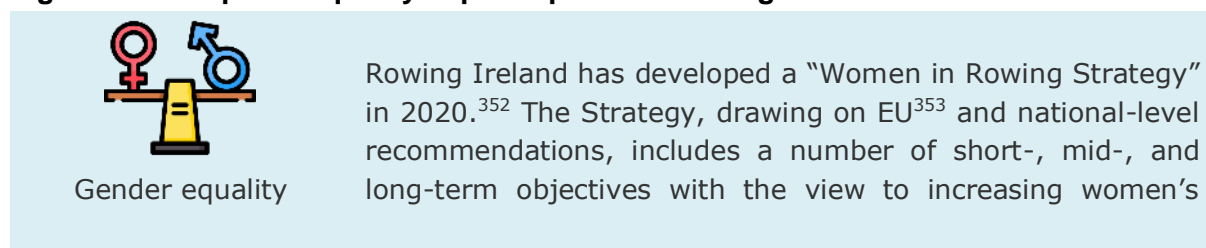
At the national level, quotas or initiatives promoting gender equality in representation can also come from governments or donors as a pre-requisite for funding. For example, 10 years ago the Spanish government introduced a quota for the inclusion of women at the executive boards of Federation. For triathlon, this decision was beneficial. Currently, Spanish Triathlon is the only Spanish Federation with more women than men on the board.³⁴⁵

Compared to governance, European and national federations are making more progressive steps in achieving equality in participation through a number of policies, initiatives and projects. Here, too, different federations and sports appear to be making progress, albeit at a different pace.

For example, sports such as volleyball, triathlon and cycling have equal prize money for their competitions. Triathlon is also the only sport in which European championships for athletes and athletes with disabilities take place simultaneously.³⁴⁶

Other sports, such as ice hockey, are moving toward gender equality through introducing new policies. For example, the IIHF adopted a policy in 2021 to facilitate the participation of transgender athletes at the international level of the sport in the category of competition that is consistent with the gender identity.³⁴⁷ FIBA Europe through its project Her World, Her Rules, has made available a pool of €2 million for National Federations to apply for programmes encouraging women participation in the sport.³⁴⁸ Greece, using this project has run series of events for girls ages between 8-15 reaching over 2.000 girls.³⁴⁹ Other interesting examples from EU countries are available.³⁵⁰ For example, Sweden, using the same project planned to organise in collaboration with the Swedish Women's Basketball League, 10 separate camps nationwide for girls aged 13 - 15.

Figure 8: Example of equality in participation at rowing Ireland



³⁴³ Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) (2018) Agenda 2022. The cycling of tomorrow is built today, : <https://www.uci.org/cyclings-agenda-2022/20zIrXhazhxtIMRhclphxu>

³⁴⁴ UEC (2020) Constitution of The European Cycling Union (UEC), <https://www.uec.ch/en/status>

³⁴⁵ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ IIHF (2021) 2022 IIHF Transgender policy, https://blob.iihf.com/iihf-media/iihfmvc/media/downloads/regulations/2022/2022_iihf_transgender_policy.pdf

³⁴⁸ FIBA (2021) FIBA Europe Girl's Program, <https://www.fiba.basketball/europe/programs/girls-program>

³⁴⁹ FIBA (2021) FIBA Europe Girl's Program National Federations Projects. Annual Report, <https://www.fiba.basketball/europe/programs/girls-program>

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵² Rowing Ireland (2020) Women in rowing strategy, <https://www.rowingireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Women-in-Sport-Strategy-Document-Jul-2020.pdf>; Rowing Ireland (2021) Women in rowing strategy. 2021 Strategy review, <https://www.rowingireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/WiS-Strategy-Review-2021.pdf>

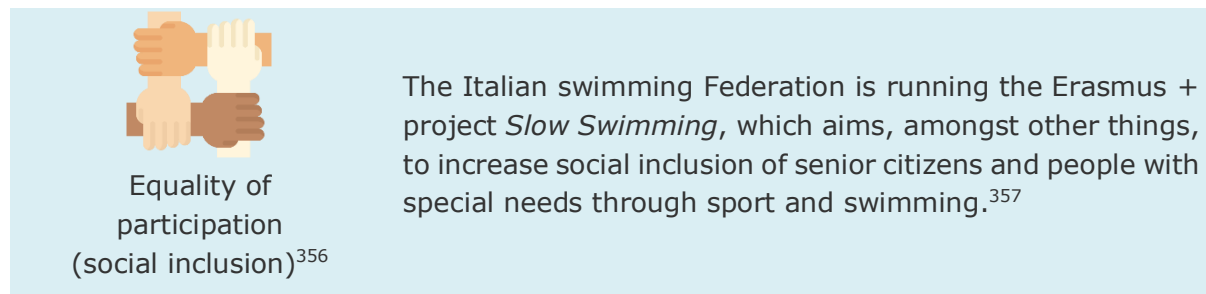
³⁵³ European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2020) Gender equality in sport: proposal for strategic actions 2014–2020, Publications Office, 2014, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/73626>

in rowing
Ireland³⁵¹

participation in rowing as coaches, volunteers, club members, officials and leaders.

Finally, European and national sporting organisations have developed initiatives of a similar nature that go beyond addressing gender inequality to touching upon broader equality issues. For example, DOSB assumes important functions in the areas of social integration, health, democracy, socialisation and inclusion, amongst others.³⁵⁴ Clubs are also active in such initiatives. As one stakeholder from a representative body commented: most clubs have something aside from the sport, for which they feel strongly. Many clubs which before did not have women teams now do, and they also work a lot with social programmes, supporting children's hospitals, integrating immigrants and others.³⁵⁵

Figure 9: Example of equality for persons with special needs in Italy



Although progress on gender equality is uneven across sports and Member States, the evidence suggests that gender equality is likely to remain very high on the agenda of all sports which are moving towards a more gender-balanced approach. For example, the High-Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport also recently published a report which includes an action plan and recommendations to achieve a more equitable gender balance in sport.³⁵⁸ The group proposed recommendations in the following thematic areas: participation, coaching and officiating, leadership, social and economic aspects of sport, media coverage and gender-based violence.³⁵⁹ Such positive trends and developments in gender equality, and other types of equality, are impacting the traditional European Sport Model, which needs to evolve to reflect such good practice principles in gender equality development.

4.9 Sustainability

Sustainability is another main trend affecting the European Sport Model with stakeholder interviews affirming strongly that it is very high on the agenda of all sport organisations and the overwhelming majority of sports reviewed being part of the UN's Sport for Climate

³⁵¹ Icon made by Freepik from www.flaticon.com

³⁵⁴ Digel, H. (2018) Strukturen des Sports in Deutschland. Series of three blog articles, https://sport-nachgedacht.de/wiss_beitrag/strukturen-des-sports-in-deutschland-i/, https://sport-nachgedacht.de/wiss_beitrag/strukturen-des-sports-in-deutschland-ii/, https://sport-nachgedacht.de/wiss_beitrag/strukturen-des-sports-in-deutschland-iii/

³⁵⁵ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

³⁵⁶ Icon made by Aranagraphics from flaticon.com

³⁵⁷ ec.europa.eu (n.d.) Erasmus +, Slow Swimming, <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details/#project/621953-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-SPO-SSCP>

³⁵⁸ European Commission (2022), *Towards more gender equality in sport: Recommendations and action plan from the High Level Group on Gender Equality in sport (2022)*, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/684ab3af-9f57-11ec-83e1-01aa75ed71a1>.

³⁵⁹ European Commission (2022), *Commission published high-level group's recommendations to achieve gender equality in sport*, 15 March 2022, <https://sport.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-published-high-level-groups-recommendations-to-achieve-gender-equality-in-sport>.

Action Network.³⁶⁰ In particular, sports are trying to understand and limit their environmental footprint and assume a role in promoting pro-environmental behaviour amongst the masses. As in the case of equality, often the first steps towards linking sports with sustainability goals are taken at the world-governing body level, with several examples, however, existing at European and national federations. Below, a selection of examples across sports and different levels is shown.

At the global level, World Triathlon has joined two UN / IOC initiatives:

- Sport for Climate Action Network
- Clean Seas Campaign

As part of the former initiative, World Triathlon has signed a compromise with UN / IOC to halve the sport's carbon emissions by 2030 and zero them by 2050.³⁶¹ In addition, World Triathlon has issued relevant sustainability guidelines for event organisers³⁶² as well as a Water Quality Statement, which allows local organising committees to run triathlon events on the condition that swimming water meets certain quality thresholds.

At the EU level, Europe Triathlon following the paradigm of the world's governing body, has recently started to include sustainability as an evaluation criterion in its procurement for the organisation of events, and works closely with national federations (through an *ask, but do not demand* approach) to promote sustainability, which will remain a focal point in the forthcoming period.³⁶³ Examples also exist at the national level (see Figure below).

Figure 10: Sustainability in Triathlon Spain



Sustainability in
Triathlon, Spain³⁶⁴

Spanish Triathlon is part of numerous national sustainability projects. Examples include the Green Sports Flag and Eco-voluntarios. The Green Sports Flag is a flag that is given to sport events meeting certain environmental standards with municipalities and local councils showing strong interest in the initiative. Eco-voluntarios is an online training and certification programme which trains volunteers in environmental issues such as waste management.

Another noteworthy example comes from cycling. In cycling, the UCI which became a signatory of the UN Sports for Climate Action Network in 2020³⁶⁵ has issued the subsequent year a sustainability strategy, aiming to make cycling one of the most sustainable sports in the world. The strategy contributes to the sustainability strategy of IOC and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development with the federation aiming to use the latter as a framework to measure (part of) its environmental and social impact.³⁶⁶ At the European level, UEC has recently begun to use electric vehicles, distribute less plastic and establish select spots at races to litter while at the administrative side, the Federation used zero printing in preparing the events for 2021.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁰ UNFCCC.INT (n.d.) United Nations. Sports for Climate Action, <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/sports-for-climate-action>

³⁶¹ ITU (2020) World Triathlon sustainability guidelines for event organisers, https://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/ITU_Sust_v5.pdf

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

³⁶⁴ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder. Icon made by Freepick from flaticon.com

³⁶⁵ UCI.org (n.d.) UCI joins movement for climate action, <https://www.uci.org/article/the-uci-joins-the-movement-for-climate-action-initiated-by-the-un/5FFTA0RXA3psMsQVKzdOWO>

³⁶⁶ UCI.org (n.d.) UCI armed with a comprehensive plan for sustainable development, <https://www.uci.org/pressrelease/the-uci-armed-with-a-comprehensive-plan-for-sustainable-development-and-commits-to-better-representation-of-women-on-its-management-committee/1k3WsRSbu4oPjdObVWtrqe>; <https://www.uci.org/sustainability/2aT8Ri5QQ2Nr67iwrEN8K4>.

³⁶⁷ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

Other sports are also advancing the sustainability agenda. For example, the European Handball Federation has put forward a plan for good governance in 2020, touching upon plans for sustainability and corporate social responsibility programmes.³⁶⁸ For some national federations within the sport, for example the German Handball Federation, its regional associations and their member clubs have such CSR strategies including activities for the personal development of young people, promoting topics such as the understanding of democracy, sustainable treatment of the environment as well as social manners and intercultural learning.

Ice hockey is also working towards a sustainability approach, with IIHF also being a signatory of UN Sports for Climate Action Network and Clean Seas Campaign and winning IOC-DOW Carbon Initiative Award for its progress. At the same time, sustainability is advancing in national agendas too. For example, in Finland transportation of youth to ice hockey halls and ice hockey halls consumption are aspects that are coming into the spotlight, with stakeholders looking into how they can minimise pollution and make the sport greener (for example through new, greener ice hockey halls).³⁶⁹

Apart from the above, several examples exist in other sports. For example, in rowing, a lot of clubs have changed their practices (for example in terms of washing boats down, not bringing algae while travelling with the boat, etc.) with the Irish championship in 2021 having recycling bins and water tanks provided by the local government (county council). In world volleyball, FIVB, amongst other initiatives,³⁷⁰ launched in 2019 the Good Net Project, repurposing disused finish nets into volleyball nets. At the same time, CEV is also accelerating its pathway to sustainability, as shown in the Figure below.

Figure 11: Sustainability in European volleyball



Sustainability in European volleyball³⁷¹

Currently, CEV is working on improving its statuses to ensure that its events meet certain parameters to protect the environment. Simultaneously, through Erasmus +, the Federation is working together with Surfrider Foundation Europe, Green Cycling Norway and BCW to provide materials and toolkits to enable local organisers measure the footprint of its events. All materials and toolkits will be open-source and available to all 56 National Federations. This project is part of a broader effort of CEV to obtain an internationally recognised certification for all of its top events, so that every local organiser who wants to host such events, will have to meet certain environmental standards.

In conclusion, sustainability is an increasing focus of sport federations in Europe. As in the case of equality, while overarching framework is often set at the world level, important initiatives exist within European and National Federations.

4.10 Digitalisation

Digitalisation is a third major trend affecting European Sport Model. Digitalisation and in particular the shift from traditional to digital media is changing the way people consume sports and opening up monetisation opportunities (through helping sport organisations better engage with the fanbase, growing viewership, sponsorship, etc.).³⁷² Sports that do

³⁶⁸ https://www.eurohandball.com/media/0hgjky2q/ehf_biz_report_print_2020-web.pdf

³⁶⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

³⁷⁰ goodnetproject.com (n.d.). Ghost Nets to Goods Nets, <https://goodnetproject.com/>

³⁷¹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

³⁷² Deloitte (2018) A whole new ball game. Navigating digital change in the sports industry, <https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/gx-digital-transformation-and-future-changes-in-sports-industry.html>

not embrace digitalisation may be at risk of missing out on the important opportunities this brings in terms of audience reach and revenue streams. In this context, several sports are trying to increase their digital footprint. To do so, sports organisations are revisiting their strategies / policies and they are creating their own products such as over-the-top (OTT) platforms and social media, often in partnership with professional agencies.

For example, FIVB, World Triathlon and Rugby Europe have their own OTT platforms, while the majority of sports across Europe and Member State have social media presence. UCI, as shown in the Figure below, plans to create an application for cyclists.

Figure 12: Example of digitalisation in world cycling



Digitalisation can bring new, important revenue streams for sporting organisations, can modernise sport and have a positive impact for sports in Europe.³⁷⁵ However, it can also pose a series of challenges to sporting organisations. Digitalisation calls for a professionalisation of services which can put sporting organisations relying on volunteers at a competitive disadvantage (both in comparison to other sporting organisations but also in comparison to resourceful commercial parties entering the market.)³⁷⁶ Moreover, online piracy of sports events not only breaches the copyright held by the right holder but can have serious effects on sports and the wider economy. It has had major consequences, particularly for amateur clubs and sports federations which are partly financed by the income from audio-visual broadcasts.³⁷⁷ For example, the French football industry has made a loss of nearly €500 million each year for their amateur clubs.³⁷⁸ Digitalisation may therefore perpetuate existing revenue inequalities between sports and undermine the solidarity principles of the European Sport Model.

³⁷³ Icon made by monkik from flaticon.com

³⁷⁴ UCI.org (n.d.) Cycling Agenda 2022, <https://www.uci.org/cyclings-agenda-2022/20zIrXhazhxtIMRhclphxu>

³⁷⁵ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

³⁷⁶ For example, Ironman, Super League Triathlon and Professional Triathletes Organisation in case of triathlon

³⁷⁷ European Parliament EPP Group (2021), *Fight illegal streaming and protect grassroots sport*, <https://www.eppgroup.eu/newsroom/news/fight-illegal-streaming-and-protect-grassroots-sport>.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

5.0 Conclusions

This research study has identified the main features of the European Sport Model and examined the key trends that are influencing the changing understanding of the Model. Our findings have been based on extensive desk research, stakeholder interviews and survey results. The main conclusions are illustrated below.

5.1 Main features

Our research has shown that the key features of the European Sport Model are generally applied in the way sport is organised and structured. All the European team sports analysed follow a *pyramid model* where the sport federation is the main governing body for a given sport and is generally responsible for the organisation and development of professional and amateur sport. There is also generally a common structure from grassroots clubs at the foundation of the pyramid to national sport federations, which regulate and organise national championships and European and international sport federations which are generally at the top level of the pyramid.

There is evidence however that the role and influence of European federations with respect to international federations varies in practice. To some extent this relates to how competitions are organised and their relative importance at the international and European levels. There are examples of more fragmented organisational structures where there is a much looser relationship with the pyramid structure.

While the broad organisational arrangements are therefore fairly similar across European sports, they however do show discrepancies in terms of 1) the involvement of stakeholder groups including athletes' representatives in the organisational structures of European sports; and 2) the level of concentration in terms of commercial negotiations, and in particular concerning media rights.

In many of the team sports, national leagues have a particular role in decision-making and commercialisation. Sport leagues typically handle commercial deals and especially broadcasting rights for professional sport. This is generally set out in the agreement between the league and the sport federation, where general principles for tendering broadcasting rights are established. Such a model is applied in most sports, including tennis, football, volleyball and handball. The picture is slightly different when it comes to individual sports as leagues are less likely to be formally involved in high level decision-making processes and the organisation of competitions.

The system of *open competition* is generally applied across European sports. The *promotion/relegation principle* is almost universally followed in team sports – at a national level, all countries studied for football, basketball, rugby, handball and volleyball generally follow a similar promotion/relegation system. This principle is not applied in only a few exceptional cases at the national and euro levels. At the European level, a few closed or semi-closed leagues exist such as the EuroLeague (basketball) or the Six Nations tournament in rugby.

There is also evidence that the promotion/relegation principle is not always sufficient on its own to ensure fair and open competition as there is evidence that financial distribution mechanisms also play an important part in ensuring fair and open competition. Countries can have the same promotion and relegation systems yet the openness of competition can vary considerably across different countries in terms of numbers of genuine contenders for the national leagues.

There is an emphasis in the European Sport Model on promotion/relegation whereas most individual sports covered in the study do not apply the promotion/relegation system but rather use a ranking system. The principle of open competitions generally applies in these

systems though there are marked differences across sports in how the ranking systems work in practice including the types of qualification criteria used.

There is a consensus that the financial *solidarity mechanism* should remain a core pillar of the European Sport Model in the future though there are increasing questions around how far this principle applies in practice. While all sport stakeholders acknowledge the principle of solidarity and redistribution of revenues as essential to the survival and ongoing development of their sport at all levels across Europe, shortcomings of the process are signalled in many sports. These relate mostly to the imbalance between the amounts of commercial revenue generated at elite level and the amounts redistributed at grassroots level, along with a perceived lack of transparency on the revenues themselves and their redistribution applied by the governing bodies (see also below under trends). We do find examples of transparent solidarity mechanisms, for example in terms of how the IOC distributes revenues to international federations and in the case of some of the European Federations that were examined for the study. For some sports however there is a limited availability of data which suggests that in some cases there is a need for greater transparency on level of payments from elite leagues to lower leagues and amateur levels. For a number of the sports, public funding plays a crucial role in supporting the financial sustainability of the grassroots sector.

According to the model, sport federations and governing bodies should have enough *autonomy* to conduct the organisation of sport as they see fit, but within the limits of EU law. It is then of key importance that sport federations and governing bodies have the ability to self-regulate and to be guided by good-governance principles and practices. There is a general recognition however that sport federations must earn their autonomy through accountability and transparency. The research highlights a range of initiatives taken forward by European and international federations to promote good governance. While many federations are proactive in the development of good governance approaches, the research has shown that there is also a role for government in influencing federations to adopt such practices in line with European objectives and standards. A reduced level of state involvement in sport which has been seen across Europe has highlighted the weakening of certain natural levels of protection of public interest and its link to policy. In some of the sports and countries analysed for this study, good governance principles are monitored by governments and are a condition of funding. Public authorities therefore also play a key role in encouraging good governance practices through funding allocation criteria and conditions attached.

The *role of volunteers* is shown to be fundamental to all sports. There is a clear dependence on volunteers for European sports, and they play a crucial role both in terms of running sport clubs and federations, as well as supporting the organisation of sport competitions (at all levels). The development of different programmes and support schemes for volunteering are essential to cater to this important pillar of the European Sport Model.

Reflection on the role of European values

The focus of the research has been to examine how the key features of the European Sport Model apply to the organisation of sport in practice. A common theme in many of the discussions with stakeholders however is that the European Sport Model ought to have a more explicit focus on particular European values that should be promoted (for example, democracy, labour rights and human rights). This is an important finding in terms of raising expectations towards the sport federations on their civic responsibility. There is evidence that the development of good governance practices to safeguard the autonomy of sport federations, as highlighted above, helps to ensure that those specific European values are reflected in the application of the European Sport Model. Such values are therefore already part of European sport, both at grassroots and professional levels. There is a common feeling however that a greater alignment between the articles of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the European Sport Model could inspire the core values that should be promoted as widely as possible. A range of stakeholders have

suggested that the European Sport Model does not necessarily provide an overall framework for the development of such practices.

5.2 Main trends

There appears to be a consensus that *internationalisation and commercialisation* of European sport can be regarded as positive for the future development of European sport where they remain aligned with the values and solidarity spirit and objectives of the European Sports Model. However, these trends could become threats to the European Sport Model with the insurgence of a commercial entertainment and pure profit driven model. The effects of internationalisation on sport manifest through increasing global audiences, wider media coverage of events and competitions and the increasing role of multinational companies in investment and sponsorship including the increasing activities and influence of private equity and venture capital interests in European sport.

The internationalisation of audiences encourages sports to exploit this increasing market potential through higher sponsorship deals, increasing merchandise sales and higher value broadcasting rights. The evidence indicates however that internationalisation and commercialisation are affecting specific sports to varying degrees and in different ways. There is concern that only the “commercially attractive sports” (i.e., suited to television) will survive and smaller sports may suffer due to a lack of funding. This would be contrary to the horizontal solidarity funding principle of the model which promotes a fair distribution across all sports, and which should be encouraged and promoted by the sport movement. Commercialisation in the form of enhanced revenues is generally not considered a threat for sport per se as in principle there is potential for increased revenues from commercialisation to trickle down to provide benefits for the sport as a whole. The benefits of commercialisation are seen in some sports for example volleyball where enhanced revenues have helped to reinforce the international federation’s solidarity approach. For some of the more popular team sports, such as football, rugby and basketball, however, there is evidence from some countries that commercialisation is encouraging a greater concentration of wealth amongst a smaller group of elite clubs and their financial backers. Stakeholders have highlighted that this may be exacerbated where there is a pure profit motive for owners and investors. This type of commercialisation, is viewed by some as a possible threat to the European Sport Model. It can distort the role and function of sport by shifting focus from traditional solidarity and social/societal service functions to pure business and profit motivations and drive to closed competitions in which the sporting merit is undermined as well as the possibility for all clubs to compete at the highest level in domestic and European competitions.

This type of commercialisation can also have other negative consequences for the European Sport Model. It can bring about a number of new issues (for example doping, match-fixing, fraud, money laundering or any other form of corrupt criminal activity) which may not be covered by the European Sport Model. Moreover, increasing interdependence between sport federations and private TV networks with regard to broadcasting major sporting events and competitions may compromise the autonomy of sport. The increasing influence of media companies and sponsors as stakeholders also results in clubs distancing themselves from service the interests of their fans in order to pursue more profitable business relationships.

The dual role of sports governing bodies is recognised as an established principle in European law and policy, in line with the autonomy and special role of sport. Stakeholders point to the dual role for governing bodies as fundamental to a European sport model which ensures that sport serves wider social and societal functions. At the same time, stakeholders see it as crucial that conflicts of interest are avoided. As highlighted below, while increasing efforts have been made by sport federations to address issues of good governance and integrity, the research highlights the challenges for some federations in

balancing commercial objectives with other objectives such as ensuring fair and open competition and fulfilling their solidarity role.

There is also concern amongst many stakeholders that for some sports, commercialisation is undermining the European Sport Model's *solidarity principle* and leading to an inequitable distribution of resources between the elite and grassroots levels. There is evidence that mechanisms of redistribution of revenues in top-tiers and closed competitions do not substantially contribute to counteract the significant economic advantage of the biggest clubs and leagues, by also preventing an effective redistribution of revenues for the development of talents and of the sport movement in lower-level competitions. The research also shows that different mechanisms of redistribution of revenues sustaining the grassroots level exist in almost all the sports considered, but not all of these provide enough financial support to the grassroots level. As a result of this, in some sports the role of public authorities is crucial to fund the development of the relevant sports at amateur or grassroots level.

Additionally, the increasing commercialisation of sport and concentration of wealth in certain sports appears to be increasing the pressure for the most successful clubs to favour *closed competition structures*. There is a perception that by eliminating the financial risk of relegation, clubs who compete in closed leagues can be more attractive to potential sponsors and investors. However, there is a concern that closed competitions are less likely to establish solidarity mechanisms, which has raised concerns that commercial event organisers profit from sport federations' investment in talent development whilst at the same time widening the gulf with teams that do not compete in closed leagues. Over the years, sport federations' ability to exercise their autonomy and penalise participants in non-affiliated events has been shaped under EU competition law. In certain sports, some federations and private organisers have found ways to collaborate without apparently engendering risks to the integrity of the overall ecosystem and development of their sports. Certainly, the literature reports that the trend for privately organised competitions will accelerate in future, and so cooperation between private event organisers and sport federations will in some cases be important to preserve integrity of sports and competitions and maintain a healthy development and solidarity basis including the links between grassroots and elite sport.

Our research also outlined the increasing relevance and importance of *good governance practices* developed and implemented by sport authorities and governing bodies to adhere to good governance principles, a fundamental trait of the European Sport Model. It is believed that the development of good governance practice helps to ensure that specific *European values* (for example, democracy, labour rights and human rights) are reflected in how the European Sport Model applies. The mapping review outlined how increasing efforts have been taken recently by sport governing authorities at national and international level to increase their transparency and accountability, by for instance adopting new codes of conducts or by setting up term limits for the main elected roles in governing bodies. As also outlined by more than half of the survey respondents, the recent development of good governance practices generally align with the values of the European Sport Model, although several stakeholders interviewed argued that more efforts are needed to increase the transparency and accountability of sport governing authorities as well as to increase the involvement of athletes, women and of small federations in decision-making processes. Several efforts have been taken to safeguard the integrity of the game (i.e., illegal betting, corruption, etc.) and of the athletes (i.e., fight against doping, athletes' welfare), while more efforts are still needed to ensure gender balance in governing or executive roles, as well as to ensure adequate representation of athletes and smaller federations or countries in sport governing bodies.

There is evidence that the number of sport *volunteers* in many sports and in many Member States has been declining. The role of the volunteer is also seen to be changing as volunteering is no longer intrinsically connected to grassroots sports, but it is seen as operating at all levels. Moreover, the demographics of volunteers can also be different across different sports and Member States and is also constantly changing. Some

stakeholders are concerned that trends in volunteering are affecting the structure of sport and sustainability of grassroots sport. There are fears from some survey respondents that a decline in volunteering and the changing role and demographics of volunteering could undermine the European Sport Model. Nevertheless, over half of the survey respondents did not see such trends as having a big impact on the European Sport Model. Sport can only survive however with the strong support of volunteers. Increased pressure to implement good governance processes and standards in sport has also been highlighted as a possible barrier to attracting committed volunteers. In order to combat these declining numbers of sport volunteers, volunteers must be encouraged, socially stimulated, educated on the importance of their work, and provided with training and skills development and reasonable benefits.

There is evidence that over the last two or three decade that *sporting habits* are moving from participation in clubs and in team sports towards participation in informal settings. A lack of public funding and resources has been a factor in contributing to changing habits in practising sport for certain citizens. The Covid-19 pandemic has also had an impact on sport and physical activity behaviour and has overall, with some exceptions, been seen to have exacerbated such trends towards individual and informal sporting practices. Such trends undoubtedly have an impact on affiliation to clubs, on sport pyramids and on sport federations both at national and European levels. Moreover, over half of the survey respondents did see that such trends in sport and physical activity participation and habits constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model. Sport federations and clubs have an important role in ensuring sport participation, as highlighted by the European Sport Model. Similar good practice initiatives as in Germany and Ireland should therefore be adopted by different sport federations/Member States to ensure continued participation of their sports at club and team level. However, given the evolving trends in habits and interests of citizens in practicing sport, the European Sport Model may also need to embrace other initiatives that take place outside of traditional sport structures.

Gender equality, sustainability and digitalisation are also seen to be impacting the traditional European Sports Model in terms of bringing about changes in their governance structures, policies, activities, and projects. While the level of ambition and the progress of sport organisations towards these trends differs across sports and countries, evidence suggests that they are likely to remain very high on the agenda of all sports. The latter, are progressively transitioning towards increasing the representation of women in participation and governance, becoming more sustainable and capable of tapping into digitalisation opportunities.

5.3 Key Conclusions

Figure 13 below highlights particular enabling factors that may support the application of the European Sport Model and particular threats that could be seen as a movement away from the model's key features. Overall, the research has shown there is broad support for the European Sport Model including its key features of open competition, solidarity and autonomy. That the features are applied differently across sports highlights a degree of flexibility in how the model is applied, for example in how far competitions can be regarded as genuinely open, levels of redistribution from elite to grassroots or development of good governance standards.

This research review suggests that the application of the European Sport Model's key features are evolving with continuing scope to reflect good practice principles in gender equality, sustainability and digitalisation development, in addition to integrating additional elements such as increased transparency, strengthened solidarity mechanisms, and better embedding the core values of the European Union as such. Importantly, through the study, several voices raised the need to involve more broadly the sport movement around discussions on the European Sport Model, including grassroots sport organisations and

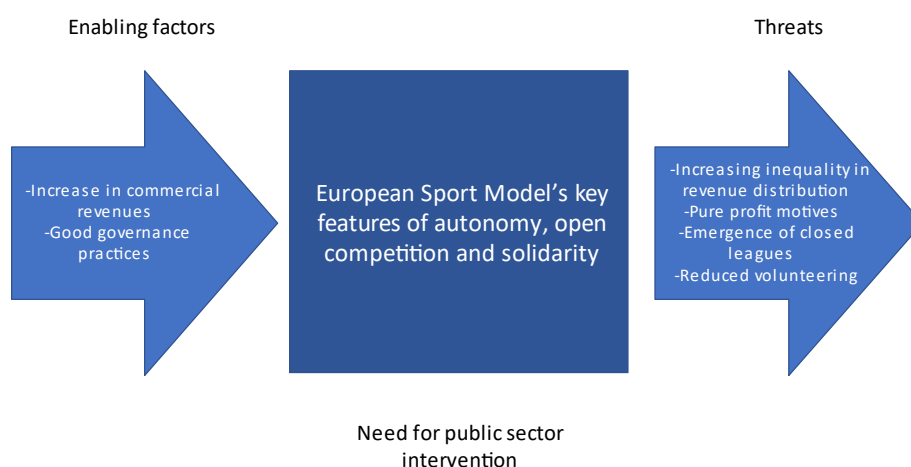
representatives of athletes to strengthen the accountability and representativeness of the Model.

The exploitation of economic opportunities because of global interest in European sport that can be served more easily, thanks to new technology developments and opportunities including new media, can be seen as an enabling factor as well as a threat. At the same time, there is evidence of reduced volunteering and capacity for sport federations. This appears to be happening in parallel with growing expectations to cater for public values and principles, equality, sustainability and participation in sport. The research has also highlighted a risk that new developments may in some instances favour economic opportunities to the detriment of interests of key stakeholders such as clubs, players and fans while actions to counter such risks are less explicit.

A key question that remains therefore is how far the principles of the European Sport Model can help to preserve sport as a public good and realise policy goals through sport. By implication there is a question of who should be the guardian or provide stewardship to preserve the public interest values and ensure coaches and support staff are equipped to meet all new expectations. The European Sport Model assumes a central role for the sport federations here but with conditions attached. The research raises an underlying question however of whether promotion of good practice standards, or even more stringent regulation are needed to define who and via what processes such values are applied should be ensured.

The research has also raised a specific question of whether more public money and resources are also needed to ensure the preservation of sport as a public good, realise policy goals through sport, and ensure the sustainability of the grassroots sports sector. As identified through the study, good practice initiatives including cooperation with private competition organisers should be applied. More strategic alliances with health providers could also be developed. Pressure for more physical activity as a preventive medicine can thus help create a new business case, other than those purely commercially driven actors selling tv-rights. Moreover, sharing good governance principles, and promoting multisport cooperation on common challenges such as solidarity, transparency and monitoring and evaluation approaches through multisport initiatives (i.e., letting smaller federations benefit from the expertise developed in larger federations) should also be applied.

Figure 13: Interconnection between enabling factors and threats to the Model



Annex One: Sport Fiches

Sport Fiche – Archery

Study on the European Sport Model(s)

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

Date produced: March 2022

Sport fiches

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each fiche summarises the main features and trends that affect the evolution of the 15 selected sports at EU level and in different Member States. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews and the survey is included where relevant – this shows key features and evolving trends in relation to archery and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Background

Archery is an Olympic individual sport popular around the world. There exist many modalities of this sport recognised by the World Archery Federation, such as target archery, indoor archery, field archery, para-archery, 3D archery, flight archery, ski archery and run archery. At the Olympic games, athletes compete in the discipline of target archery using recurve bows. Archery has also featured on the programme of the Paralympic Games since its first edition. In Europe, the practice of archery is more common in countries such as Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands. However, the practice of this sport is widespread, and the European-level continental federation (World Archery Europe) presently has 50 national federations as members.

Main features of the Archery Sport Model

Archery follows the model's traditional **pyramidal structure** - with an international federation, a European federation, and national federations, clubs and athletes; depending on the size of the country, regional entities may also be involved. World Archery (WA) is the international governing body for the Olympic sport of archery. There are five additional continental associations (Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, Oceania), dedicated to growing archery in their respective regions. On top of this, World Archery has national member associations across the globe to administer the sport at a local level.

WA is governed by its national member associations. Delegates from each of the national archery federations meet every two years at congress to vote on matters such as changes to the World Archery Rulebook and to elect officers to the executive board and committees. The executive board, which is led by the president, governs the federation between meetings of congress. It is supported by the elected permanent committees and appointed boards, ad-hoc committees and commissions that are responsible for specific areas of the federation's activities. Daily operations are carried out by a professional staff, which is managed by the secretary general, based at WA's headquarters in the Olympic Capital of Lausanne, Switzerland.

World Archery Europe is the governing body of archery at European level, created in 1988. It notably organises the European Grand Prix and the European Championships (main European competition, with both team and individual competitions).

System of competition

WA is responsible for organising a portfolio of international events and awards the rights to host cities in a transparent bidding process. The World Archery Championships, which are held every two years in odd years, is the pinnacle event in the sport of archery, awarding the title of World Archery Champion. There are also world championships for other disciplines of the sport and age groups, including the World Archery Para Championships, World Archery Field Championships, World Archery 3D Championships,

World Archery Youth Championships and World Archery Masters Championships. WA organises two international circuits. The Archery World Cup is for national teams, uses the discipline of target archery and runs from April to September. The Indoor Archery World Series is for individual archers (and mass participation: any licensed athlete can join), uses the discipline of indoor archery and runs from October to March. Bids to host events are accepted from national member associations, city authorities and event companies.

On a continental level, each continental federation is in charge of organising its respective championship, so the European federation organises the European Archery Championship. On a national level, each national federation organises a national championship, which is at the top of the national level. In this context, national federations make sure that the qualification system is the same for everybody by establishing a clear set of rules on a national level and ensuring they are respected. They further ensure that everyone has the same chance to qualify for the national championships. Each national association can enter a maximum of three athletes in each category and division for the European championship. Although national federations can decide on their selection process, the athletes are typically selected through ad hoc qualification competitions.

Solidarity mechanisms

Two main forms of solidarity mechanisms are identified:

- **The Olympic Solidarity department:** A department of the International Olympic Committee focused solely on growing sport, Olympic Solidarity funding is distributed for development projects through National Olympic Committees. World Archery's member associations can apply for financial aid for a range of projects including athlete support, coach education and the creation of a national sport system. Funding is distributed through world programmes, which are more generic, and continental programmes, managed by continental federation such as World Archery Europe, which are more customised for regional needs.
- **Equipment donations:** National archery federations that have the greatest shortage of equipment or an inability to access equipment for grassroots or elite archers can apply to World Archery to receive an equipment donation, which are made by possible by sponsors. Targets and facilities are not covered by the equipment donation programme. Donations are not always granted. Federations that submit an application for a donation must already have an approved strategic plan, detail how the donation will be used and report on the effect of the donation.

Autonomy and good governance

WA funding comes from sponsors or from the IOC, and they have autonomy to allocate these funds. In terms of governance, archery is based on clubs/regions electing their national representatives, which then elect their continental/international representatives and so on. The WA follows good governance practices, namely:

- Supervising the governance of all their national federations, and on a continental level on a number of matters - asking for the latest copy of their constitution, their general assembly minutes, their strategic plan, confirming that their accounting books are being audited externally, etc;
- If for any reason they do not comply with the requirements, WA tries to help them or in the worst case, suspends them (if they don't cooperate).

WA requires its members to report on their activities at least once every four years and encourages all national federations to develop and implement a strategic plan, covering areas including high-performance programmes, education, membership, facilities, events and promotion. A guide for archery federations to use when creating strategy called "Targeting Gold" is available for all members. Additional support is available from WA's member services department and the strategic planning and good governance committee.

Role of public sector

The link with the public educational system is important in different areas, for example to promote the practice of archery in schools, and in the funding of infrastructure – that is, making public facilities available to clubs (such as outdoor fields and gymnasiums that can be used in winter) since not many clubs can afford to have their own field of play. The federations and public entities are also together responsible for:

- Making sure that things stay within a good governance framework, that the money made available is spent correctly and not misused;
- Preventing practices that go against the common values of sports (e.g. match-fixing, doping, etc).

Example from Germany:³⁷⁹

- Partnership with the Ministry of Education. The German Shooting and Archery Federation (GSAF) has projects with schools since archery fits quite well with schools, from a security viewpoint - it's quite safe to handle. GSAF's partnerships with schools also represent an investment in the development of the sport - they train children in the hope of some becoming professional athletes or volunteers.
- Partnership with the Federal Ministry of the Interior. In addition to archery, GSAF also deals with the sport of 'shooting', which involves handling firearms. GSAF takes part in public discussions around the private ownership of firearms, and the prevention of rightwing radicalism (namely the Reichsbürger movement).

Role of volunteers

As a smaller sport, archery is significantly more reliant on the role of volunteers when compared to more developed sports, such as football or basketball. Reliance on the role of volunteers poses significant challenges for the development of the sport, and there are also stark difference among countries in the EU in terms of commitment levels: while countries with more access to financing (such as Germany, France, and Italy) are able to not only attract but retain more volunteers to work alongside a larger team of full-time dedicated employees, countries with less access to financing (such as Monaco and Cyprus) tend to face difficulties in finding and retaining volunteers, while at the same time lacking permanent staff. This poses some significant issues in terms of professionalisation and knowledge transfer within archery. How can smaller sports like archery build a structure that allows for a sort of continuity to be maintained and knowledge transfer secured, while still relying heavily on the role of volunteers? How can volunteers be better trained to make a long-lasting impact as staff involved in the sport's structure and not leave 'blind spots' behind? What role can national and extra-national (e.g., World Archery Federation) play in the training/professionalization of volunteers? These issues are further explored through the related case study "Archery: reliance on the role of volunteers and related challenges (EU level)" in the Annex.

Main trends that affect the evolution of Archery

The trend of commercialisation is seen in archery, though not as clearly as in other sports. In archery, commercialisation is happening in a light way, and does not challenge the ESM values that the sport is based on. For example, archery is definitely becoming more popular, for example with events being transmitted on public national linear TV in Germany.³⁸⁰ So the growing popularity of the sport rather helps to generate revenues and sustain the development of archery. World Archery Europe also seeks to develop its main event (European championships) as an offering to generate some TV rights revenues and develop its other activities such as para-archery.

³⁷⁹ Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the German Shooting and Archery Federation (GSAF), December 2021

³⁸⁰ Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the German Shooting and Archery Federation (GSAF), December 2021

Federations find it **increasingly hard to find volunteers** willing to commit to working for them, particularly in the long term. This might be due to the fact that people have other obligations, such as their families or jobs. As a result, nowadays, volunteer engagement tends to be more short-term.

Volunteers have also become **more demanding** in terms of what they can take from their volunteering experience - not only in terms of the "more reimbursement, single room accommodation" type of requests but in ways of recognition. They want to feel they are in a partnership relationship with the federations - not simply working for them, but *with* them. This has prompted federations to approach their relationships with volunteers more critically, asking themselves: "What do I expect? What do I give? What do I receive?"

This partnership relationship where both parties expect to gain something has put **volunteer training** programmes on the agenda of most federations. In order to recruit and retain volunteers, federations need to match their increasing demands. This often means providing education programs (webinars, workshops), where volunteers can develop valuable skills that they can then transfer to their personal and professional life – including management, community, social, and leadership skills.

The evolution of this trend and how it is affecting archery is further explored in this study through the case study "Archery: reliance on the role of volunteers and related challenges (EU level)" in the Annex.

Sport Fiche – Athletics

Study on the European Sport Model(s)

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

Date produced: March 2022

Sport fiches

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each fiche summarises the main features and trends that affect the evolution of the 15 selected sports at EU level and in different Member States. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews and the survey is included where relevant – this shows key features and evolving trends in relation to athletics and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Background

Athletics is a group of sporting events that involves competitive running, jumping, throwing and walking. Although these competitions are sometimes referred to as track and field, they are generally known under the umbrella term of athletics. Athletics is the oldest form of organised sport, having developed out of the most basic human activities, such as walking and running. Athletics has become 'the most international' of all sports, as nearly every country in the world engages in some form of athletics competition. Furthermore, the simplicity of the competitions and the lack of a need for expensive equipment contribute to the popularity of the sport in the world.

Athletics is mostly an individual sport, with the exception of relay races and competitions which combine athletes' performances for a team score, such as cross country. The most common types of athletics competitions are track and field, road running, cross country running, and racewalking.

Most countries send teams of men and women to the quadrennial Olympic Games and to the official World Championships of track and field. There are also several continental and intercontinental championships, such as the European, Commonwealth, African, Pan-American and Asian.

Main features of the Athletics Sport Model

The **organisational structure** of athletics is similar to other sports. It is governed by a international governing body called World Athletics (formerly known as the International Association of Athletics Federations IAAF). The body manages the standardisation of rules and regulations for the sports, certification of athletics facilities, world records and the organisation and sanctioning of the athletics competitions. World Athletics has a total of 214-member national federations divided into six areas associations in Asia, Africa, South America, North America, Central and Caribbean, Oceania and Europe.

The governing body in charge of the sport in Europe is called the European Athletics Association (or European Athletics). It has 51-member national federations (also members of World Athletics) and it is based in Lausanne, Switzerland. European Athletics organises and runs several championships and meetings across Europe, both indoors and outdoors. The European Athletics governance is split between five bodies: The Congress – which is the General Assembly of the Members; The Council which includes the executive board and its president; The Commissions; The Head Office; the European Athletics Association Court.³⁸¹

³⁸¹ <https://www.european-athletics.com/>

The National Federations are represented in the Congress where they have the right to vote. Federations are composed of local and regional clubs – completing thus the pyramid model specific to the majority of sports.

European Athletics manages the **organisation of competitions** across Europe. There are several official competitions organised by the governing body: European Athletics Championships, European Athletics Indoor Championships, European Cross-Country Championships, European Athletics U23, U20, U18, European Team Championships, European Race-Walking Cup, European Throwing Cup, European Mountain Running Championships/³⁸²

The European Athletics Championships have taken place every four years since 1934, with a few exceptions. Since 2010, they have been organised every two years, and when they coincide with the Summer Olympics, the marathon and racewalking events are not contested. From 2018, European championships not held in an Olympic year have formed part of the European Championships, a new quadrennial multi-sport event covering a number of different sports.

The European Athletics Team Championship (ETC) (previously known as the European Cup) is the world's premier team competition between nations, with promotion and relegation at stake across four leagues. In 2008, it was decided to change the competition and a new format with four leagues was created, which consist of 20 events for men and 20 for women. The Super League and the First League have 12 teams each, while the Second League and the Third League 8 and 14 respectively. Team scores are calculated by combination of men and women's points, rather than the previous individual male and female scores. Each year, three teams are relegated from the Super League and are replaced by three teams promoted from the First League. Two teams are relegated/promoted among First, Second and Third League teams. In 2018, it was decided to change again the competition format: the ETC was to be held every odd year, starting from 2021, with a Super-League of 8 countries only, and First and Second League of 12 countries. In the case that the host country is not qualified, a 9th country could compete in Super-League.

Like in other sports, athletics functions on the basis of **solidarity mechanisms** and redistribution of revenues from elite to grassroots levels. World Athletics, the international governing body of athletics, receives payments from the International Olympic Committee from the revenues secured through the Olympic Games (held every two years – alternating between Summer and Winter Games). These revenues are then used by World Athletics to pay National Federations and secure educational and other grassroots programmes to further develop the sport worldwide. World Athletics are one of three international federations in the top group for revenue distribution, along with the International Swimming Federation and the International Gymnastics Federation.³⁸³ However, survey respondents indicated that there was a lack of balance between the revenues and investment in the elite level of the pyramid and its redistribution to grassroots. The grassroots level in athletic is mostly funded by personal revenues and memberships.

In terms of **governance**, European Athletics organises every two years its General Assembly of the Member Federations. The so-called Congress is the supreme authority of the European Athletics Association. The Congress is also the forum for proposed Constitution amendments and changes which are voted upon. The Congress consists of the Council and delegates of the 51 Member Federations. Each Member Federation in good standing, according to the European Athletics Constitution, has one vote.³⁸⁴

European Athletics embedded their mission, values, intentions and their overall governance principles into a manifesto called "Your Sport for Life".³⁸⁵ The purpose of the

³⁸² <https://www.britannica.com/sports/athletics>

³⁸³ Michael Pavitt, 'World Athletics holding talks with IOC over Olympic revenue share', 2020 in [insidethegames.biz](https://www.insidethegames.biz), <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1093876/world-athletics-ioc-olympic-revenue>

³⁸⁴ <https://www.european-athletics.com/>

³⁸⁵ <https://www.european-athletics.com/european-athletics/who-we-are/your-sport-for-life?s=f>

manifesto is to provide the foundation for a shared understanding of the goals, beliefs and actions of European Athletics and also of their way to communicate. Therefore, the manifesto is not only destined to those entities closely associated with European Athletics and its governing committees, but also for all external stakeholders of the sport throughout Europe. It functions as a reminder of speaking with one voice for the sport.

The values promoted in the manifesto are competition, excellence, fair play, discipline, personal development, physical fitness, healthy lifestyle, equality, inclusiveness, integrity, unity, social and environmental responsibility, innovation. The mission of European Athletics is to grow the sport of athletics by leading, inspiring and enabling every European to enjoy a relationship with the sport and receive its benefits. These are closely in line with the promotion of a healthy European Sports Model.

The support of the **public sector** (especially through public funds) is very important for this sport. Public funding for athletics clubs generally covers around one third of their budget.³⁸⁶ Athletics is also one of the main sports practiced in schools, and is a mandatory sport in most EU countries.³⁸⁷ One of the main priorities of European Athletics is to increase the financial stability and operational competence of its members (the national federations). This translates into strategies and support measures to assist eligible federations in accessing European Union project funding for appropriate projects, but also in accessing support from their governments and other national agencies for the development of the sport including its facilities. In general, available funding streams at EU level support actions dedicated to increasing accessibility of individual to the sport at local and regional levels, to raise awareness (especially among young generation) of the benefits of practising sport, to further developing good governance principles, to combat discrimination and to promote social inclusion through sport.³⁸⁸

Like many other sports, athletics depends on **volunteers** at grassroots level. European Athletics believes that the value that volunteers bring into this sport is much higher than the value of the media contracts for this sport.³⁸⁹ Therefore, this resource must be well managed and renewed, particularly among young people. European Athletics' believes that strengthening the Athletics Community leads to athletics being recognised as offering relevance to individuals and society that goes beyond the elite pathway and showcase events. A stronger grassroots community would have better chances, via the various activities organised at local levels, in attracting the resources needed to strengthen the organisational structure at all levels.

Main trends that affect the evolution of Athletics

The COVID-19 pandemic and the series of public measures to stop the spread of the virus have affected the entire sport sector, including athletics. The various lockdown and isolation episodes posed great challenges to the sport, especially in terms of organising events and competitions and promoting them to large audiences. Therefore, digital transformation was a major focus of European Athletics' communications activities in 2020 and despite the cancellation and postponement of major events, sizable growth across all platforms was achieved, building on the **internationalisation of audiences** trend that dates back to 2016. European Athletics has achieved the following figures across their social media channels in 2020: 337,000 Facebook followers, 160,000 Instagram followers, 127,000 Twitter followers and 19,000 YouTube followers.³⁹⁰

In 2020, 21.3 million international viewers were reached across social media platforms. Moreover, there were 428,000 engagement with content and 6.6 million minutes of watch

³⁸⁶ Barget, E. & Chavinier-Réla, S. (2017). Analyse de la diversité des recettes des clubs sportifs amateurs : une perspective européenne. *Staps*, 116, 7-25. <https://doi.org/10.3917/sta.116.0007>

³⁸⁷ European Commission, European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Eurydice, Physical education and sport at school in Europe, Publications Office, 2015,

³⁸⁸ See for instance the Erasmus+ programme for sport

³⁸⁹ <https://www.european-athletics.com/european-athletics/who-we-are/your-sport-for-life?s=f>

³⁹⁰ European Athletics, Annual Review 2020, <https://directus.european-athletics.com/downloads/2b2c64ed-0b09-4234-811b-e49a93397b3f/Annual%20Review%202020.pdf>

time of content from the main competitions organised in 2020. Also, 2020 saw a rise of 27% in terms of video views across channels, reaching to 52.7.³⁹¹

Recently there has been an increase in the **commercialisation** activities in the sector of athletics in Europe. In 2015, a joint venture between the European Athletics and the Tridem Sports agency was created.³⁹² Titled the European Athletics Marketing AG and based in Lausanne, Switzerland the joint venture was created to act as a service company for the commercial strategies and sales activities of European Athletics, including sponsor account management and rights delivery. European Athletics is the sole shareholder of the company, with the federation maintaining ownership and control of its commercial properties. This joint venture paved the way for the European Athletics to create additional values and revenues from the events and activities.

Currently the European Federation has several long-term commercial partners such as: SPAR, Gruyere AOP, Toyo Tires, Getty Images or the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). SPAR International has been the principal sponsor of European Athletics since 1996. In 2019, a new deal was signed between the two entities that extended their partnership for 8 years until 2027.³⁹³ It was the first time that the contract was signed for such a long period of time which highlighted a major sign of commitment from the brand to facilitate healthy lifestyles through sport. EBU's support has always been focused on developing European Athletics into a more attractive product for television, spectators and athletes.

The **distribution of revenues** through solidarity mechanisms has also been enforced in past years. The introduction of the Athletics Olympic Dividend (AOD) by World Athletics in 2016 delivered US\$17.2m in new grant funding directly to Member Federations over 2016-2020.³⁹⁴ The AOD is a project-based grant designed to provide tailored support to meet Member Federations individual long-term strategic development needs. Athlete development accounted for almost a quarter of this spend over the four years, with staging competitions, education programmes, facilities and equipment, and youth and grassroots programmes accounting for the majority of the remaining funds.

Good governance was also reinforced in past years from the European governing body towards its members through a series of capacity-building activities. For example, a valuable addition to European Athletics' Education Programme were the eight High Performance Webinars which ran from October to December 2020. While the programme chiefly focuses on performance in athletics, it also covered aspects linked to post-Covid recovery and the organisational models to address the post-Covid situation, as well as clean sport and gender equality topics. The webinars were so well received that the series was extended to June 2021. In similar fashion, a series of free medical webinars were organised by European Athletics from November onwards targeted at medical experts, physios, sport scientists and medical staff of Member Federations.³⁹⁵

Moreover, public funding was unlocked to further improve and develop good governance in terms of doping prevention. As such, in 2019 the European Athletics and a network of nine partners led by the Agency for the Development of Athletics in Europe (ADAE) have secured a grant of €324,000 from the European Union to expand the European Athletics 'I Run Clean' anti-doping education programme to the grassroots of athletics throughout Europe.³⁹⁶

Another significant societal development took place in October 2020 linking athletics with social innovation practices. The European Commission awarded the Royal Spanish

³⁹¹ idem

³⁹² Mike Rowbottom, 'European Athletics creates new marketing company with Tridem Sports to boost revenue', in *insidethegames.biz*, 2015, <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1027040/european-athletics-creates-new-marketing-company-with-tridem-sports-to-boost-revenues>

³⁹³ <https://www.european-athletics.com/>

³⁹⁴ World Athletics, Annual Report and Accounts 2020, <https://worldathletics.org/news/press-releases/annual-report-accounts-2020>

³⁹⁵ European Athletics, Annual Review 2020, <https://directus.european-athletics.com/downloads/2b2c64ed-0b09-4234-811b-e49a93397b3f/Annual%20Review%202020.pdf>

³⁹⁶ idem

Athletics Federation (RFEA) €300,000 in to develop European Athletics' Dynamic New Athletics for use in schools and clubs. RFEA's Jungle Athletics project, which combines DNA's mixed-gender team competition format with digital technology, was one of just five proposals selected for funding from 141 submitted in response to the Commission's "Grassroots sport programmes and infrastructure innovation" call for proposals published in May 2020.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁷ Preparatory Action "Grassroots sport programmes and infrastructure innovation", <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/pppa-sport-2021-grassroots-innovation>

Sport Fiche – Basketball

Study on the European Sport Model(s)

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

Date produced: March 2022

Sport fiches

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each fiche summarises the main features and trends that affect the evolution of the 15 selected sports at EU level and in different Member States. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews and the survey is included where relevant – this shows key features and evolving trends in relation to basketball and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Background

Basketball is a fast-paced team sport in which two opposing teams compete on an indoor court and points are scored by shooting a basketball through the opposition team's hoop. Although the sport was invented in the USA, basketball is popular across much of Europe. The most prolific basketball teams represent a range of geographic areas in the EU, with teams from France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Spain competing at the highest level alongside teams from non-EU Member States such as Israel, Russia, Serbia, and Turkey.³⁹⁸ Its relative popularity is highest in the Baltic States, where in Lithuania it is the national sport.³⁹⁹ Basketball has featured at the Summer Olympics since 1936 for men and 1976 for women.⁴⁰⁰ In the recent 2020 Tokyo Olympics, a different format of the game (3x3 basketball) was introduced for both men and women, reflecting its importance as the largest urban team sport in the world.⁴⁰¹

Main features of the Basketball Sport Model

The **organisational structure** of basketball follows a pyramid structure and is centred around the international basketball federation, FIBA, who establishes the rules and regulations for basketball and organises international competitions at a global level.⁴⁰² Its European division, FIBA Europe, is responsible for regulating and developing basketball at a European level.⁴⁰³ FIBA Europe promotes, supervises, and directs international competition at the club and national team levels through a range of leagues and tournaments across men's, women's, junior, and disability basketball. This involves various organisational responsibilities such as appointing referees for European international fixtures.

The **system of competition** differs between national and European level. National basketball federations run their own league(s) and cup competition(s) within most Member States. These leagues are typically organised in a pyramidal structure with promotion and relegation between the top and lower divisions. A number of these leagues (11) are members of the Union of European Leagues of Basketball (ULEB) whose remit is to defend the rights and interests of the domestic leagues and their clubs.⁴⁰⁴ Player representatives are tasked with protecting player welfare in some Member States, though the extent to

³⁹⁸ EuroLeague Basketball (2022) *Teams*, <https://www.euroleaguebasketball.net/euroleague/teams/>

³⁹⁹ Pop, V. (2013). 'Everything is about basketball in Lithuania' in EU Observer, <https://euobserver.com/lithuania/120297>

⁴⁰⁰ Peter, N. (2021) 'History of basketball at Olympics: A tale of American domination' published by International Olympic Committee, <https://olympics.com/en/featured-news/olympic-basketball-history-dream-team-usa-soviet-union>

⁴⁰¹ International Olympic Committee (2022) *History of 3x3 Basketball*, <https://olympics.com/en/sports/3x3-basketball/>

⁴⁰² FIBA (2022). *Presentation*, <https://www.fiba.basketball/presentation>

⁴⁰³ FIBA (2022). *Organisation*, <https://www.fiba.basketball/europe/organisation>

⁴⁰⁴ ULEB (2021) <https://www.uleb.com/>

which they are involved varies. Player welfare is particularly established in Spain, for example, where the Spanish Players Association supports professional players from the top men's division by negotiating 4-year collective bargaining agreements between players and ACB which cover issues such as insurance and wages.⁴⁰⁵

In response to a change of format of the top European competition by FIBA, in 2000 a breakaway league was created and managed by ULEB. In the 2006-07 season, ownership of EuroLeague was transferred to Euroleague Commercial Assets (ECA).⁴⁰⁶ ECA is a private company who oversees two competitions (EuroLeague and EuroCup) in which some of the top European basketball teams compete.⁴⁰⁷ Unlike the national leagues, there is no longer promotion and relegation into or between ECA competitions, and instead places are based on licence agreements.⁴⁰⁸ The majority (11/18) of EuroLeague clubs are ECA shareholders and long-term licence holders. They input into decisions on the structure and schedule of the leagues and how broadcasting revenue is distributed. Some of this revenue is reinvested into talent development or clubs' own corporate social responsibility programmes.⁴⁰⁹

FIBA Europe generates most of its revenue from sponsorship and broadcasting revenue related to its top men's basketball pan-European club competitions, EuroBasket and European Champions League, along with European international fixtures. This revenue is redistributed via established **solidarity mechanisms** into a number of development initiatives, from financing top-level women's and youth basketball competition to grassroots programmes in schools.⁴¹⁰ National basketball federations also benefit from these solidarity mechanisms, and are able to apply for development funding from FIBA Europe. They can also apply for various grants and programmes offered on behalf of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).⁴¹¹ Most grassroots funding is distributed via these channels, though individual clubs may invest money into talent development initiatives of their own accord; the extent to which this happens varies across Member States.

The **autonomy** of FIBA Europe and national basketball federations has been challenged in recent years by the existence of EuroLeague. The main way this tension manifests itself is through the calendar of fixtures, as many EuroLeague clubs also compete in their national leagues. Since EuroLeague is not under FIBA's jurisdiction, clubs are not bound to release their players to play in international fixtures.⁴¹² This impacts the competitiveness of games such as international qualifiers and can put off spectators from watching if the top players are not on show, in turn impacting on FIBA Europe's ability to generate revenue from these fixtures to redistribute via solidarity mechanisms.

FIBA consider their model of **governance** to be strong and transparent, with a strong focus on regional representation and autonomy. All governance decisions pass through a Board whose members include representatives from 25 national basketball federations, including smaller nations.⁴¹³ Basketball agents must be licensed by FIBA and their licence subject to strict conditions. There is an independent body, the Basketball Arbitral Tribunal, which arbitrates any disputes between players, agents, coaches, or clubs.⁴¹⁴

The **role of the public sector** varies between Member States. Its main role is to fund the national basketball federations, and since basketball is often a popular sport across Member States it enjoys relatively high levels of public funding. Still, public funding levels were noted as declining due to austerity measures associated with the 2008 recession –

⁴⁰⁵ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Euroleague Basketball (2021) <https://www.euroleaguebasketball.net/euroleague-basketball/about>

⁴⁰⁸ Eurohoops (2019) *The EuroLeague changes in the summer of 2020* <https://www.eurohoops.net/en/euroleague/905734/the-euroleague-changes-in-the-summer-of-2020/>

⁴⁰⁹ Euroleague (2020) *About One Team*, <https://www.euroleague.net/one-team/about>

⁴¹⁰ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁴¹¹ FIBA (2021) *Olympic Solidarity*, <https://www.fiba.basketball/national-federations/olympic-solidarity>

⁴¹² Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁴¹³ FIBA (2021) *One FIBA*, <https://www.fiba.basketball/one-fiba>

⁴¹⁴ Parrish, R., et al. (2019) *Promoting and Supporting Good Governance in the European Football Agents Industry*, <https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/law/files/2019/10/Final-Report.pdf>

as was particularly the case in Greece – which left the sport increasingly needing to source commercial funding. The ways in which public funding is generated varies, and funds can be raised by the exchequer, lotteries, or even subsidies raised from taxing sports betting companies, as is the case in Greece.⁴¹⁵ In Spain, the public sector’s role goes beyond financing sport, and both central government and local councils have a responsibility for making sport accessible to the general population.⁴¹⁶

Whilst individual clubs and grassroots initiatives involve **volunteers**, there is no clear model for how volunteers are expected to support Basketball. Official recruitment of volunteers tends to support the organisation of major tournaments at international and club level such as the EuroLeague ‘final four’ or FIBA Europe’s EuroBasket. Volunteer involvement varies at a Member State level and can depend on the level of state involvement with the organisation of sport. For example, in Spain the state takes more of a leading role in organising grassroots sport, reducing the need for large-scale volunteer organisations.⁴¹⁷

Main trends that affect the evolution of Basketball

The evolution of EuroLeague has affected the **organisation of competitions** across European basketball. Most EuroLeague teams are direct or indirect members of their national basketball federations and all of them compete in their respective national competitions. Stakeholders report that this has created a gulf in competition within national leagues, due to the increased revenue-earning potential of competing in EuroLeague, where participating clubs are able to profit from larger sponsorship and broadcasting deals. So whilst the national leagues are open competitions with promotion and relegation, they are often dominated by EuroLeague teams which calls into question the extent to which these competitions are truly based on value of merit. Even if non-EuroLeague clubs win their national leagues, there is no longer an opportunity for them to progress into the EuroLeague and play at the highest level through their championship.⁴¹⁸ In 2016, FIBA formed a rival European club competition - the Basketball Champions League. This competition is based on value of merit and provides non-EuroLeague clubs to qualify and compete at a high level against teams from other European countries.

Still, audiences at national league matches are reported to have dipped in some countries in recent years.⁴¹⁹ Currently, EuroLeague clubs usually play their games during midweek to avoid clashes with national league fixtures which are typically played on weekends. However, FIBA Europe’s power to prevent fixtures across both leagues from clashing is limited. This tension is evident in international fixtures, where clashes mean that EuroLeague players are not always able to play for their countries. Stakeholders report that the absence of top players detracts from the value of those international fixtures, making them a less attractive proposition for fans and media broadcasters. This has a direct impact on **grassroots provision**, as FIBA Europe reinvest the revenue from these international competitions into grassroots basketball, and so the clash in fixtures indirectly limits the development of European basketball.

There are no established **horizontal solidarity mechanisms** between EuroLeague and the wider basketball ecosystem, with EuroLeague profits largely reinvested into its shareholder clubs.⁴²⁰ Stakeholders have therefore accused EuroLeague of profiting from its top talent (i.e. players, coaches, officials) without reinvesting into the development of future talent, therefore threatening the sustainability of the sport. A knock-on effect of

⁴¹⁵ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁴¹⁶ Puig, N., Martínez J., & García B. (2010) ‘*Sport policy in Spain*’, International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics, 2:3, 381-390, DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2010.519343, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19406940.2010.519343>

⁴¹⁷ Ibid

⁴¹⁸ Eurohoops (2019) *The EuroLeague changes in the summer of 2020*

<https://www.eurohoops.net/en/euroleague/905734/the-euroleague-changes-in-the-summer-of-2020/>

⁴¹⁹ Ting, T (2020) *Intrigues under the basket*, in ‘Frankfurter Rundschau’ <https://www.fr.de/sport/sport-mix/raenkespiele-unterm-korb-13537649.html>

⁴²⁰ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

this is that in order to compete with EuroLeague teams, other clubs are increasingly having to direct more revenue towards an elite level in an attempt to remain competitive with EuroLeague clubs, which consequently means diverting funds which would have otherwise been spent on grassroots basketball.⁴²¹ Owning a basketball club that does not compete in EuroLeague is a loss leader, according to stakeholders, who reflected that such clubs often only attract owners with a personal connection to the club for this reason.⁴²²

There is mixed opinion as to whether the creation of EuroLeague and the Basketball Champions League has led to an **internationalisation** of the sport. EuroLeague viewing figures show that its global audience is growing, and it has staged exhibition games in China to try to grow its audience.⁴²³ The absence of promotion and relegation in the EuroLeague has made investing in EuroLeague teams a more attractive proposition, as investors can feel confident in the scale and duration of their investments.⁴²⁴ Furthermore, the Basketball Champions League has recently attracted US investors which it hopes will lead to its own commercial growth.⁴²⁵

However, stakeholders reported that dual competition between ECA, FIBA, and national leagues increasingly devalues European club basketball because it makes it a confusing proposition for investors and broadcasters.⁴²⁶ Moreover, this investment mostly benefits those clubs who play in the top pan-European competitions. In contrast, smaller national league clubs struggle to attract investment or sponsorship because of limited prospects of progressing into these competitions. The popularity of EuroLeague has also negatively impacted broadcasting deals for national leagues.⁴²⁷

Overall, stakeholders considered the European Model of Sport to be very **relevant** to basketball, and certainly pertinent given the main threats and challenges to the sport. Whilst the shift towards closed competitions in basketball has seen European basketball move closer towards the American model of sport in recent years, stakeholders firmly believe this was not a model suited to European sport. This is because the American model is built around the school system and has a strong commercial focus, which was not seen as sustainable for the long-term sustainability of basketball as a mass participation sport. Instead, the privatisation of the top leagues within European basketball has reinforced the importance of a pyramidal structure, whereby clubs can progress between national leagues through promotion and relegation. Open competition was thought to be essential in clubs' ability to attract talented players and investment. In the short-term, coordination of fixtures and a centralised solidarity mechanism are both key priorities for stakeholders, who consider these to be crucial to the constructive coexistence between ECA and FIBA competitions.

⁴²¹ Ibid

⁴²² Ibid

⁴²³ Euroleague Basketball (2014) *Euroleague Basketball strengthens ties with China with new grassroots projects*, <https://www.euroleaguebasketball.net/euroleague-basketball/news/i/134174/euroleague-basketball-strengthens-ties-with-china-with-new-grassroots-projects>

⁴²⁴ Sport Business (2019) *Euroleague Basketball's great leaps forward*, <https://www.sportbusiness.com/2019/09/euroleague-basketballs-great-leaps-forward/>

⁴²⁵ Carp, S (2020) *Fiba lands US investment to galvanise Basketball Champions League*, in 'Sports Pro Media' <https://www.sportspromedia.com/news/basketball-champions-league-fiba-gcbh-euroleague/>

⁴²⁶ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁴²⁷ Ibid

Sport Fiche – Cycling

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Sport fiches

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Background

Cycling is an Olympic sport which is played both individually and in teams. Like fencing and athletics, cycling is amongst the rare sports that have always featured on the Olympic Programme.⁴²⁸ Track and Road Cycling made their Olympic debut in Athens in 1896. A hundred years later, Mountain Bike followed in the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996 while BMX racing, and more recently, BMX freestyle also became Olympic sports in 2008 and 2020, respectively.⁴²⁹ Cycling is very popular in Europe and is where almost all of professional cycling takes place. Europeans, particularly the French and Italians, have always dominated Olympic cycling, while Eastern European countries have also been successful at the Olympics, particularly in track cycling.⁴³⁰

Main features of the Cycling Sport Model

Cycling follows a pyramidal **organisational structure**, where the principle of one country - one federation applies. *Union Cycliste Internationale* (UCI) is cycling's world governing body, representing five confederations and 201 national federations (NFs).⁴³¹ According to its constitution, UCI's aim is to direct, develop, regulate, control and discipline cycling in all forms worldwide.⁴³² Interestingly, this also includes any and all forms of virtual/electronic cycling activities and competitions.⁴³³ UCI includes approximately 1,500 professional athletes and currently manages and promotes under its umbrella nine cycling disciplines: road cycling, track cycling, mountain biking, BMX racing, BMX freestyle, paracycling, cyclocross, trials and indoor cycling.⁴³⁴

In Europe, the sport's confederation is the *Union Européenne de Cyclisme* (UEC), which comprises of 51 NFs and some 850,000 athletes holding a license.⁴³⁵ UEC is the strongest confederation in cycling. In particular, UEC has the most voting delegates in UCI⁴³⁶ and the most members in UCI's commissions.⁴³⁷ This gives to UEC stronger voting powers in decisions relating to the sport. UCI also has an athlete's commission whose president is also a member of the Management Committee, i.e., the Committee with the most

⁴²⁸ Olympics.com (n.d.), *Road Cycling*, <https://olympics.com/en/sports/cycling-road/>

⁴²⁹ Olympics.com (n.d.), *Sports*, <https://olympics.com/en/sports/>

⁴³⁰ Olympics.com (n.d.), *Road Cycling*, <https://olympics.com/en/sports/cycling-road/>

⁴³¹ UCI.org (n.d.) *UCI*, <https://www.uci.org/>

⁴³² UCI (2021), *Union Cycliste Internationale Constitution*, <https://www.uci.org/regulations/3MyLDDrWJCJJ0BGGOFzOat#constitution-and-standing-orders>

⁴³³ Ibid

⁴³⁴ UCI (2018), *Agenda 2022, The cycling of tomorrow is built today*, <https://www.uci.org/cyclings-agenda-2022/20zIrXhazhxtIMRhclphxu>

⁴³⁵ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁴³⁶ UCI (2021), *Union Cycliste Internationale Constitution*, <https://www.uci.org/regulations/3MyLDDrWJCJJ0BGGOFzOat#constitution-and-standing-orders>, page 18

⁴³⁷ UCI.org (2021), *UCI renews its commissions and increases percentage of their women members*, <https://www.uci.org/pressrelease/the-uci-renews-its-commissions-and-increases-percentage-of-their-women/4h5ewkBryturhnUnJwPK67>

extensive powers as regards the management of the UCI and the regulation of cycling.⁴³⁸ In UEC, there is no athlete's commission, given the confederation's small size.⁴³⁹

Worldwide, cycling's **competition system** is open, and it is based on sporting merits. Broadly speaking, UCI organises events throughout the year, and athletes competing in these events can get points which are part of the qualification process of the Olympic Games.⁴⁴⁰

Cycling also benefits from **solidarity schemes**. In particular, UCI receives funding from the International Olympic Committee⁴⁴¹ and redistributes this funding to its confederations and national federations through solidarity programmes⁴⁴². Solidarity programmes offer in-kind as well as financial support to NFs with the aim to reduce inequalities. For example, in Europe, there is an annual solidarity scheme from UCI and UEC made-up of two parts:⁴⁴³

- One part dedicated to the education of riders, coaches, and referees (commissaires);
- One part dedicated to infrastructure projects.

The scheme is open to NFs based on a ranking system, in order to help the least developed federations to grow.⁴⁴⁴

The implementation and application of **good governance practices** are important to UCI and the confederation. UCI's Agenda 2022 outlines the four main pillars of its good governance practices including most notably "[...] (d) consolidating our principles of good governance and transparency to ensure that ethics are respected".⁴⁴⁵ Gender equality also plays a key role in the federations' good governance procedures, and UCI and UEC have amended their statutes to implement ambitious quotas to ensure female participation in governance positions.⁴⁴⁶ UEC also has its accounts audited (annually) and made public to NFs to ensure good governance.⁴⁴⁷

NFs remain **autonomous** to make their own decisions regarding the organisation of cycling at national level. UCI's 2020 Annual Report highlighted that member NFs, "*must manage their internal affairs with total independence and ensure that no third party interferes in their operations. They must remain autonomous and resist all political, religious and financial pressure which may infringe their commitment to abide by the Constitution of the UCI*".⁴⁴⁸

The **public sector** and National Olympic Committees (NOCs) support cycling in many Member States. For example, in Poland both government and the NOC provide financial support to cycling, while in the Ukraine it is just the NOC that financially supports the sport. As often these amounts cannot fully compensate for the expenses of the federations, federations are also getting support through seeking other revenue streams (including UCI's and the confederations' support).

⁴³⁸ UCI (2021), *Union Cycliste Internationale Constitution*, <https://www.uci.org/regulations/3MyLDDrWJCJJ0BGGOFzOat#constitution-and-standing-orders>, page 22

⁴³⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁴⁴⁰ uec.ch (n.d.), *Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games Qualification System*, https://www.uec.ch/resources/Olympics%20EuroGames/Tokyo_2020_Olympic_Games_Qualification_System_Road_Cycling_english.PDF

⁴⁴¹ UCI.org (2021), *UCI publishes its 2020 UCI Annual Report*, <https://www.uci.org/pressrelease/the-uci-publishes-its-2020-uci-annual-report/5Am7h0QBW85bWro7yzL2RR>

⁴⁴² UCI (n.d.), *UCI Solidarity Programme - Guidelines*, https://www.uec.ch/resources/solidarity/00_2020%20UCI%20Solidarity%20Programme%20Guidelines.pdf

⁴⁴³ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁴⁴⁴ UCI (2020). *UCI Annual Report 2020*, <https://assets.ctfassets.net/76117gh5x5an/6vcY4Oi10QENInBqoPOnxi/ce34be6a60bdeb394d93a680a69ebb68/2020-uci-rapport-annuel-inside-english-web.pdf>

⁴⁴⁵ UCI (2018), *Agenda 2022, The cycling of tomorrow is built today*, <https://www.uci.org/cyclings-agenda-2022/20zIrXhazhxtIMRhcIphxu>

⁴⁴⁶ UCI (2021), *Union Cycliste Internationale Constitution*, <https://www.uci.org/regulations/3MyLDDrWJCJJ0BGGOFzOat#constitution-and-standing-orders>

⁴⁴⁷ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁴⁴⁸ UCI (2021), *Union Cycliste Internationale Constitution*, <https://www.uci.org/regulations/3MyLDDrWJCJJ0BGGOFzOat#constitution-and-standing-orders>, page 6

Cycling relies on the support of **volunteers**. Excluding some major events run by professional organisations (e.g., Tour of Italy, Tour de France), the majority of cycling events are run by volunteers, who are often eager to contribute to events which have a long tradition. In addition, in Europe, most members of the federations are volunteers (e.g., members of the UEC management committee).

Amongst all features, **good governance** stands out as a particularly **relevant** feature of the European Sport Model to cycling. Good governance has been referenced by stakeholders as a very important element that can help UEC build trusting relationships with NFs and the general public, with the view to promoting sports for all. Moreover, **solidarity mechanisms** and the need to even disparities between NFs through supporting those most in need also appears to be a very relevant feature of the cycling sport model.

Main trends that affect the evolution of Cycling

This section summarises the main trends that are seen to be affecting the evolution of cycling.

The first trend affecting the evolution of cycling is **internationalisation**. The sport is growing and becoming increasingly international both in terms of **participation** and **audiences**. For example, Africa now has 54 federations, almost 40 more than what it had some 20 years ago.⁴⁴⁹ At the same time, cycling is growing in terms of viewership. For example, the sport is becoming popular in overseas countries and often in some unexpected countries, such as the Philippines and Peru. At the same time, UEC launched in 2021 the UEC TV to further internationalise the sport.

One interesting trend is that within cycling, **cyclocross** is becoming increasingly popular. Cyclocross is one of the few cycling disciplines where men and women can compete under the same rules, and where underage categories can include mixed teams.⁴⁵⁰ Currently, the discipline is most popular in Belgium and France, while recently, it has caught the attention of countries such as Portugal, which previously had no cyclocross tradition. The discipline is also interesting from a commercial point of view, as it offers exposure to sponsors during the otherwise quiet winter months.⁴⁵¹ UEC is aware of these developments and has launched in 2021 a European Cup on cyclocross.

All cycling **competitions** are likely to remain under the sport's pyramidal organisational structure. This is due to the fact that the cycling federations do not allow and immediately suspend athletes who take part in an event that does not fall under the UCI's calendar. These competitions are important, as they help to create revenues which then trickle down via **solidarity schemes** to the NFs. Such emerging trends in solidarity schemes have been observed in the Member States. For example, UEC in 2022 will organise a training camp in Portugal for track, road and mountain bike riders in the UCI's World Cycling's Center (WCC) in the country. In addition, UEC plans to organise similar training activities for coaches and referees. For all of these activities, participants will come from countries where cycling federations are not highly developed.

In terms of **participation habits**, cycling increased during the pandemic, with suppliers struggling to keep up with demand for bikes and many European cities adding new bicycle lanes or expanding existing ones.⁴⁵² For example, Brussels installed 40 km of new cycling paths in its regional territory,⁴⁵³ Paris added hundreds of kilometres of pop-up cycle lanes along the *Rue du Rivoli*, while other cities such as London added designated bike lanes

⁴⁴⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid

⁴⁵¹ Cyclist.co.uk (2021), *The rise of cyclocross*, <https://www.cyclist.co.uk/in-depth/9089/the-rise-of-cyclocross>. Also based on information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁴⁵² bbc.com (2020), *The new bicycle boom of 2020*, <https://www.bbc.com/future/bespoke/made-on-earth/the-great-bicycle-boom-of-2020.html>

⁴⁵³ brusselstimes.com (2020), *Brussels rolls out 40 km of cycle paths*, <https://www.brusselstimes.com/brussels/108649/brussels-rolls-out-40km-of-cycle-paths-to-ready-lockdown-phase-out>

along the famous Hyde Park.⁴⁵⁴ This is very positive for the sport, which aims to incorporate people practicing cycling as a hobby into the federations (i.e., as licensed members).

Finally, **societal trends** such as developments in **gender equality** and **sustainability** are also seen to be positively having an impact on cycling. In terms of gender equality, cycling is making progress in relation to both equality in participation and governance.

In terms of **equality in participation**, as part of UCI's Agenda 2022, cycling aims to give women equal opportunities to qualify for the UCI World Championships (2020), promote the phasing-in of equal prize money for men and women (2019-2022), draft a strategic plan in collaboration with the UCI WCC to enable the creation of women-only training courses on cycling professions (2019-2022), among others. In addition, cycling made a series of progressive steps to improve the employment conditions of women riders. These include introduction for female athletes of a minimum salary, a maximum number of days of racing, sickness cover, maternity cover, life insurance, increased prize money, etc.⁴⁵⁵

Progressive steps have also been taken to improve **equality in governance**. In particular, UCI has amended its constitution to promote more women in governance positions by setting ambitious targets. For example, continental confederations have amended their statutes to ensure that women account for at least 25% of the members of their Management Committees (2019) while at the same time women now represent between a quarter and a third of UCI's Management Committees and Commissions.⁴⁵⁶ In addition, a similar amendment was made to include the obligation that at least one of the Vice Presidents is a woman (from a total of four).⁴⁵⁷

In light of the above, it should be noted that UCI was the first world sports governing body to receive the EDGE Move Certification for Gender Equality, the leading global assessment and business certification for gender equality.⁴⁵⁸ Moreover, UCI have also improved their Code of Ethics⁴⁵⁹ to protect athletes from any form of harassment, introduced a Charter of Gender Equality⁴⁶⁰ in addition to enforcing minimum levels of live TV coverage for all UCI Women's World Tour events.

Moreover, UCI is a signatory of the United Nations Sports for Climate Action⁴⁶¹ and has recently introduced a comprehensive **sustainability** strategy in 2021.⁴⁶² As part of this strategy, the organisation aims to measure its environmental and social impacts against the sustainability objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.⁴⁶³ Some forthcoming developments include the development of a carbon calculator tool to

⁴⁵⁴ bbc.com (2020), *The new bicycle boom of 2020*, <https://www.bbc.com/future/bespoke/made-on-earth/the-great-bicycle-boom-of-2020.html>

⁴⁵⁵ UCI.org (2021), *Women in cycling*, <https://www.uci.org/article/women-in-cycling-worldwide-initiative-to-boost-equality-and-diversity-in-cycling/6W6Km3IWEg5OXA8ZjSTVGG>

⁴⁵⁶ UCI.org (2021), *UCI renews its commissions and increases the percentage of their women*, <https://www.uci.org/pressrelease/the-uci-renews-its-commissions-and-increases-percentage-of-their-women/4h5ewkBryturhnUnJwPK67>

⁴⁵⁷ UCI (2021), *The UCI armed with a comprehensive plan for sustainable development and commits to better representation of women on its Management Committee*, <https://www.uci.org/pressrelease/the-uci-armed-with-a-comprehensive-plan-for-sustainable-development-and-commits-to-better-representation-of-women-on-its-management-committee/1k3WsRSbu4oPjdObVWtrqe>

⁴⁵⁸ UCI.org (2022), *UCI breaks ground for gender equality in sport with new level of edge*, <https://www.uci.org/pressrelease/uci-breaks-ground-for-gender-equity-in-sport-with-new-level-of-edge/4eNHpy2yrlHAssHQCPdt8q>

⁴⁵⁹ UCI (2018), *Code of ethics*, https://archive.uci.org/docs/default-source/uci-official/ucicodeofethics_english.pdf?sfvrsn=97e4670e_18

⁴⁶⁰ UCI (n.d.), *Gender Equality Charter*, <https://assets.ctfassets.net/76117gh5x5an/slhs17hF9RU6DUxBa0giP/783a61466c51cfa9adbf33a94a3b3cc/gender-equality-charter-uci-administration-policy.pdf>

⁴⁶¹ unfccc.int (n.d.), *United Nations Sports for Climate Action*, <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/sports-for-climate-action/participants-in-the-sports-for-climate-action-framework#eq-1>

⁴⁶² UCI.org (n.d.), *Sustainability*, <https://www.uci.org/sustainability/2aT8Ri5QQ2Nr67iwrEN8K4>

⁴⁶³ UCI (2021), *The UCI armed with a comprehensive plan for sustainable development and commits to better representation of women on its Management Committee*, <https://www.uci.org/pressrelease/the-uci-armed-with-a-comprehensive-plan-for-sustainable-development-and-commits-to-better-representation-of-women-on-its-management-committee/1k3WsRSbu4oPjdObVWtrqe>

be used by cycling stakeholders by 2022, a life cycle cost analysis of the needed work to improve energy efficiency and sustainability of UCI facilities (starting from 2022) and others.⁴⁶⁴ UCI is also taking part in international campaigns: the federation is partner of the Cycling Cities Campaign launched at COP26 and alongside other organisations, aims to promote safe cycling lanes as a way to contribute to the vision of a zero-carbon future.⁴⁶⁵ Finally, in Europe initiatives such as using Electric Vehicles (EVs) on tracks, distributing less plastic to athletes, having dedicated spots for litter during races, as well as reducing paperwork in preparing for events are also small steps that have recently been taken towards contributing to sustainability.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁴ UCI.org (n.d.), *Sustainability*, <https://www.uci.org/sustainability/2aT8Ri5QQ2Nr67iwrEN8K4>

⁴⁶⁵ UCI.org (2021), *UCI joins global coalition calling on governments to boost cycling levels to reduce carbon emissions*, <https://www.uci.org/article/uci-joins-global-coalition-calling-on-governments-to-boost-cycling-levels-to/5kA8wVHNRGEUulCg426IKo>

⁴⁶⁶ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

Sport Fiche – Football

Study on the European Sport Model(s)

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

Date produced: March 2022

Sport fiches

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each fiche summarises the main features and trends that affect the evolution of the 15 selected sports at EU level and in different Member States. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews and the survey is included where relevant – this shows key features and evolving trends in relation to football and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Background

Football is a team sport played by approximately 250 million players in over 200 countries, making it the world's most popular sport. Football's popularity across Europe is also unparalleled and is the top sport across the European Union. The success and model of European football is considered a European success story. Football is also an Olympic sport, and it was the first team sport included in the Olympic Games.

Football is governed internationally by the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) which organises World Cups for men and women every four years. It is the most prestigious men's football tournament in the world, and the most widely viewed and followed sporting event in the world, exceeding the Olympic Games.⁴⁶⁷

The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) is the governing body for football in Europe, with 55 national association members. Every four years UEFA organises men's and women's European Championships (the "EURO") national team tournaments that are landmark moments of European unity and national identity. The most prestigious competitions in club football are the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Women's Champions League, which attract an extensive television audience throughout the world. The final of the men's tournament has been, in recent years, the most-watched annual sporting event in the world.

Main features of the Football Sport Model

The **organisational structure** of football follows a pyramidal model. UEFA – the Union of European Football Associations – is the governing body of European football. It is an association of associations, a representative democracy, and is the umbrella organisation for 55 national football associations across Europe. It is a Confederation recognised by FIFA (article 3 of UEFA statutes).

Its objectives are, among other things, to deal with all questions relating to European football, to promote football in a spirit of unity, solidarity, peace, understanding and fair play, without any discrimination on the part of politics, race, religion, gender or any other reason, to safeguard the values of European football, promote and protect ethical standards and good governance in European football, maintain relations with all stakeholders involved in European football, and support and safeguard its member associations for the overall well-being of the European game. UEFA and its member associations embody a European model that is founded on open competitions, solidarity and redistribution to ensure the sustainability and development of the game and the promotion of European values and social outcomes.

⁴⁶⁷ Alana Glass (2019). "FIFA Women's World Cup Breaks Viewership Records". Forbes, 21 October 2019

At European level, UEFA manages European competitions (both clubs and national teams' competitions such as the European Championships or the Nations League). UEFA has a long history of cooperating with representative organisations of clubs (European Club Association), leagues (European Leagues), players (FIFPro Division Europe) and fans (SD Europe, Football Supporters Europe) including under specific protocols and MOUs. Cooperation is also ensured via the Professional Football Strategy Council (PFSC), which deals with issues of strategic importance to professional football in Europe. The PFSC reports directly to the UEFA Executive Committee and exercises a major influence on its decision-making.⁴⁶⁸

The European **system of competition** is organised around a clear open and hierarchical model, with three main competitions (Champions League, Europa League and the newly launched Europa Conference League). One important feature of this model is the transfer of eliminated clubs from the UEFA Champions League to the UEFA Europa League, and from the UEFA Europa League to the UEFA Europa Conference League at certain stages (mainly group stages).

Within this open model, the UEFA club competition access structure provides access to qualifying rounds for clubs from all 55 National Associations and just under 240 clubs which qualify through their domestic league performances for UEFA qualifying and/or group stages.

The pyramid model and promotion/relegation system are clearly applied at national level as well, with only small differences around the number of national and regional level leagues.

Solidarity mechanisms are particularly important in football. The revenues generated from the UEFA Club Competitions and UEFA National Team Competitions are used to fund European football's solidarity objectives, whether at continental or national level. Established financial solidarity mechanisms in football help to establish, maintain and reinforce the necessary link between professional and amateur sport, as well as financing less profitable competitions (e.g., women's and youth tournaments) which are essential for the long-term development of and access to sport. The financial support flowing throughout European football through the established pyramid ensures the proper development and training of referees, coaches and football administrators, training of sports doctors, fighting against anti-doping, and ensuring players receive appropriate education and health support. It provides assistance to national associations in the form of business development, club licensing implementation, and improved professionalisation. It funds social and societal programmes and campaigns such as anti-racism campaigns, programmes to promote inclusivity and football opportunities for marginalised groups.

The revenues that UEFA club competitions bring across the whole European football pyramid is spread as follows across the last ten seasons: seventeen different countries received more than €200 million in UEFA club distributions, and a further fourteen countries received between €50-200 million. Even in the lowest ranked UEFA National Associations where players are often semi-professional, every country received more than €10m across the last ten seasons⁴⁶⁹. With solidarity increasing and UEFA Europa League and Europa Conference League prize money more than quadrupling in ten seasons this broad revenue distribution is set to continue.

Furthermore, the UEFA Champions League is a major source of funds for other competitions and youth development. For 2021-24 the level of cross subsidy from the UEFA Champions League to the UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League

⁴⁶⁸ UEFA (2020) UEFA Statutes - Rules of Procedure of the UEFA Congress and Regulations governing the Implementation of the UEFA Statutes. Edition 2020.

https://documents.uefa.com/v/u/_CJ2HRiZAu~Wo6ytlRy1~g

⁴⁶⁹ The only exceptions were Kosovo whose clubs joined UEFA part way during the decade and Liechtenstein who receive less as there is no domestic league, only a national cup.

is projected at more than €400m. In addition to these cross subsidies, from 2021/22 between €245m and €280m will be paid in direct solidarity to clubs (€105m for qualifying round payments and €140m-€175m for youth investment to non-participating clubs).

The values increase each commercial cycle but in the last ten seasons just under €967 million has been paid out for 1,660 different non-participating clubs and youth academies further down the pyramid.

Overall, UEFA returns approximately 95% of UEFA club competition revenues (meaning all revenues other than the costs of organising competitions) back into football.

UEFA's HatTrick Programme is one of the largest solidarity and development programmes established by a sports body. UEFA provides solidarity payments (roughly €270 million per year, and €242 million for 2019-2020), which are made available to member associations to develop their infrastructure, cover their running costs, to contribute to their running costs, as well as to clubs where players take part in national team football. The HatTrick programme also provides for yearly solidarity payments in favour of member associations (€750,000 as a solidarity payment to cover the running costs of the member association and good governance projects, and €1,150,000 maximum in annual incentive payments linked to good governance criteria).⁴⁷⁰

Beyond UEFA's action, it is worth noting that in 2020, FIFA and FIFPRO, the World Players' Union, reached an agreement to establish the FIFA Fund for Football Players (FIFA FFP), which aims to provide financial support to players who have not been paid and have no chance of duly receiving the wages agreed with their clubs. FIFA has set aside \$16 million for the fund up to 2022, with this allocation to be divided as follows: \$3m in 2020, \$4m in 2021 and \$4m in 2022, plus a further \$5m for the retroactive protection of players' salaries for the period between July 2015 and June 2020.⁴⁷¹

In terms of **autonomy**, partnerships between public authorities and football associations requires a balanced approach and ad hoc analyses. The Macolin convention, dealing with important issues such as the fight against match-fixing and betting-related is an important milestone in this respect.⁴⁷² The discussion leading to the convention made clear the importance of partnerships between public authorities and sport federations to efficiently tackle such issues, especially to ensure adequate investigative powers are mobilised.

On sport-related matters, several subjects can benefit from joint political statements and a common voice between sport federations and public authorities. Financial fair play and the topic of homegrown players are good examples of ad hoc joint interest between UEFA and the European Commission, for instance.⁴⁷³

As one of the main leading sport federations, UEFA has a standard-setting role in terms of **good governance** and has multiplied its efforts across a number of different criteria. This is reflected in recent amendments to the UEFA Statutes, including the introduction of term limits for the UEFA president and the members of the UEFA Executive Committee, the addition of two full member positions on the UEFA Executive Committee to representatives of the European Club Association (ECA) and of one full member position on the UEFA Executive Committee to a representative of the European Leagues (EL). The amendments also foresee strengthening the UEFA Governance and Compliance Committee through the

⁴⁷⁰ UEFA (2021) UEFA Financial report 2019-2020: https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/0268-1215a6daaf78-a6ca16cd1df1-1000/04_uefa_financial_report_2019-20_en.pdf

⁴⁷¹ FIFA (2021) Manual on "TPI" and "TPO" in football agreements. <https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/6413cca6d9bc5032/original/MANUAL-ON-TPI-AND-TPO-IN-FOOTBALL-AGREEMENTS-Dec-2021-Update.pdf>

⁴⁷² Council of Europe (2014) Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions Magglingen/Macolin, 18.IX.2014

⁴⁷³ Information retrieved from stakeholder consultation with UEFA, carried out in October 2021.

appointment of two additional, independent members, as well as transparency, ethics and good governance objectives (article 2 and 3bis).⁴⁷⁴

UEFA also specifies some good governance principles for its national associations. This is set out in a circular letter (No. 58/2018) on 12 October 2018, which includes key principles such as: stakeholder involvement, promotion of ethical values, integrity and good governance, accountability, transparency and the promotion of volunteer programmes.⁴⁷⁵

The **role of the public sector** in football is marked by interrelationships: while a lot of sport federations rely heavily on public funding, national and international football federations rather tend to work together with public authorities. At European level, UEFA has become a regular interlocutor with the European Union (EU).

The European Commission and UEFA signed their first Arrangement for Cooperation⁴⁷⁶ in 2014, aiming to strengthen relations between the EC and UEFA based on cooperation towards European priorities and in key policy areas. A new partnership is currently being developed focusing on Europe's greatest challenges, priority goals and EU's strategic objectives, for example with the UEFA Respect + EU Green Deal joint TV advert "Every Trick Counts" launched in 2021 to promote awareness of the climate emergency and inspire more people to take action to protect the environment. Over the next three years, this EU-UEFA clip will be advertised on television, social media and in football stadiums in 57 countries during certain UEFA club and national team competitions including the men's and women's UEFA Champions League matches. A similar Memorandum of Understanding also exists between UEFA and the Council of Europe.⁴⁷⁷

Main trends that affect the evolution of Football

Football is a global sport, and the **internationalisation** of football has been a growing influence on the sport over many decades, in particular in relation to ownership of and investment in clubs. In certain sports, survey respondents note that by and large the recent influx of foreign investment into European professional sport has been positive, for example leading to better competitions and expanded audiences. However, in the case of football, there are concerns that the increasing internationalisation of club sport and clubs' focus on strengthening their global fan base may pose a threat to the idea of 'supporting your local club' or may compromise clubs' focus on its local support base and local identity. The increasing activities and influence of private equity and venture capital interests in European football is also influencing the practices in organising sport competitions as it is increasing the pressure for commercially driven club owners and financial backers to favour totally or partially closed competition structures (to increase their own revenues) in contrast to the accepted principles of the European Sports Model.

Mobility of players is also an important component of football, and the transfer activity of professional football players in 2020 was still high despite the pandemic, with a total of 17,077 international transfers. This represents a decrease of 5.4% compared to 2019, while still slightly higher than 2018.⁴⁷⁸ The high number of transfers and related fees is an

⁴⁷⁴ UEFA (2020) UEFA Statutes - Rules of Procedure of the UEFA Congress and Regulations governing the Implementation of the UEFA Statutes. Edition 2020.

https://documents.uefa.com/v/u/_CJ2HRiZAu~Wo6ytlRy1~g

⁴⁷⁵ UEFA (2018) Circular letter (No. 58/2018). 12 October 2018 and Law in Sport (2019) A guide to UEFA's Good Governance Reform. 17 January 2019

⁴⁷⁶ Commission Decision of 14.10.2014 adopting the Arrangement for Cooperation between the European Commission and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), C(2014) 7378 final

⁴⁷⁷ Council of Europe and UEFA (2018) Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and The Union of European Football Associations. 30 May 2018. Available at:

https://www.uefa.com/MultimediaFiles/Download/uefaorg/General/02/56/17/27/2561727_DOWNLOAD.pdf

⁴⁷⁸ FIFA (2021) FIFA Transfer Market system. FIFA Global Transfer Market Report 2020

integral part of the football economy and generates important redistribution effects across the football pyramid, but also arguably leads to a concentration of talent and resources.⁴⁷⁹

The effects of **commercialisation** of football are manifold. While we cannot capture all dimensions here, an important point was raised by survey respondents on the challenges of redistribution of resources to amateur sport or sport for disabled and vulnerable groups from remote regions, not reinvesting in creation of sport infrastructure. In some countries this means values-based sport organisations do not receive enough public funding and do not benefit sufficiently from solidarity mechanisms.

Another important trend is the rising popularity of Women's football, which is enjoying larger and larger crowds and TV audiences both in club and national team competitions. DAZN signed a four-year deal with UEFA ahead of the 2021/22 season, which will see all matches from the European elite women's club soccer tournament simulcast for free on a dedicated YouTube channel for the first two seasons of the contract. As the women's game continues to gain in popularity, the Champions League has become the competition of interest for European fans. Barcelona's victory over Real Madrid in the UEFA Women's Champions League at the Camp Nou on 30 March 2022 was played in front of 91,533 fans, setting a new attendance record for a women's match. The game not only set records for attendance but also drew DAZN's biggest live YouTube audience since securing the competition's global rights.⁴⁸⁰

The 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup in France generated record viewership: A total of 993 million people watched it on TV, with a further 482 million accessing it via digital platforms. The final alone was watched live by 260 million viewers, including 14.3 million in the United States, a country where men's football is less popular than other team sports. Indeed, the 2019 Women's World Cup final was more popular among US viewers than the men's final in 2018, with the women's game drawing 22% more audience.⁴⁸¹

Practices in **organising competitions** in European football align strictly with the core principles of the European sports model, including in terms of openness, sporting merit and the central role of governing bodies. This has been reconfirmed by the wide opposition that met the failed European Super League closed league breakaway attempt by the owners of 12 elite clubs in April 2021. The super league attempt was highly controversial, causing significant public and political backlash over its potential impact on the overall European football ecosystem (including domestic leagues) and bringing concerns regarding the principle of open competitions to the fore. Claims made by the leaders of the European Super League project that they would triple solidarity were widely rejected and criticised as wildly misleading in the 2021 European Club Football Landscape report.⁴⁸² Most of the club owners and leaders involved and even the project's financial backers⁴⁸³ quickly abandoned the project. Whilst three club leaders still continue to promote the project, there are growing calls on national governments and the EU, driven by fans and citizens movements to safeguard the model of European football and to block against further super league attempts in EU law.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁷⁹ KEA (2018) An update on change drivers and economic and legal implications of transfers of players. Final Report to the DG Education, Youth, Culture and Sport of the European Commission, March 2018.

⁴⁸⁰ Rory Jones (2022) Barcelona's Women's Champions League win over Real Madrid sets records for DAZN. Sports Pro Media, 1 April 2022 <https://www.sportspromedia.com/news/barcelona-real-madrid-womens-champions-league-dazn-youtube-viewership/>

⁴⁸¹ Deloitte (2020) Women's sports gets down to business: On track for rising monetization. TMT Insights 2021. <https://www2.deloitte.com/xe/en/insights/industry/technology/technology-media-and-telecom-predictions/2021/womens-sports-revenue.html>

⁴⁸² European Club Football Landscape Report 2021, https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/026a-128c5dffdb5f-64d49e6e5300-1000/210615_ecfl_pandemic_eng.pdf

⁴⁸³ Jasper Jolly (2021) JP Morgan 'misjudged' football fans over European Super League. The Guardian, 23 Apr 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/apr/23/jp-morgan-misjudged-football-fans-over-european-super-league>

⁴⁸⁴ Amital Winehouse (2022) Fans group launches campaign to block Super League breakaways through EU law. The Atlantic, 26 March 2022 <https://theathletic.com/news/fans-group-launch-campaign-to-block-super-league-breakaways-through-eu-law/IpXep0tneF9n/>

Another aspect to consider in the practices of organising competitions is the International Match Calendar which establishes the frequency of matches and competitions in a coherent and consensual way. It is seen as imperative for the good functioning and positive and healthy development of football and its players, as well as potential impact on and positive co-existence with other sports, that multi-stakeholder – including governing bodies and representative organisations of players, clubs, leagues and fans - consultation and decisions continue to govern the frequency of international sporting events. In this regard, a unilateral and ultimately unsuccessful campaign by FIFA in 2021-2022 to push proposals to hold the World Cup every two years was met with a broad opposition from European football stakeholders, European public authorities and other international sports organisations, including the IOC.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁵ Associated Press (2022) Biennial World Cup is a 'threat' to football, all other sports. 3 February 2022 <https://www.espn.com/soccer/fifa-world-cup/story/4584810/biennial-world-cup-is-a-threat-to-football-all-other-sports-ioc-president>

Sport Fiche – Handball

Study on the European Sport Model(s)

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

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Sport fiches

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each fiche summarises the main features and trends that affect the evolution of the 15 selected sports at EU level and in different Member States. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews and the survey is included where relevant – this shows key features and evolving trends in relation to Handball and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Background

Handball is an Olympic team sport in which two teams of seven players each pass a ball using their hands with the aim of throwing it into the goal of the other team. It is played globally and the sport is managed by the International Handball Federation (IHF) formed in 1946 which, as of 2016, has 197 member federations. The sport is most popular in Europe, and European countries have won all medals except one in the men's world championships since 1938. In the women's world championships, only two non-European countries have won the title: South Korea and Brazil.⁴⁸⁶

Handball is the most played indoor sport in most European countries and continues to rapidly increase in popularity. The European Handball Federation (EHF) was founded on 17th November 1991 in Berlin, Germany, and is the umbrella organisation for European handball. Handball is particularly popular across several large handball countries such as Denmark, France, Norway, Spain, Sweden, along with most Central-Eastern Europe States (such as Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, and Romania) but many other smaller countries are strong contenders.⁴⁸⁷ The game also enjoys popularity in East Asia, North Africa and parts of South America.

Main features of the Handball Sport Model

The system of competition follows a clear hierarchy between different competitions and a promotion/relegation system used at national level (more details below). At a European level, three European club competitions are organised with a similar structure for men and women competitions, consisting of:

1. European Champions leagues (16 teams spread in two groups; first two teams of each group qualify for quarter finals; teams ranked 3-6 go to playoffs and then quarter finals then knock-out rounds until the finals);
2. EHF European League (32 teams, with one knock-out round, then four groups of six teams each phase qualifying the best for a last 16 round, then knock-out rounds until the finals);
3. EHF European Cup (50 teams with knock-out rounds).

The IHF manages the main **solidarity mechanisms**, taking the form of development aid (financial support to handball infrastructures, club developments, support to trainers, etc). Altogether it spent around €2 million on this across the globe. The IHF also provided exceptional support during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the following measures for both 2021 men and women Senior World Championships:

⁴⁸⁶ www.ihf.info and IHF (2020) IHF triannual report 2017-2019: https://www.ihf.info/sites/default/files/2020-01/IHF%20Activity%20Report%202017-2019_E.pdf

⁴⁸⁷ <https://www.eurohandball.com/>

- Advancement of the qualification bonus paid to qualified National Federations
- Advancement of the down payment of the host fee to the organisers
- Increase the players compensation by 50% at both events, transferred through National Federations to clubs

Article 11 of IHF regulations also specifies the compensation for transfers of players as well, with education compensation (ranging from CHF 500 to CHF 1,500) for players transferred from an amateur club to a professional one.⁴⁸⁸

A plan for **good governance** was put forward by the EHF as part of its 2020 annual report, following a set of key principles: democratic structures and transparent decision-making procedures; ensuring integrity; and maintenance of high ethical standards. The issues of sustainability and the creation of CSR programmes are also envisioned (focusing around the people, planet and profit principles).⁴⁸⁹ The EHF is also a signatory of the pledge on good governance developed by the ERASMUS+ project GoodGovernanceSport project.⁴⁹⁰

At national level, France is one of the few countries where professional handball players (men and women) have signed a collective bargaining agreement stipulating minimal rules for consecutive days of rest, minimal wages, safety protocols, etc, and where players have more influence in the decision-making processes for the organisation of competitions.⁴⁹¹ Additionally, the development plan for the French Handball federation foresees the involvement of different stakeholders with the co-development of actions between the federation, the handball leagues, clubs and relevant committees (regional leagues).⁴⁹²

In Denmark, good governance principles are generally applied (transparency, regular communications, clear allocation of roles and responsibilities, involvement of different stakeholders albeit without decision-making powers). Gender equality is also high on the agenda and women handball is also a leading sport in Denmark.⁴⁹³

National examples highlight the important role of the **public sector** particularly as a source of funding support. In France public subsidies represent on average 23% of the budget of top clubs. Cities and metropolitan areas are by far the main funders, with €20 million invested by cities and metropolitan areas for the latest year where data is available (2018).⁴⁹⁴

Similarly in Denmark, the Ministry of Sport & Olympic Committee are very involved and supportive of Danish Handball in general and they are the main contributors to amateur handball, largely funding the operational costs of handball at grassroots level. The national team also has a high importance in Denmark, which means that the interests between clubs, the federation and public authorities are quite well-balanced. The public sector and the handball federation and clubs have a common vision to foster a strong club elite level to develop professional players, while bearing in mind the interest of placing national team players in the best condition by avoiding overcrowded competition calendars (and similarly no issue ever emerged around clubs releasing players for the national team).⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁸⁸ IHF triannual report 2017-2019: https://www.ihf.info/sites/default/files/2020-01/IHF%20Activity%20Report%202017-2019_E.pdf

⁴⁸⁹ https://www.eurohandball.com/media/0hgjky2q/ehf_biz_report_print_2020-web.pdf

⁴⁹⁰ https://www.eusport.org/goodgovernance/GGS_about

⁴⁹¹ <https://www.ajph.fr/mes-droits/document-liens-utiles/>

⁴⁹² 2020 Development plan for the Handball federation - towards 2024.

https://www.handball-idf.com/images/DocsLigue/ANS/2020/PSF_FFHandball-CAP_2024.pdf

⁴⁹³ Interview with Torsten Laen and Kresten Blæsild, Player Adviser, Håndbold Spiller Forening, carried out in November 2021.

⁴⁹⁴ Annual report of the French national handball league (Commission Nationale d'Aide et de Contrôle de Gestion):

<https://docs.inh.fr/cnacg2019/14/>

⁴⁹⁵ Interview with Torsten Laen and Kresten Blæsild, Player Adviser, Håndbold Spiller Forening, carried out in November 2021.

Volunteers are deemed very important for handball and they play a key role for both professional (support to events and tournaments organisation) and amateur Handball (management of clubs, trainers), but detailed data is not available.⁴⁹⁶

According to some stakeholders, **the European Sport model** generally applies well to Handball and captures the main features of the sport. However, it does not particularly seek to ensure the active participation of multiple stakeholders. This is an important issue in handball as it is becoming more and more popular and attracting willingness to develop new competitions, friendly matches, etc. Additionally, the decision-making process where international standards (e.g., calendar of competitions, rules around days of rest) are set by the IHF does not always sit well with national federations in Europe which have a more packed calendar (more professional teams and more demanding European club competitions). Closed leagues are seen as a potential challenge in this respect, especially since the pool of professional players is lower in handball than football, for instance (few substitutes available, so inability to ensure the main players can rest in some matches). Additional incentives for dialogue, including with clubs and players representatives should be encouraged, according to some stakeholders.⁴⁹⁷ In Denmark, all key discussions now include consultations with the players' union and representatives from the clubs/leagues, but there is no binding mechanism for the federation to take into account the various demands from them.⁴⁹⁸ At European level, the EHF has set up a professional board which includes players and clubs representatives as well, which is perceived as a positive development.⁴⁹⁹

Main trends that affect the evolution of Handball

Handball is becoming more and more popular globally and the **internationalisation** of competition retransmissions are appealing to global audiences. The 2021 season saw a cumulative audience of 530 million tune in to watch the EHF Champions League. In total 12,000 hours of handball were broadcast globally, with an increase in broadcasters operating on OTT platforms or online, the EHF Champions League was more accessible than ever. The EHF's OTT platform, EHFTV, also attracted more than 250,000 global subscribers in its first season after its relaunch in summer 2020. Subscribers were able to access and enjoy matches free of charge, in addition to all highlights and special features.⁵⁰⁰

Alongside this popularity, the **commercialisation** of handball is on the rise, especially in terms of TV rights. Global subscription streaming service DAZN has secured rights in Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Spain to the European Handball Federation's (EHF) men's and women's Champions League competitions until the end of the 2025/26 season.⁵⁰¹

Under the terms of the deal, which takes effect from the start of the 2020/21 season on 16th September, DAZN will also cover both male and female editions of the EHF European League and EHF European Cup club competitions. EHF Champions League rights in Germany were previously held by Sky Deutschland for the past six seasons. The pay-TV broadcaster also previously held exclusive rights in Austria and non-exclusive rights in Switzerland for the past three seasons. The partnership, brokered by Infront on behalf of the EHF, extends coverage from the upcoming men's and women's Champions League and European Cup finals to 28 territories. Infront and DAZN signed a ten-year marketing deal with the EHF worth €600 million (US\$668 million) in May which included the launch of a

⁴⁹⁶ Interview with the European Handball Federation, carried out in November 2021.

⁴⁹⁷ Interview with Torsten Laen and Kresten Blæsild, Player Adviser, Håndbold Spiller Foreninge, carried out in November 2021.

⁴⁹⁸ Interview with Torsten Laen and Kresten Blæsild, Player Adviser, Håndbold Spiller Foreninge, carried out in November 2021.

⁴⁹⁹ Statutes of the European Handball Federation, last amended on 24.04.2021

<https://www.eurohandball.com/en/what-we-do/regulations/statutes/>

⁵⁰⁰ European Handball Federation (2021) 2021 business report: <https://businessreport.eurohandball.com/>

⁵⁰¹ EHF Business report 2018 and 2020. See also dedicated article:

<https://www.ehfoffice.at/businessreport2018/LTF-Signing-of-deal-in-May-2018.html>

new digital ecosystem across all the governing body's platforms, as well as the management of rights to the biennial EHF Euros held between 2022 and 2030.⁵⁰²

Additionally, Pay-TV broadcaster Eurosport has secured the rights to handball's major European club and national team competitions in France and Poland as part of a new six-year deal. The agreement, signed with the European Handball Federation (EHF) and its commercial arm EHF Marketing, includes exclusive rights to the EHF Champions League and the EHF European League, as well as the men's and women's editions of the EHF European Cup, until the end of the 2025/26 season.

In Poland, the Discovery-owned network will also show exclusive coverage of several national team competitions, including the 2020 women's European Championship, and the 2022, 2024 and 2026 men's and women's European Championships. Additionally, Eurosport will air the next three editions of the men's and women's Beach Handball Euros in both France and Poland.

The **distribution of revenues and solidarity** is growing to support the development of the sport across Europe. The EHF has committed a €6million fund to develop its member federations, which will be supported in their efforts to deliver the EHF Master Plan through a new approach under the banner of 'Embrace Handball', which is clustered into four different programmes. Funding for federations will be granted for strategies and projects which contribute to the goals of the Master Plan. The four programmes are: EHF 360 degrees, SMART 2.0, short-term projects and EHF initiatives, all support programme for national federations, funding will be given for projects that contribute to each federation's long-term strategic plans.⁵⁰³

Practices in organising competitions are evolving in Handball, with some changes in the structure of the top European club competitions.

The first major change concerns the men's and the women's EHF Champions League which will be played in a 16-team format, starting directly at the group phase played in a round-robin league format, with no qualification rounds or tournaments before. The top four teams in each group will qualify directly for the quarterfinals with teams finishing in seventh and eighth place eliminated. The four remaining teams from each group (3rd-6th) will qualify for a play-off round, before progressing to the quarterfinals and then the EHF FINAL4. Men's EHF Champions League games will be played on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, with the weekends set-aside for Women's EHF Champions League games. The purpose of these changes is that fans will have an 'appointment to view' each week, and with no overlap of men's and women's top competitions, TV partners will have better scheduling options in the future.⁵⁰⁴ The changes follow extensive discussions with EHF stakeholders including clubs, leagues, players and commercial partners.

European Handball is adopting **good governance practices** to better integrate gender equality principles. Two new Nation Committees Men (NCM) and Women (NCW) were elected and convened for the first time in May 2021. The objective is to reform the EHF bodies to uphold a balanced and harmonised system for male and female competitions. More specifically, the Nations Committee Women is newly created after the model of the Nations Committee Men. The Women's Handball Board is also re-arranged in a form analogous to the Professional Handball Board with an identical set-up and assignments.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰² Michael Long (2020) Eurosport pockets European handball rights in France and Poland. Sport Pro Media, 17 September 2020

⁵⁰³ European Handball Federation (2021) 2021 business report: <https://businessreport.eurohandball.com/>

⁵⁰⁴ Statutes of the European Handball Federation, last amended on 24.04.2021

<https://www.eurohandball.com/en/what-we-do/regulations/statutes/> and Regulations of the competitions: <https://www.eurohandball.com/en/what-we-do/regulations/club-competitions/ehf-european-cup/>

⁵⁰⁵ European Handball Federation (2021) 2021 business report: <https://businessreport.eurohandball.com/>

Sport Fiche – Ice Hockey

Study on the European Sport Model(s)

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

Date produced: March 2022

Sport fiches

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each fiche summarises the main features and trends that affect the evolution of the 15 selected sports at EU level and in different Member States. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews and the survey is included where relevant – this shows key features and evolving trends in relation to ice hockey and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Background

Ice Hockey is an Olympic, team sport. Despite claims attributing the origin of the sport to Canada, Ice Hockey is not a Canadian invention. Nonetheless, it is true that important developments in the modern game stemmed from Canada.⁵⁰⁶ The sport made its Olympic debut at the 1920 Summer Olympics in Antwerp, but quickly moved to Winter Olympics in 1924 and has ever since featured at every Winter Games.⁵⁰⁷ Ice Hockey is more popular in North America, with the National Hockey League (NHL) being arguably the best professional hockey league in the world.⁵⁰⁸ In Europe, Ice Hockey is less popular, with the exception of Finland, where it is by far the most popular sport. The sport's popularity is also strong in Sweden, and to a lesser extent, in Czechia, Norway and Slovakia.⁵⁰⁹ At international level, the sport is governed by the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF). Contrary to many sports, there are no confederations in ice hockey, meaning that there is not a European Ice Hockey Federation. Also, and interestingly, IIHF's national federations do not always have the same rules. For example, in North America, NHL's rules deviate from those of IIHF's. This fiche describes this, as well as other relevant features and trends affecting the Ice Hockey Sport Model.

Main features of the Ice Hockey Sport Model

Like many sports, ice hockey, follows a pyramidal **organisational structure**. At the international level, the sport is governed by the IIHF, while interestingly, there are no confederations. Instead, IIHF has 81-member national associations (MNAs), with their majority being full members and their minority being associate members.⁵¹⁰ MNAs, via their representatives, have a key role in decision-making, while players' and fans' representatives are not officially involved in decision-making.

As the sport's governing body, IIHF controls the international rulebook, processes international player transfers, and dictates officiating guidelines. In addition, IIHF presides over ice hockey in the Olympic Games and over the IIHF World Championships at all levels.⁵¹¹ However, deviations exist. For example, in North America, NHL has its own rulebook, while in Europe, SM-liiga, although adhering to the IIHF's rulebook, includes minor deviations, stemming from the NHL tradition.⁵¹² For example, NHL made the decision to disallow its players to participate at the Winter Olympics of PyeongChang

⁵⁰⁶ Martel, J. (2020), *Origins of Ice Hockey*. In The Canadian Encyclopaedia, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/origins-of-ice-hockey>

⁵⁰⁷ Olympics.com (n.d.). *Ice Hockey*, <https://olympics.com/en/beijing-2022/sports/ice-hockey/>

⁵⁰⁸ Thehockeywriters.com (2022), *Top 10 best Ice Hockey Leagues*, [https://thehockeywriters.com/top-10-best-ice-hockey-leagues/#:~:text=1.\)&text=With%2031%20teams%20in%20the,world%20vying%20for%20one%20trophy](https://thehockeywriters.com/top-10-best-ice-hockey-leagues/#:~:text=1.)&text=With%2031%20teams%20in%20the,world%20vying%20for%20one%20trophy).

⁵⁰⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁵¹⁰ IIHF.com (n.d.) *Associations*, <https://www.iihf.com/en/associations>

⁵¹¹ IIHF.com (n.d.) *Who we are*, <https://www.iihf.com/en/statichub/4682/who-we-are>

⁵¹² Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

(2018)⁵¹³ and Beijing (2022). Commentators have indicated that this decision was short-sighted for the sport, while the International Olympic Committee (IOC) also expressed its discontent with this development.⁵¹⁴ This deviation of NHL from the pyramidal organisational structure is affecting the European Sport Model as it devalues national competitions and it could set a paradigm for the European leagues to follow, something that could negatively impact the sport.

With regard to the **system of competition**, IIHF's World Championships at all levels include the principle of promotion-relegation. However, this principle is not binding for MNAs. For example, in Europe, there are both closed leagues (e.g., in Austria and Finland) and open leagues (e.g., in Czechia, Germany and Sweden). At the same time, recently, due to COVID-19, IIHF and MNAs (e.g., in Switzerland) have temporarily suspended the system of promotion-relegation.⁵¹⁵ According to a stakeholder, the system of competition is increasingly moving closer to the closed-league model of the NHL in North America.⁵¹⁶

IIHF also has various **solidarity mechanisms** in place, through which it supports MNAs, and particularly the least developed associations. The federation has a number of open-access resources that MNAs can use to train coaches, attract young people to the sport, etc., while it also has several development initiatives providing financial or equipment support to MNAs. For example, IIHF runs two global camps helping MNAs to upgrade and to operate quality development and education programmes within their countries: IIHF Hockey Development Camps and IIHF Women's High-Performance Camps. MNAs can also apply for individual development programmes as well as receive equipment support. Between 2016 and 2020, equipment worth \$1,378,000 has been received by 27 out of the 81 MNAs, with seven to ten MNAs, having received equipment worth \$190,000 to \$240,000. Solidarity mechanisms also exist within MNAs.

In terms of the system of governance, IIHF makes its decisions based on the preferences of its MNAs in an **autonomous** fashion. Recently, similar to other federations, IIHF is also progressively adhering to **good governance principles** with the federation being featured amongst the top-ranked winter sports federations for its good governance principles, according to an independent International Federation Governance review.⁵¹⁷ The federation has an integrity book, including four pillars: anti-doping, competition manipulation, abuse and harassment and ethics. Another noteworthy issue around good governance is IIHF's adoption in 2021 of a transgender policy, facilitating the participation of transgender athletes at the international level of the sport.⁵¹⁸ Nevertheless, it is also worth noting that until 2021, IIHF had the same male president for 27 years.

In ice hockey, the **public sector plays a role in promoting the sport**, although this varies across Member States. For example, in Finland, the Ministry of Education and Culture, funds the national federation, which then administers programmes to promote ice hockey in the country. In total, this funding amounts to approximately 8% of the federation's revenue, which adding funding from the National Olympic Committee (NOC) amounts to a total of 10%.⁵¹⁹ Normally, the amount of funding is conditional on certain parameters, e.g., on good governance and development issues, thus pushing federations to make improvements on these issues. The public sector also plays a role in promoting

⁵¹³ NHL.com (2021), *NHL players will not participate in 2022 Beijing Olympic*, <https://www.nhl.com/news/nhl-players-will-not-participate-in-2022-beijing-olympics/c-329206756>

⁵¹⁴ Olympics.com (2017), *IOC Statement on NHL Decision*, <https://olympics.com/ioc/news/ioc-statement-on-nhl-decision>; NHL.com (2021), *NHL players will not participate in 2022 Beijing Olympics*, <https://www.nhl.com/news/nhl-players-will-not-participate-in-2022-beijing-olympics/c-329206756>

⁵¹⁵ IIHF.com (2021), *No team relegated at World Juniors*, https://www.iihf.com/en/events/2022/wm20/news/31341/no_team_relegated_at_world_juniors; Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁵¹⁶ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁵¹⁷ AIOWF - Association of International Olympic Winter Sports Federation (2020), *Third Review of Governance of AIOWF International Federation Members*, https://blob.iihf.com/iihf-media/iihfmvc/media/downloads/integrity/third_review_of_governance_of_aiowf_if_members_2020.pdf

⁵¹⁸ IIHF.com (2021), *Transgender policy*, https://blob.iihf.com/iihf-media/iihfmvc/media/downloads/regulations/2022/2022_iihf_transgender_policy.pdf

⁵¹⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

the sport through after-school activities (e.g., in Finland), although this is not particular to ice hockey, but rather to all sports, and varies across countries.⁵²⁰

The **role of volunteers** is particularly important in ice hockey. Volunteers often take on multiple roles, including helping at events, serving as technical staff (e.g., coaches, referees, etc) and acting as staff members in the national federations. Volunteers are thus extremely relevant and important for ice hockey. For example, in Finland, volunteering appears to be a historical part of the Scandinavian or Nordic model, where volunteers are the ones who are running the sport at the local level.⁵²¹ Indeed, in Finland, the overwhelming majority of coaches are volunteers, often parents of the children.⁵²² In Sweden, volunteering is equally important, with stakeholders questioning the extent to which ice hockey could exist in the country without their existence.⁵²³ Therefore, the importance of volunteering is particularly true for lower-tier, semi-professional or amateur leagues. In top-tier leagues, there are often enough resources to have a mix of professionals and volunteers that can respond to the needs of the sport and the challenges that it is facing (e.g., in terms of commercialisation).

While all of the different features of the European Sport Model are deemed to be relevant to the ice hockey model, volunteering appears to be particularly **relevant** for the sport. As the section below will show, the role of volunteers, especially for amateur sport, is very important, with parents of children often taking the role of coaches.

Main trends that affect the evolution of Ice Hockey

This section summarises the main trends that are seen to be affecting the evolution of ice hockey.

Increased **internationalisation** of the sport, in terms of audiences and player transfers are seen to be impacting the evolution of ice hockey. In terms of **audiences**, ice hockey appears to be popular within certain countries such as Canada, Russia, the United States and in European countries such as, Czechia, Finland and Sweden. Nonetheless, the sport is increasingly making efforts to internationalise its audiences to other countries. For example, Swedish Ice Hockey (SHL) is currently broadcasted in 160 countries worldwide.⁵²⁴ In addition, recently in Finland and Sweden AI cameras have been installed in ice hockey halls to broadcast lower-tier division sporting matches.⁵²⁵ Another means via which ice hockey is trying to expand its viewership is through the Champion's Hockey League (CHL), which is Europe's largest ice hockey competition for clubs. In this way, it seems that clubs are also assuming a role in internationalising the sport that was hitherto belonging exclusively to national teams. Despite the increasing internationalisation, it is worth noting that monetisation opportunities from both domestic and international broadcasting deals cannot sustain the sport, which relies on other revenue streams such as sponsorship, gate sales, etc.

Player transfers are also impacting on the evolution of ice hockey in Europe. In particular, outward mobility from top European leagues primarily to NHL and less often, to the Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) in Russia is increasing, as the revenue and prestige, particularly of NHL, is a huge pull factor. While systems are in place between NHL and other top leagues in Europe, so that the latter can benefit from transfers, this outflow of players from Europe to North America still has a negative return on investment and limits the competitiveness of European leagues. In this context, Sweden has made an agreement with NHL to retain Swedish players, if they are to compete at NHL's second-tier league, the American Hockey League (AHL).⁵²⁶

⁵²⁰ Ibid

⁵²¹ Ibid

⁵²² Ibid

⁵²³ Ibid

⁵²⁴ Ibid

⁵²⁵ Ibid

⁵²⁶ Ibid

Another interesting trend relates to the **distribution of revenues and solidarity**. In ice hockey, IIHF, NOCs and in some cases national governments, fund federations to develop the sport. However, they are not alone. In many cases, top-tier leagues and their clubs, are also having an increasingly key role in the distribution of revenues and solidarity, despite the fact that they are in most countries independent from their national federations (i.e., they are a separate legal entity).

For example, in Sweden, SHL shares a percentage of its profits with the national federation, so that it can redistribute it to grassroots and other types of activities.⁵²⁷ In Finland, there is an agreement between the clubs participating at the top league (SM-liiga) and the federation. As part of this agreement, clubs have a mandate to finance an affiliated junior team.⁵²⁸ In turn, clubs have used these junior teams to identify and acquire promising players. This helps to trickle down revenues from the professional, towards semi-professional and amateur sports. For example, the *Idrottsföreningen Kamraterna Helsingfors* (HIFK), one of the most historical teams in Finnish Ice Hockey, spends about 10% of its revenue on youth and women teams.⁵²⁹ This strong link of top-tier independent leagues and their clubs towards semi-professional and amateur sports is positive. At the same time, however, it increases the negotiating position of the leagues towards the federations and might possibly create power-play issues in the future.

Ice hockey is also trying to grapple with numerous **societal developments** including **changing consumption habits, sustainability, gender equality**, and also, and perhaps most importantly, **decreasing birth rates**.

Changing consumption habits and the shift to digital consumption is not a challenge that affects exclusively ice hockey. Nonetheless, stakeholders within the sport, recognise the need to respond to digital consumption habits, with one stakeholder reporting that ice hockey in Europe is lagging behind North America in addressing the issue.⁵³⁰

Within ice hockey, **sustainability** is also becoming more important than ever before,⁵³¹ featuring regularly in discussions in the IIHF. In this context, it is worth noting that the federation is part of the United Nations Sports for Climate Action Framework and the Clean Seas Campaign and has won in 2019 and 2020 the IOC-DOW Carbon Initiative Award. Recently, in 2019, the federation launched the IIHF Sustainability Award, giving its MNAs the opportunity to show how they are working towards sustainability. Finally, the federation has in place a sustainability vision as well as a manual for sustainable events.⁵³²

MNAs are also becoming increasingly aware of sustainability issues. More concretely, stakeholders reported that issues such as the energy consumption of arenas and transport emissions are now high on their agenda. For example, the Finnish Ice Hockey Federation is working together with cities and municipalities to modernise ice hockey rinks while the country uses the latest technology in building new rinks that are more environmentally efficient.⁵³³ Clubs are also looking into sustainability, as both public, but also private sponsors are taking this issue into consideration.

Ice hockey is also working to improve **gender equality**. In relation to **gender equality in governance positions**, IIHF has some rules in place, although these appear to be moderate, e.g., out of its Council's 14 voting members, at least two must be male or female.⁵³⁴ With regard to **gender equality in participation**, numbers of women in ice hockey appear to be increasing, albeit not to the same degree as those of men. For example, between 2007 and 2018 the number of registered female players worldwide

⁵²⁷ Ibid

⁵²⁸ Ibid

⁵²⁹ Ibid

⁵³⁰ Ibid

⁵³¹ IIHF.com (n.d.) *Sustainability*, <https://www.iihf.com/en/static/5116/sustainability>

⁵³² IIHF.com (2015). *Manual for sustainable events*, https://iihfstorage.blob.core.windows.net/iihf-media/iihfmvc/media/downloads/sustainability/iihf_manual_social-environment.pdf

⁵³³ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁵³⁴ IIHF (2018, updated in 2021). *Statutes and bylaws 2021-2024*, [https://blob.iihf.com/iihf-media/iihfmvc/media/downloads/statutes/2021-2024-statutes-and-bylaws-\(effective-september-2021\).pdf](https://blob.iihf.com/iihf-media/iihfmvc/media/downloads/statutes/2021-2024-statutes-and-bylaws-(effective-september-2021).pdf)

grew from 153,665 to 205,674.⁵³⁵ In MNAs, situations vary. For example, in Sweden, men's clubs at SHL, have to take care of the female clubs (e.g., in terms of providing necessary resources); in Finland, this is not mandatory, and currently only two men's clubs at SM-liiga are integrating women's teams in their professional structure, providing professional staff for marketing, professional coaches, physiotherapists, etc. However, as previously seen, clubs in Finland are also supporting women's sports, through redistribution of revenues.

Finally, **decreasing birth rates** has been reported by stakeholder to be one of the most important threats to the evolution of ice hockey. This is particularly true in Finland. Finnish stakeholders shared a concern that with decreasing birth rates and immigration to larger cities, it will not be possible for small cities in the country to develop their own ice hockey teams in the future, something that will negatively impact the sport. This threat is likely to stay and can possibly be also true for other sports. To address this threat, stakeholders are considering different options (e.g., immigrant integration, allowing the formation of teams with less players, reducing the threshold for participation) and their trade-offs.

⁵³⁵ IIHF (n.d.). *Women's Ice Hockey*, <https://www.iihf.com/en/static/5068/women-s-hockey>

Sport Fiche – Ice Skating

Study on the European Sport Model(s)

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Sport fiches

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each fiche summarises the main features and trends that affect the evolution of the 15 selected sports at EU level and in different Member States. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews and the survey is included where relevant – this shows key features and evolving trends in relation to ice skating and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Background

Ice skating is the sport which involves gliding across an ice surface on blades fixed to the bottoms of shoes (skates).⁵³⁶ The activity of ice skating has given rise to two sports: figure skating which involves jumps, spins and dance, and speed skating and short-track speed skating, both of which are forms of racing on ice skates. Ice hockey is considered to be a separate sport – a team sport. Ice skating is believed to have developed in Scandinavia as early as 100 BC. Contemporary figure skating grew popular in Northern Europe and North America.

All sports involving ice skating are Olympic sports. Figure skating are organised in men's and women's singles, pairs, ice dance events and team events. Short track speed skating and speed skating are organised in competitions for men and women in pairs or teams at 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 5000m and 10000m.

The International Skating Union (ISU) was formed in 1892 by the National Amateur Skating Association of the United States, the Amateur Skating Association of Canada and the National Skating Association of Great Britain along with other national groups. ISU is the world governing body for speed skating, ice dancing and figure skating.

Main features of the Ice Skating Sport Model

In terms of **organisational structure**, ice skating follows the traditional pyramidal structure of sport. The International Skating Union is the world governing body for speed skating, ice dancing and figure skating. Its objectives are to regulate, govern and promote these sports and their organised development on the basis of friendship and mutual understanding between sportsmen and women.⁵³⁷

There is no European governing body for this sport. ISU is the sole body recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to administer the sports of figure skating and speed skating on ice. The National Federations of ice skating across Europe are direct members of ISU.

ISU is organised across several executive bodies. The ISU Council is the highest of its bodies and its main functions are to determine the policies of the ISU and decide upon the general coordination of the ISU structure, allot ISU championships and other ISU Events, checking that the accounting for and management of assets are subject to adequate controls, the preparation and submission to Congress of annual budgets, or decisions regarding the admission or suspension of Members.

ISU organises over 50 events each season. Among these events, particular importance is given to **competitions** such as: ISU Championships, ISU Speed Skating and Short Track

⁵³⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/sports/ice-skating>

⁵³⁷ <https://www.isu.org/>

Speed Skating World Cup Competitions, ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Competitions, ISU World Team Trophy in Figure Skating, ISU International Competitions.

World Championships are based on a system of qualifications at national level. The number of skaters sent by each nation to worlds is based on the team's performance from the previous year: A country's final placements (in men's, women's, pairs, or dance) must total 11 or less in order for it to send three skaters in that discipline the next year. It is also possible that a nation sends less skaters or none to world championships.⁵³⁸

All competitions are structured according to rules created by ISU. The national federations members of ISU must inform ISU on any international competition they plan to organise, and they have to comply with ISU regulations for organising it. International competitions are not organised according to a **promotion-relegation system** per se, as understood in other sports.

The ISU has also put in place **solidarity programmes**, namely an extensive Development Programme implemented for the first time in 1996, which is an essential tool for the promotion and development of the ISU sports. The Programme has the goal to improve the skating activities of ISU Members in a sustainable way.⁵³⁹ Within a budget set by the ISU Council, the Development Programme supports training programmes for skaters and coaches, education for officials, acquiring state-of-the art equipment or effective programmes for grassroots skating. It also supports development initiatives identified by Members, Technical Committees, Commissions and the Council that fall within ISU criteria.

For the period 2020-2022, the ISU Development Programme distributes an annual contribution to ISU Members based on a fix amount of \$25,000 for Members representing one Branch (i.e., either Figure Skating or Speed Skating) and \$50,000 for Members representing both Branches. In return, Members have to submit an annual report on their most important initiatives to promote and improve their skating activities.⁵⁴⁰

The activities of the Ice Skating Federations members of ISU are strictly controlled by the world governing body. With limited **autonomy**, they have to inform ISU on any international competition they plan to organise and they have to comply with ISU regulations for organising it. Moreover, the ISU eligibility rules ban skaters from international speed skating events such as the Olympic Games or the World Championship, if they participate in international speed skating events that are not approved by the ISU. This has made the object of a recent ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)⁵⁴¹ which states that ISU regulation restricts the athletes' commercial freedom unduly, which results in a situation where they are not allowed to participate in speed skating events other than those organised by the ISU or its members (national federations). This prevents new entrants (organisers of sports events) from organising alternative international speed skating events because they are unable to attract top athletes.

Volunteers play an important role in promoting and developing this sport at local, regional and national levels. Their duties can be related to the organisation of national competitions, announcing the competition and handling the participants. Volunteers can actively participate in more technical jobs in the framework of a competition, such as timekeeping or music technicians. They are one of the most important resources for a federation, therefore time and effort are placed in recruiting and managing volunteers on the field. A good example is the British Ice Skating Federation who has created a Volunteer Handbook for these purposes.⁵⁴²

A relevant event for the evolution of the European Sport Model in Ice Skating happened in 2003, when an attempt to set up an alternative association to replace ISU for governing

⁵³⁸ International Skating Union, Constitution and General Regulations 2021, <https://www.isu.org/speed-skating/rules/ssk-constitution/file>

⁵³⁹ International Skating Union, Communication No. 2052, ISU Development Program, 2020, <https://www.isu.org/inside-isu/isu-communications/communications/23871-isu-communication-2310/file>

⁵⁴⁰ Idem.

⁵⁴¹ International Skating Union v Commission, Case T-93/18;

⁵⁴² See <https://www.iceskating.org.uk/volunteer-opportunities>

and promoting the sport took place. A group of several former figure skating champions announced the creation of the World Skating Federation (WSF), as an alternative to ISU, calling ISU corrupt and dictatorial.⁵⁴³ The role of WSF would have been to break ISU monopoly and ensure competition judging in an unbiased manner and be geographically balanced. The attempt received positive feedback, as it 'echoed sentiments that were well known for some time in the sector'.⁵⁴⁴

This attempt emerged as a reaction to the 'deeply conservative culture, both athletically and culturally, that figure skating had been suffering from'.⁵⁴⁵ Concerns over racist and anti-LGBTQI behaviour in the institutional system of the sport have long been voiced by athletes and other stakeholders, who have strongly demanded a radical reshaping of the judging system.⁵⁴⁶

The attempt ultimately failed, as several national federations (among which the US Figure Skating Association and Skate Canada) and the IOC refused to recognise WSF as a legitimate organisation and declared ISU the only legitimate body.⁵⁴⁷

Main trends that affect the evolution of Ice Skating

A disruption in the way ice skating is organised, challenging the **organisation of competitions** as a sport came in 2014, when two prominent Dutch ice skaters, Mark Tuitert and Niels Kerstholt, filled a complaint towards the European Commission challenging the threat by the ISU to bar ice skaters who competed in commercial, well paid, Icederby events run by a South Korean company until 2012.⁵⁴⁸

The legal argument raised by the skaters was that the ISU rules compromised the commercial freedom of athletes and the ISU rules prevented new organisers of international speed skating events from entering the market because they were unable to attract top skaters. Under the ISU rules an athlete participating in an unauthorised event faced a range of penalties, leading potentially to a life-time ban from all key international speed skating competitions. As with many other sports, even a limited ban on participation would leave an ice skater unable to prepare for, and participate in, major events such as the Olympic Games, shortening their competitive skating career. The complaint reached the CJEU which filed against ISU, questioning its monopoly system in this sport and its breach of EU competition laws.

The technical committee of ISU has made attempts to improve the competition and judging system in ice skating, by announcing a proposal to relax the rules for the artistic and technical programmes allowed in men's and women's singles figure skating competition and to change the structure of these competitions. If approved, the proposal would take effect in the 2022-2023 season.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴³ Philip Hersh, 'Skating Splinter group suffers another setback', in *Chicago Tribune*, May 4 2003, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2003-05-04-0305040316-story.html>

⁵⁴⁴ George Vecsey, 'Sports of the Times; Old Skating Hands Ripping the System', in *The New York Times*, 2003

⁵⁴⁵ Rebecca Jennings, 'Figure skating is on thin ice. Here's how to fix it.', in *Vox*, 2021, <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/22276736/figure-skating-olympics-winter-2022-lessons>

⁵⁴⁶ idem

⁵⁴⁷ Philip Hersh, *op.cit.*, 2003

⁵⁴⁸ Ben Van Rompuy, 'Dutch Speed Skating Duo Files EU Antitrust Complaint Against The International Skating Union', in *Law in Sport*, 2014, [https://www.lawinsport.com/topics/item/dutch-speed-skating-duo-files-eu-antitrust-complaint-against-the-international-skating-union#:~:text=In%20June%202014%2C%20two%20prominent,ISU\)%20with%20the%20European%20Com mission.](https://www.lawinsport.com/topics/item/dutch-speed-skating-duo-files-eu-antitrust-complaint-against-the-international-skating-union#:~:text=In%20June%202014%2C%20two%20prominent,ISU)%20with%20the%20European%20Com mission.)

⁵⁴⁹ Philip Hersh, 'In figure skating, a radical proposal to reshape the sport', in *Olympic Talk*, *NBC Sports*, 2020, <https://olympics.nbcsports.com/2020/02/13/figure-skating-scoring-changes-proposal/>

Sport Fiche – Judo

Study on the European Sport Model(s)

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

Date produced: March 2022

Sport fiches

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each fiche summarises the main features and trends that affect the evolution of the 15 selected sports at EU level and in different Member States. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews and the survey is included where relevant – this shows key features and evolving trends in relation to judo and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Background

Judo – known as a holistic practice that extends beyond the physical realm to encompass intellectual and moral education values as well - is a modern Japanese martial art and Olympic sport that is practised all around the world. Judo is taught through three different main practices: *randori* (or free practice), *kata* (forms), and *mondo* (exchanges between the students and their teacher based on the values and philosophy of judo). Athletes compete at the Olympic games, and judo also features on the programme of the Paralympic Games. In most European countries, judo is still seen as a niche sport, with perhaps the exception of France, where the sport's popularity is much greater. However, the benefits of practicing judo have been increasingly recognised, and the European-level continental federation (European Judo Union, EJU) now has 54 national federation members.

Main features of the Judo Sport Model

The **organisational structure** in Judo is similar to many sports. Judo has one world federation, a European Federation, and one federation per country all throughout the world. The International Judo Federation (IJF) is composed of National Judo Federations and Continental Unions. Each National Federation must be recognised as the sole federation authorised to represent its country in international sporting bodies by its Olympic Committee, which itself is duly recognized by the International Olympic Committee. The major development of judo worldwide made it necessary to create five Continental Unions. These five Unions are in charge of implementing the policy of the IJF and the International Olympic Committee. Every continental union is subject to the rules, statutes, disciplinary procedures, transparency, and moral guidelines provided by the IJF.⁵⁵⁰

Europe is the most developed continental union. It has a commercially successful European championship and open cups around the continent where they organise activities, sell TV rights, sell sponsorship around the events, and financing those events in that way. In that sense, the European continental union has more financial independence than other unions.⁵⁵¹

Each country may be represented by only one National Federation recognised by IJF. If two or more federations within a country claim representation, official status will be given to the federation which is recognised by IJF. A National Federation that wishes to become a member of the EJU and IJF, must apply. The application must contain all the documents necessary to demonstrate the technical development and organisation of the association, to include: statutes, sporting activities, grades, number of members (a minimum of 20),

⁵⁵⁰ Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the International Judo Federation (IJF), January 2022.

⁵⁵¹ Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the International Judo Federation (IJF), January 2022.

and a declaration that the Federation agrees to comply with the Statutes and all regulations and decisions of the EJU and IJF. When a national federation has duly submitted all the necessary documents, this National Federation becomes a provisional member of the EJU and has the right to take part at the European Championships, under the condition that the necessary annual and entry fees are paid.

In terms of the **system of competition**, all of IJF competitions and the right to compete are open to all people who practice judo around the world. There is a clear competition and events structure from local to global, as follows:

- Local level: The events that happen at a local level, in the club itself: all the club members compete against each other.
- Regional level: The events that happen in a region, where several clubs compete against each other.
- National level: The national championship consecrates a champion for each country (the champion of Portugal, France, etc).
- 'Several country' level: Example: the Balkan tournament.
- Continental level: The European championship.
- World level: The World championship.

The competitions are generally open and follow a mixed model of selection based on rankings and selection decisions. For instance, to be eligible to participate at European championships, all athletes must have competed in a minimum of two tournament, counting towards the IJF World Ranking List (WRL) during the European Games Qualifying period. Each federation can enter up to 9 athletes in the championship, based on this ranking list.

Solidarity mechanisms are sets out in the IJF's financial regulation covering the redistribution of the Olympic dividend. The latest edition (2020) specifies that:

- Upon receipt of the IOC dividend, the President and General Treasurer of the IJF make a proposal for distributing these funds to the Continental Unions.
- Continental Unions will receive funds for the next four years (between 2021-2024) divided into four yearly instalments as follows:
 - African Judo Union: US \$1,000,000
 - Judo Union of Asia: US \$1,000,000
 - European Judo Union: US \$1,000,000
 - Pan American Judo Confederation: US \$1,000,000
 - Oceania Judo Union: US \$700,000

This regulation is renewed and updated at the occasion of the Summer Olympic Games.

Autonomy and good governance

From the international level, the IJF aims to be fully transparent and public, from the disciplinary/doping cases to all financial balance sheets, and audit reports. Adding to that, the President of the IJF does not receive a salary for his work, he is a volunteer- he does what he does for judo because "he sees it as a way to give back to society".⁵⁵²

National level

However, being a member of the IJF whose statutes require the national federations to be in conformity with certain rules, the threat to the autonomy of the national federations is very reduced. The IJF is very active in ensuring the autonomy of its national federations - in fact, the IJF has suspended national federations before due to the implications of their government. For example, the Iranian Judo Federation has been suspended until they can compete with others in an open manner, without any type of discrimination against any

⁵⁵² Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the International Judo Federation (IJF), January 2022.

country. In this case, discriminatory practices were imposed through a directive from the Iranian government, and the IJF had to step in to suspend the Iranian federation from competing in all tournaments.⁵⁵³

Role of public sector

Example from IJF (Europe-wide initiative):⁵⁵⁴

The IJF is running with ERASMUS+ a programme to develop the way that judo can be taught in schools. The IJF is currently creating a framework, handbook, and teaching materials to help existing judo teachers be able to run sessions that link judo values to school values and create a positive way of socio-emotional learning whilst also doing it with sports activity and strong links to classrooms. The aim of the programme is not just doing activities through sports (judo) with students on judo mats, but also to link to the classroom and teach the students important key competencies and skills such as respect, discipline, and emotional intelligence (to identify and deal with their emotions).

At national level, there is no 'one-rule-fits-all' approach to funding. National federations around the world have financing coming from their Ministry of Sport, the Olympic committee, and their sponsors. From the more than 200 national federations that exist, the type of funding sources and its level of diversification varies - some national federations have very limited funding coming from the Ministry of Sport while some rely heavily on it.

Starting with that lowest level and going to the World Championship and all the events in between, judo counts on **volunteers** to help with the organisation and promotion of events. Judo starts the voluntary-based activity at the very beginning – in the *dojo*, when athletes start practicing the sport at the club level (as early as 11 or 12 years old), there is a practice to create 'senpais' or junior instructors that are volunteers who teach and promote the values of judo to the students.

The IJF identifies two different types of volunteers in the volunteer's spectrum:⁵⁵⁵

- **Teacher-volunteer:** People who are teaching judo on a voluntary basis to a school or to children in the *dojo*, or any other jobs around the activity of teaching judo on a voluntary basis. Since judo as a sport is very technical, these volunteers do it in their club as also helps their own education process, and the pull back from that is that they get recognition and develop leadership skills which is the compensation that the volunteer receives for their time and energy. However, this volunteer-based work does not happen at the club after a certain age, it is more a part of the developing process of an athlete within the context of judo.
- **Event volunteer:** Volunteers at major events or activities (seminars, competitions, world judo tour events). The judo community is always more than happy to do anything around the events, and the IJF never has a lack of volunteers for this. Usually, they are judo people from the judo community that see it as a privilege to be able to participate in the organisation of the event and don't require or request anything back, other than to be able to see the actual matches when their favorite athletes are competing. Sometimes the volunteer roles serve as a kind of "audition" for getting a real job at the IJF, since the best volunteers can later join the IJF later for full-time doing a certain job or responsibility.

Main trends that affect the evolution of Judo

Internationalisation of audiences

The internationalisation of judo has generally developed rapidly from the 2000s when there was only one judo event every two years broadcasted in five countries. Today, there are

⁵⁵³ Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the International Judo Federation (IJF), January 2022.

⁵⁵⁴ Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the International Judo Federation (IJF), January 2022.

⁵⁵⁵ Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the International Judo Federation (IJF), January 2022.

over 15 events a year broadcasted in 180 countries. This shows the efforts that judo had made to reach new audiences and modernise itself as a sport.⁵⁵⁶

Diversification of funding sources

Judo has developed rapidly since the 2000s through reforms in competitions and financing, including tracking sponsors and selling TV rights, which all help to improve the financial stability of the IJF. Before 2007, the IJF was 90% financed by Olympic dividends, which essentially means deriving most of the financing from participating in an event every four years. From the late 2000s, a focus on increasing the world judo tour, holding more events, attracting sponsors, selling TV rights, and promoting more cultural, social, and learning activities - such as sending coaches around the world to teach judo to school children - has reduced dependence on the Olympic dividend to around 15% of the IJF's total income.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁶ Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the International Judo Federation (IJF), January 2022.

⁵⁵⁷ Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the International Judo Federation (IJF), January 2022.

Sport Fiche – Rowing

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Sport fiches

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Background

Rowing is the sport of racing boats using oars. It is divided into two disciplines: sculling and sweep rowing. In sculling, each rower holds two oars—one in each hand, while in sweep rowing each rower holds one oar with both hands. Rowing is both a team and an individual sport. There are several boat classes in which athletes may compete, ranging from single sculls, occupied by one person, to shells with two, four or eight rowers and a coxswain, called eights.⁵⁵⁸ Rowing originated as a sport in England in the 17th and early 18th centuries, with the Oxford-Cambridge university boat race, and since the 19th century has gained popularity in Europe,⁵⁵⁹ including in Germany, Italy and Romania.⁵⁶⁰ Rowing is one of the oldest Olympic sports - male rowers have competed since the 1900 Summer Olympics, while women's rowing was added to the Olympic programme only in 1976.⁵⁶¹

Main features of the Rowing Sport Model

The **organisational structure** of rowing follows the pyramidal model in line with the European Sport Model, with the international federation (World Rowing (previously known as FISA (*Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron*)) at the top, followed by the European Confederation (European Rowing), and the national federations. European Rowing represents the 46 European national rowing federations and is recognised by World Rowing as the Continental Confederation for Europe.⁵⁶² European Rowing manages the European Rowing Championships, the European Rowing Junior, U23, Indoor and Championships and other European Rowing events.⁵⁶³ It also supports the development and promotion of rowing across the European continent and between European national federations and works closely with World Rowing on dates of competitions to ensure a coherent calendar of events for the sport.⁵⁶⁴

Very little broadcasting rights are available in rowing and federations typically handle the negotiations directly. For example, the broadcasting rights for the national championships in Austria and France are negotiated by the national federation, for local events broadcasting rights would be negotiated by local organising competitions.⁵⁶⁵ For European championships, all broadcasting rights are done and negotiated through the international federation.⁵⁶⁶ Player reps and fan reps are largely involved in decision making. At international level, there is an Athlete Commission that is elected by the current athletes.

⁵⁵⁸ Olympics (n.d.), *History of Rowing*, <https://olympics.com/en/sports/rowing/>

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Tyner Rowing Club (2019), *The Best Countries in the World in Rowing*, <http://tynerrowingclub.org.uk/category/rowinginfo/>

⁵⁶¹ Rules of Sport (n.d.), *Rowing Rules*, <https://www.rulesofsport.com/sports/rowing.html>.

⁵⁶² World Rowing (n.d.), *European Rowing*, <https://worldrowing.com/about/continental-rowing-confederations/european-rowing/>.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

The chair of the Athlete Commission sits on the executive committee (the highest level of the board).⁵⁶⁷ Athlete representation at national level varies depending on the national federation.⁵⁶⁸

In terms of the **system of competition**, there is no promotion/relegation system in rowing at the European and national levels. The principle of open competition nevertheless applies. European championships are open to all 50 countries that are on good terms with the European federation.⁵⁶⁹ The whole competition structure is under the control of Rowing Europe for European championship events and sits under the European Rowing rules.

National competitions and events fall under the control of national rules and national federations.⁵⁷⁰ For example, in Ireland there are no closed leagues, and a point structure is in place for competitions where athletes gain a certain number of points/wins from competitions.⁵⁷¹

There is no single model in terms of funding and distribution of money in rowing. **Solidarity mechanisms** vary from federation to federation. European Rowing does not have any role in the transfer of funds between the Member States. In most Member States, most part of the funding comes from the Ministry of Sport and is distributed in different ways (e.g., on the organisation of regattas, personnel costs, rowing promotion programmes, etc).⁵⁷² Moreover, there is no transfer of money from elite to grassroots sport in Hungary,⁵⁷³ and stakeholders similarly highlighted that rowing in Denmark also does not benefit from solidarity schemes. In Ireland, however, the national federation has recently started to focus on transferring funding from elite to grassroots sport and have engaged an online consultancy firm to work on solidarity schemes.⁵⁷⁴

National federations have their own **autonomy** to make their own decisions affecting the organisation and governance of rowing in their Member States.⁵⁷⁵ World Rowing and European Rowing never interfere with Member States' governance. There are however certain areas where they may consider suspending a national federation (for example, if they did not follow their own statutes, if there was a safeguarding issue, or if somebody at the highest level of the federation had a serious allegation of wrongdoing made against them).⁵⁷⁶ Despite having full autonomy, in practice many national rowing federations (for example, Austria and Hungary) need to comply with certain government requirements in order to receive the large majority of their budget for rowing, which comes from central funding.⁵⁷⁷

World Rowing have adopted a number of **good governance processes** including safeguarding policies and procedures.⁵⁷⁸ World Rowing initiated the "No Needle" policy at events in 2010 and has been a leader in the anti-doping movement having been the first international federation to conduct out of competition testing starting in 1983.⁵⁷⁹ World Rowing also emphasises equal participation between men and women and is a leading federation in terms of women in positions of leadership, which has also had a spill-on positive effect on European Rowing and in many national federations (for example, Germany and Ireland).⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ World Rowing (2021), *Article 4 of the World Rowing Rule Book*, <https://www.rowing.be/images/2021/kamprechtters/FISA-rule-book-EN-2021.pdf>

⁵⁷⁶ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁸ For more information see: <https://worldrowing.com/responsibility/safeguarding/>.

⁵⁷⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

The **public sector** has a huge role to play in funding rowing in the Member States (it is estimated that 99% of funding support for the sport's development comes from public sources). The actual role of the public sector in relation to rowing varies from country to country.⁵⁸¹ Many Member States play a role in funding grassroots participation, access, and provide rowing classes within the education system. For example, the public sector is hugely important and has a big role to play in the promotion of rowing in Ireland.⁵⁸² The Get Going Get Rowing programme was implemented into the Irish education system from public funding and encourages participation of school children in rowing.⁵⁸³ The Hungarian government has also provided more funding to rowing at university level and as a result a rowing programme with all of the universities has recently been developed.⁵⁸⁴

Rowing at European and Member State level relies heavily on the support of **volunteers**. Almost all people working in rowing, particularly at grassroots level, are volunteers. Many of the people working in the federations at European and Member State level are also volunteers. The volunteer structure within each Member State is slightly different and there are specific areas with specific training (for example umpiring, classification for para-athletes will have proper continuing professional development (CPD) and training, the organising committees of regular regattas and events- for example Lucerne in Switzerland regatta – are largely volunteer led and the federation organises regular training for them).⁵⁸⁵

It can therefore be seen that most of the main features of the European Sport Model are **relevant** to rowing. Interviewees highlighted that the pyramid structure is relevant, competitions are open, national federations are, by law, autonomous and follow good governance practices, the sport heavily relies on the support of volunteers, and the public sector has an important role to play in many Member States in funding and promoting rowing. However, solidarity mechanisms vary from country to country and the distribution of funding from elite to grassroots rowing does not exist in a number of Member States.

Main trends that affect the evolution of rowing

Some trends that can be seen to be influencing the evolution of rowing have been identified through the research.

While there is no evidence of breakaway/closed/partially closed rowing leagues or **competitions** being formed in Europe, a stakeholder highlighted that there may be some threats to the national character of competitions at elite level as they must abide by World Rowing rules. For example, for coastal rowing competitions which traditionally are very localised and each different coastline has different traditional boats, World Rowing introduced a specific type of boat for safety and fairness purposes.⁵⁸⁶ Originally there was a lot of resistance to changing to this boat in order to compete internationally and one stakeholder highlighted that it will change the nature of traditional coastal rowing around Europe, particularly for elite level rowing.

The role and **governance** of European and national sport federations is also slowly changing. This is primarily due to the fact that national federations are influenced by their governments and their funding bodies and must have certain good governance processes in place to receive funding. Stakeholders highlighted that a massive change across Europe can be seen in terms of term limits for elected roles (for example, Presidents on Boards) and in terms of the numbers of women being elected to senior roles on the board. For

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³For more information see:

<https://www.getgoinggetrowing.com/#:~:text=Get%20Rowing%2C%20is%20an%20initiative,could%20be%20easily%20part%20of.>

⁵⁸⁴ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

example, Germany now has elected their first female Vice President to their board, and of the seven European Rowing Board members, three of them are women.⁵⁸⁷

Trends in terms of changing demographics and numbers of **volunteers** in rowing were also identified through the research. While the number of volunteers supporting rowing in Denmark and Hungary were reported to be stable, stakeholders highlighted that the number of volunteers has significantly declined in Austria and Ireland. The COVID-19 pandemic, lack of time, and family and work commitments were reported to be the main causes of such declining numbers. It was also reported that there is a growing trend to use younger people (for example, university students and school children) as volunteers particularly for European and national championships across federations.⁵⁸⁸

Other **societal developments** in equality, inclusion and sustainability are also influencing the traditional rowing model. As highlighted above, World, European and national level rowing support **gender equality** in terms of the numbers of women being elected to senior roles on the board. Rowing Ireland has also developed a “Women in Rowing Strategy” in 2020.⁵⁸⁹ The Strategy, drawing on EU⁵⁹⁰ and national-level recommendations, includes a number of short-, mid-, and long-term objectives with the view to increasing women’s participation in rowing as coaches, volunteers, club members, officials and leaders.⁵⁹¹

National rowing federations and local clubs are implementing a number of projects across Europe to increase **diversity** and be more **inclusive**. For example, the Get Going Get Rowing Programme in Ireland also focuses on areas of socio-economic need and disability and works with children with disabilities, particularly autism and down syndrome.⁵⁹² Several clubs in Hungary also run several programmes for para-rowers and para-athletes.⁵⁹³

Finally, rowing is also supporting **sustainability** goals at international, European and national level. Rowing is a green sport and supports clean water as most people around Europe are rowing on natural water ways. A lot of clubs have also changed their practices (for instance, in terms of washing boats down, not bringing algae while travelling with the boat, etc).

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ Rowing Ireland (2020), *Women in Rowing Strategy*, <https://www.rowingireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Women-in-Sport-Strategy-Document-Jul-2020.pdf>; Rowing Ireland (2021), *Women in Rowing Strategy. 2021 Strategy Review*, <https://www.rowingireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/WiS-Strategy-Review-2021.pdf>

⁵⁹⁰ European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2020) *Gender equality in sport: proposal for strategic actions 2014–2020*, Publications Office, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/73626>

⁵⁹¹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

Sport Fiche – Rugby

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Background

Rugby union is a full contact team sport played outdoors on a grass pitch. Players can carry, pass or kick an oval-shaped ball, scoring points by reaching the end of their opponent's defensive territory or kicking the ball through H-shaped posts. The sport originated in England and it remains most popular in certain pockets of Western Europe, notably France, Great Britain, Ireland and Italy who regularly play at the top-level.⁵⁹⁴ Its popularity elsewhere in Europe is mixed, and other more established rugby nations include Georgia, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain and the Netherlands.⁵⁹⁵ A shorter, fast-paced version of the sport (Rugby 7s) has featured at the Olympic Games since 2016 for both men and women.⁵⁹⁶

Main features of the Rugby Sport Model

Rugby's **organisational structure** in Europe largely revolves around its international federation, World Rugby, which governs the sport at a global level. Its European confederation, Rugby Europe, governs the sport at continental level, and private commercial entities Six Nations and European Professional Club Rugby (EPCR) run private club competitions between the rugby clubs of the Six Nations. World Rugby has a wide range of responsibilities, including promoting, developing, and governing rugby; establishing and enforcing the rules of the game; ensuring there is a fair and equitable programme of matches and tournaments; appointing match officials; and providing training opportunities for a number of roles involved in the sport.⁵⁹⁷ In doing so, it sometimes consults player unions to seek their input into decision-making regarding player welfare. World Rugby has 128 member countries who are affiliated through six regional associations.⁵⁹⁸ Rugby Europe is the governing body responsible for the promotion, development, administration, and management of international competitions for the 47 member unions across Europe.⁵⁹⁹

Rugby Europe does not intervene in the domestic affairs of its members unless requested to. Most European countries have their own domestic leagues which adopt a pyramidal **system of competition**. However domestic leagues are not always based on open competition. For example, top sides from Ireland, Italy, Scotland, South Africa (since 2021) and Wales compete in a closed league⁶⁰⁰, and promotion and relegation only applies

⁵⁹⁴ Six Nations Rugby (2022) *About Six Nations Rugby*, <https://www.sixnationsrugby.com/about-six-nations-rugby/>

⁵⁹⁵ Rugby Europe (2022) *Rugby Europe Championship*, <https://www.rugbyeurope.eu/competitions/rugby-europe-championship-2022/>

⁵⁹⁶ International Olympic Committee (2021) *World Rugby*, <https://olympics.com/ioc/world-rugby>

⁵⁹⁷ World Rugby (2021) *Bye Laws*, <https://www.world.rugby/organisation/governance/bye-laws/bye-law-1>

⁵⁹⁸ World Rugby (2021) *About Us*, <https://www.world.rugby/organisation/about-us/overview>

⁵⁹⁹ Rugby Europe (2021) *About Us*, <https://www.rugbyeurope.eu/about-us/about-rugby-europe/>

⁶⁰⁰ United Rugby Championship (2021) *About URC*, <https://www.unitedrugby.com/about>

to the lower tiers of rugby in those countries which often operate at a more amateur level. In contrast, the lower tiers of rugby in France are considered to be much more professional, allowing for genuine competition for promotion and relegation – in contrast to countries such as England, where even though promotion is possible, the gulf between the first and second divisions mean promoted clubs struggle to compete at the highest level.⁶⁰¹ Each country's rugby union has considerable autonomy to arrange fixtures and grant consent for broadcasting of matches within their union. They are supported by World Rugby via a 'right to release' rule which requires clubs to ensure top players are available for selection in international matches.⁶⁰²

A private commercial organisation, the Six Nations, is responsible for the promotion and operation of the annual Six Nations Championships and Autumn International Series, as well as the negotiation and management of their centralised commercial rights.⁶⁰³ The **Six Nations** (England, France, Ireland, Italy, Scotland and Wales) is the top tier of international competition in XV rugby in Europe and is a **closed competition**. Rugby Europe has no jurisdiction over the Six Nations tournaments and matches.⁶⁰⁴ Rugby Europe organises a number of rugby matches and tournaments each year for all European members across all levels (senior, junior), genders (male, female), and variations of the sport (XVs, 7s, beach, and snow rugby).⁶⁰⁵ **Rugby Europe** competitions are based on a **promotion/relegation system**.

Another private commercial organisation run by the same unions and domestic leagues (England, France, Ireland, Italy, Scotland and Wales), **E.P.C.R.**, is responsible for two **closed European club competitions**, the Championship Cup and the Challenge Cup. Rugby Europe launched the Rugby Super Cup in 2021, which is a European club competition which they hope will provide a European competition pathway to the top clubs of its other member countries.⁶⁰⁶

In terms of **solidarity mechanisms**, most of World Rugby's revenue is generated from the men's Rugby World Cup via commercial partnerships, broadcast rights and ticket sales.⁶⁰⁷ World Rugby can also apply to the International Olympic Committee for a share of the revenue generated by the Olympic Games.⁶⁰⁸ A portion of these revenues are reinvested into the development and growth of the sport, directly and indirectly. World Rugby directly runs programmes aimed to support participation, coaching, volunteering, and business.⁶⁰⁹ They also allocate funding to member unions to use on their own grassroots and development initiatives, and countries who participate in the men's Rugby World Cup get a proportional dividend.⁶¹⁰ This leads to variation in the amount of funding available for grassroots sport and the way in which it is spent, which is governed by each country's rugby union. In France, solidarity mechanisms are felt to be effective thanks to a tax which requires sport federations who benefit from the sale of TV rights to return 5% of rights collected to the National Sports Agency.⁶¹¹ In the case of rugby, revenue from TV

⁶⁰¹ Rugby Network (2021) *Is French Rugby the Gold Standard of Organisation*, <https://www.rugbynetwork.net/main/worcester-warriors/s130/st201439/is-french-rugby-the-gold-standard-of-organisation>

⁶⁰² World Rugby (2021) *Regulations*, <https://www.world.rugby/organisation/governance/regulations/reg-1>

⁶⁰³ Six Nations (2021) *About Six Nations*, <https://www.sixnationsrugby.com/about-six-nations-rugby/>

⁶⁰⁴ Rugby Europe (2020) *ByLaws Edition 2020*, <https://www.rugbyeurope.eu/media/rctfboxi/eng-rugby-europe-bylaws-2020.pdf>

⁶⁰⁵ Rugby Europe (2021) *About Us*, <https://www.rugbyeurope.eu/about-us/about-rugby-europe/>

⁶⁰⁶ Rugby Europe (2021) *Rugby Europe Launches The Super Cup*, <https://www.rugbyeurope.eu/news/rugby-europe-launches-the-super-cup/>

⁶⁰⁷ World Rugby (2021) *About Us*, <https://www.world.rugby/organisation/about-us/overview>

⁶⁰⁸ Morgan, L. (2020) *World Rugby offers financial support to Tokyo 2020 qualified nations*, in 'Inside the Games', <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1097960/world-rugby-offers-sevens-support>

⁶⁰⁹ World Rugby (2019) *Impact Beyond: Programme Report*, https://resources.world.rugby/worldrugby/document/2020/09/01/94599f5e-bcce-40e6-a991-d6854ceb6b21/2020-ImpactBeyond-2019_Report-ENG.pdf

⁶¹⁰ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁶¹¹ Vie Publique (2021) *Who finances sport in France?*, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/274760-qui-finance-le-sport-en-france>

broadcaster Canal+ is thought to be well-distributed to clubs at different tiers of the French league system.⁶¹²

Rugby Europe can also apply for World Rugby funding which is largely spent helping members fulfil international fixtures – particularly in elite level men and women competitions outside of the Six Nations.⁶¹³ Many smaller European rugby nations are amateur and depend on financial support from World Rugby and Rugby Europe in order to compete. Whilst the revenue generated during the Six Nations over the course of four years is comparable to the Rugby World Cup, there are **no horizontal solidarity mechanisms** from the Six Nations to Rugby Europe or other European Rugby Unions and profits from the tournament are reinvested into the six participating nations.⁶¹⁴

The World Rugby Council is World Rugby’s highest decision-making body which votes on key decisions and has the power to admit or expel unions from its membership.⁶¹⁵ The Council is made up of 52 voting members. Rugby Europe has two representatives, though most of the members are from the largest rugby unions, with the ten biggest rugby nations having three votes each and representing 30 votes out of 52. Only 17 (out of 128) global rugby unions have voting power on the council, which means that decisions are often made which suit those established, larger rugby unions with voting power, according to stakeholders.⁶¹⁶ Rugby Europe has a large degree of **autonomy** and follows the sport **good governance** principles. Around a quarter (10) of their member countries are represented on their Board of Directors. On a national level, governance varies between countries but overall is considered to have improved since rugby was made an Olympic sport in 2016, since rugby unions are required to comply with the International Olympic Committee’s governance standards in order to receive funding.⁶¹⁷

The two main **roles of the public sector** in rugby are around promoting personal and mental health benefits of rugby (in particular providing reassurance around the risk of injury), and financing or supporting facilities (as World Rugby does not have a capita budget).⁶¹⁸ Support from the public sector varies between countries. For example, in France some councils own their local club’s stadium and contribute financially to the upkeep and training facilities; or in other cases local government has used public funding to build playing facilities.⁶¹⁹

Whilst there is no established **model for volunteering** in rugby, the sport is extremely reliant on volunteer workforces to run the game at grassroots level. Almost all clubs are run by volunteers who help with everything from governance to team management. In order to support the volunteer workforce, World Rugby produces a range of resources which are publicly available in multiple languages and provides advice on a wide range of issues around the set-up and management of clubs. Some national federations develop their own complimentary resources which are more country specific.⁶²⁰

Main trends that affect the evolution of Rugby

Top competitions are closed at both an international and club level, with the Six Nations and European Professional Club Rugby (EPRC)⁶²¹ limited to clubs and players from six European countries. Moreover, there is **no financial solidarity** between these closed competitions and the rest of European rugby. These **practices in organising**

⁶¹² Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁶¹³ Ibid

⁶¹⁴ Ibid

⁶¹⁵ World Rugby (2021) *Governance*, <https://www.world.rugby/organisation/about-us/governance>

⁶¹⁶ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁶¹⁷ Ibid

⁶¹⁸ Ibid

⁶¹⁹ Rugby Network (2021) *Is French Rugby the Gold Standard of Organisation*, <https://www.rugbynetwork.net/main/worcester-warriors/s130/st201439/is-french-rugby-the-gold-standard-of-organisation>

⁶²⁰ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁶²¹ European Rugby Championship (2021) *Qualification*, <https://www.eprcrugby.com/champions-cup/format/qualification/>

competitions have led to an increasing gulf with other nations and clubs who do not get an opportunity to compete at the highest level. For instance, the top rugby nations do not have to compete for their place in the World Cup, and so smaller rugby unions do not even get a chance to play qualifying matches against them⁶²². This gulf is also evident at club-level rugby, where there is often a big difference in quality and professionalism between clubs from different countries, or even clubs from different tiers in the same country. Therefore, even if promotion and relegation are an option, the gulf is such that few teams are genuinely able to be competitive at a higher level. This was evident in European club rugby, where previously clubs from other nations such as Romania could qualify for top tournaments but were often substantially defeated in matches. Stakeholders therefore reiterated that more investment in developing rugby nations is needed in order to level the playing field before the issue of open competition is addressed.⁶²³ Moreover, since the ability to generate revenue outside of the top competitions is limited, the financial repercussions for the top nations and clubs if they were to be relegated would be significant and lead to a loss of investment at all levels of the game, threatening to 'destabilise' it.⁶²⁴

The fact that players can only compete at the top level if they play in or for certain countries has led to significant **international player mobility** within rugby. For example, almost all of the Georgian national team play their club rugby in France.⁶²⁵ As well as for the higher level of competition, many players are reportedly attracted to the top European leagues because of the higher salaries on offer.⁶²⁶ The influx of foreign talent into top clubs has an impact on their home nations, whose leagues are unable to professionalise. In theory, countries such as Georgia could penalise their players who play club rugby elsewhere (as England does), however they do not have the infrastructure to keep top talent in the country and lack the 'buying power' needed to do so.⁶²⁷

Consequently, several countries have imposed rules around the number of 'home-grown' players required to be in the squads of these top teams. For example, in 2010 France introduced the 'JIFF' (*Joueurs Issus des Filières de Formation*) rule into its national league, which stipulates that 55% of squad players must have spent three seasons at a French club's youth academy before turning 21 or been licensed to play in France for five seasons before the age of 23.⁶²⁸ Whilst this was effective in reducing the number of foreign signings, clubs have instead altered their recruitment policies to get around the rule by recruiting talented young players from other countries and enrolling teenagers into their academies. This prevented the opportunity for young French talent to compete in the league. Further, it meant that young players could qualify to play for France under the three-year residency rule, depriving developing unions of their best players (though France has recently reversed this policy).⁶²⁹ In response to these issues, World Rugby has recently changed its regulations to allow players to switch nationality and become eligible to play for their country of birth again.⁶³⁰ Additionally, it has established a new professional game committee which brings together representations from the top nations. World Rugby hope

⁶²² Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁶²³ Ibid

⁶²⁴ Cumiskey, G. (2020) *Philip Browne admits funding model for Irish rugby is not sustainable*, in the 'Irish Times', <https://www.irishtimes.com/sport/rugby/philip-browne-admits-funding-model-for-irish-rugby-is-not-sustainable-1.4264926>

⁶²⁵ Sport24 (2021) *Georgia pick 12 France-based players for Springboks' Test return*, <https://www.news24.com/sport/Rugby/georgia-pick-12-france-based-players-for-springboks-test-return-20210630>

⁶²⁶ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁶²⁷ Ibid

⁶²⁸ Mortimer, G. (2016) *French rugby looking to close foreign player loopholes*, in 'Rugby World', <https://www.rugbyworld.com/countries/france-countries/french-rugby-looking-close-foreign-player-loopholes-55584>

⁶²⁹ BBC Sport (2016) *France rugby team to stop selecting 'foreign' players, says Laporte*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/rugby-union/38389827>

⁶³⁰ Planet Rugby (2021) *World Rugby approves changes to eligibility laws*, <https://www.planetrugby.com/world-rugby-approves-changes-to-eligibility-laws/>

this will provide a forum for some of these challenges, such as access to talent pools and developing sustainable competition pathways, to be discussed.⁶³¹

Rugby union became a professional sport relatively recently (1999) and continues to become more and more **commercialised** as the sport grows. The increasing popularity in international and domestic competitions has recently attracted **investment** from private equity firm, CVC, who have bought a percentage of the Six Nations, United Rugby Championship (URC), and English Premiership.⁶³² Since acquiring a 28% stake in the URC (formerly the Pro14).⁶³³ CVC has driven structural changes to the league and tried to 'maximise' its commercial potential by signing new paid-TV deals. In addition, the URC has launched a new global streaming service in partnership with Irish TV platform, RTE, in which consumers have the option to subscribe to a range of packages.⁶³⁴ It is reported that CVC is looking to capitalise on the revenue potential of the Six Nations by moving matches onto paid-for TV subscription channels.⁶³⁵

In terms of **participation**, rugby's biggest growth is amongst female players, who now make up over a quarter of players globally.⁶³⁶ As such, women's rugby is seen as a priority area for growing the game. Consequently, one of World Rugby's **good governance** priorities is around increasing female representation at all levels of the sport, including Board level. An independent review into World Rugby's governance recommended 40% female representation on committees. It also recommended increased player representation, and certainly player welfare was thought to be another key governance issue.⁶³⁷ Rugby Europe also introduced a 2021-2024 strategic plan which pledges to grow female representation to 30%. Recent media attention around the long-term impacts of concussion has forced player welfare into the spotlight and World Rugby is taking a data driven approach to reducing injury prevention by investing resources into research. A big concern is the impact this is having on grassroots sport, as rugby can be portrayed as dangerous which is putting parents off from allowing their children to play rugby.⁶³⁸

Overall, stakeholders considered the European Model of Sport to be **relevant** to rugby. Whilst the pyramidal structure works well at grassroots level, this approach falls down at elite level where certain clubs and countries have a 'glass ceiling' above them. The partial implementation of the European Sport Model in rugby prevents the sport to grow in the countries not belonging to the Six Nations. A lack of open competition and pyramidal structure are ultimately the issues which need to be resolved, though the first priority should be professionalising more countries of the sport. Until teams are ready to compete at the highest level, promotion and relegation are not a viable option. In order to address this, stakeholders believed that key rugby federations (World Rugby, Rugby Europe, Six Nations) should start by establishing financial solidarity mechanisms between the Six Nations and other European unions in order to disperse investment throughout the sport.

⁶³¹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁶³² Chitty, T. (2021) *Private equity firm CVC lands \$509 million deal for international rugby tournament*, <https://www.cbc.com/2021/03/12/cvc-capital-partners-buy-share-in-rugbys-six-nations.html>

⁶³³ IRFU (2020) *Guinness PRO14 Announces CVC Capital Partners Strategic Investment*, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/2020/05/22/guinness-pro14-announces-cvc-capital-partners-strategic-investment/>

⁶³⁴ Carp, S. (2021) *'It needs to become an entertainment platform to grow': URC chief Martin Anayi talks taking club rugby in a new direction*, in 'Sports Pro Media', <https://www.sportspromedia.com/analysis/united-rugby-championship-rebrand-ott-streaming-platform-martin-anayi-interview/>

⁶³⁵ Dixon, E. (2021) *England v Scotland Six Nations clash peaks at 8.7m on ITV*, in 'Sports Pro Media', <https://www.sportspromedia.com/news/england-scotland-six-nations-2021-itv-tv-viewing-figures/>

⁶³⁶ World Rugby (2021) *Women's Rugby*, <https://www.world.rugby/organisation/about-us/womens>

⁶³⁷ World Rugby (2021) *World Rugby reveals interim findings of independent-led governance review*, <https://www.world.rugby/news/610992/world-rugby-reveals-interim-findings-of-independent-led-governance-review>

⁶³⁸ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

Sport Fiche – Swimming

Study on the European Sport Model(s)

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

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Sport fiches

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each fiche summarises the main features and trends that affect the evolution of the 15 selected sports at EU level and in different Member States. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews and the survey is included where relevant – this shows key features and evolving trends in relation to swimming and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Background

Swimming is an individual or team racing sport taking place in pools or open waters. Swimming has featured at the Olympic games since 1896 for men and 1912 for women⁶³⁹ and it is generally considered as one of the most popular Olympic disciplines.⁶⁴⁰ According to the European Swimming Federation (*LEN - Ligue Européenne de Natation*), swimming has been the most watched sport on TV during the last three editions of the Olympic games.⁶⁴¹ Swimming is also a popular sport all over Europe, with over 90 million people practicing it at least every two weeks.⁶⁴² Moreover, around 1.5 million practice this sport at a competitive level, equally divided between males and females, with 65% of these being under 18.⁶⁴³

Main features of the Swimming Sport Model

The **organisational structure** of swimming follows pyramidal structure in line with the European Sport Model. At the top of the pyramid there is the international swimming federation, FINA (*Federation Internationale de Natation*), which is responsible for the organisation of international competitions as well as for setting up rules for the participation of athletes in Olympic Games.⁶⁴⁴ The two following layers of the pyramid are then constituted by the continental and national federations: there are currently five continental federations and 208 national federations that are members of FINA.⁶⁴⁵ The European Swimming Federation (LEN) is a recognised member of FINA and works to achieve the objectives stated in the FINA constitution, by also promoting aquatics sports through development programmes, courses, clinics and conferences.⁶⁴⁶

Only one national federation can be affiliated to LEN, and each member federation has the right to take part in the LEN events, vote for members of the LEN bureau, take part in the LEN congress and propose candidates for FINA Vice-Presidents and FINA bureau members.⁶⁴⁷ Each national federation can then be composed of a number of regional committees or federations that are responsible for the organisation of regional

⁶³⁹ International Olympic Committee (2022). *History of Swimming*, <https://olympics.com/en/sports/swimming/#discipline-history-of>

⁶⁴⁰ Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA) (2021). *Swimming History and Presentation*, <https://www.fina.org/swimming/history-and-presentation>

⁶⁴¹ Ligue Européenne de Natation (LEN) (2021). *About LEN*, http://www.len.eu/?page_id=360

⁶⁴² Ibid

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA) (2021). *FINA Constitution*, https://resources.fina.org/fina/document/2021/06/15/dfdc5d34-5752-4155-b1c4-82495a2c6019/22_FINA-Constitution_05.06.2021.pdf

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁶ Ligue Européenne de Natation (2018). *Constitutional rules*, <http://www2.len.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/LEN-CONSTITUTIONAL-RULES.pdf>

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

competitions or to support the development of sport at grassroots level. For instance, in Italy there are 20 regional committees (one per Italian region) part of the Italian National federation.⁶⁴⁸ while in Ireland the national federation is composed by 32 committees at county level (also including Northern Ireland).⁶⁴⁹

The **system of competition** in swimming is mostly based on standard qualifying times that need to be met by athletes willing to participate in specific international, national or local events.⁶⁵⁰ For this reason, the principle of promotion and relegation is not really applicable in swimming. There are however different types of competitions based on the age and sex of the athletes, as well as on the specific sub-discipline (i.e., individual or team race, specific swimming styles, etc.). While major world competitions are organised directly by FINA, other international competitions can be organised by national or continental federations after being recognised by FINA.⁶⁵¹ National and regional federations or committees can then organise local level competitions that can be recognised by the continental federation and provide access to national, continental or world competitions if a standard qualifying time has been met in each relevant sub-discipline.⁶⁵²

The **solidarity mechanisms** are mainly aimed at redistributing revenues from top-tiers competitions and elite level to the lower-level competitions and grassroots level. In the case of swimming, national federations usually receive fees and economic contributions from local or regional sport clubs, and they then pay an affiliation fee to FINA.⁶⁵³ FINA is then responsible for redistributing these revenues through ad-hoc programmes, such as the FINA Continental Support Programme, which provides funds to continental organisations for the development and growth of the sport movement within their region. Moreover, FINA also provides funds directly to national federations and their athletes to compete in international competitions at elite level.⁶⁵⁴

National federations need to rely on public funding sources however in order to support the development of the sport at grassroots level. This is largely because the proportion of funds from international or continental federations allocated to the grassroots level is small, with the vast majority of funding aimed at supporting and developing the sport at elite level.⁶⁵⁵ The public sector provides the main source of funding for the Irish national federation, for example, (55%), followed by self-generated income (fees from associations or clubs). In fact, as argued by a stakeholder consulted, swimming does not attract a sufficient amount of funds from private entities in the form of sponsorships or broadcasting rights.⁶⁵⁶

Autonomy and good governance is important for the organisation of this sport. In particular, the FINA by Law 2017-2021 explicitly indicates that the autonomy of the National Federations members of FINA shall not be compromised by national or regional governments and it represents a key aspect contributing to the development of the sport

⁶⁴⁸ Federazione Italiana Nuoto (FIN - Italian Swimming Federation) (2020). *Regolamento settore nuoto (Swimming rules)*, https://www.federnuoto.it/home/nuoto/norme-e-documenti-nuoto/norme-documenti-nuoto_2020-2021/5817-regolamento-stagione-2020-2021/file.html

⁶⁴⁹ Swim Ireland (2021). *Annual Report 2020*, <https://www.swimireland.ie/files/documents/Swim-Ireland-Annual-Report-2020.pdf>

⁶⁵⁰ Federation International de Natation (FINA) (2021). *FINA Constitution*, https://resources.fina.org/fina/document/2021/06/15/dfdc5d34-5752-4155-b1c4-82495a2c6019/22_FINA-Constitution_05.06.2021.pdf

⁶⁵¹ Federation International de Natation (FINA) (2021). *FINA by laws*, https://resources.fina.org/fina/document/2021/08/13/81c8304f-37f9-4235-992a-9558fcbd68d6/18_FINA-By-Laws_13_08_2021.pdf

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁴ Federation International de Natation (FINA). (2021). *2020 Annual Report FINA Development Programme*, https://resources.fina.org/fina/document/2021/02/18/720fe652-d307-45eb-a24c-60e89d7c1703/Development_Annual_Report_2020.pdf

⁶⁵⁵ Federazione Italiana Nuoto (FIN - Italian Swimming Federation) (2020). *2019 Budget*, <https://www.federnuoto.it/home/sostenibilit%C3%A0/6099-bilancio-di-sostenibilit%C3%A0-2018-1/file.html>; Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

⁶⁵⁶ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

movement in the relevant country.⁶⁵⁷ In this context, FINA can take appropriate measures - including the suspension or expulsion from FINA membership - if the constitutions, laws or other regulations and acts by a relevant government “provokes the activities of the National Federation or the making or expression of its will to be hampered”.⁶⁵⁸

As also outlined by a stakeholder consulted, at national level the **role of public sector** is mainly aimed at supporting the development of sport at grassroots level or at promoting and fostering participation in sporting activities.⁶⁵⁹ In Ireland, for example, the main sporting body (Sport Ireland) provide different funding streams to sustain the development of swimming in the country, through outreach activities fostering participation in swimming at community and grassroots level.⁶⁶⁰ In Ireland, other public resources are also made available by other authorities, such as the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education, and mostly aimed at funding specific programmes (i.e., inclusion of harder to reach segments of the population) or outreach and training activities in schools⁶⁶¹.

All the survey respondents providing their feedback on swimming indicated that the **role of volunteers** is a very relevant for the organisation of this sport. This finding was also corroborated by the stakeholders consulted, mentioning that without volunteers swimming (and sport more in general) would not function, since all the competitions at all levels rely on the work of volunteers⁶⁶². The Irish swimming federation, for example, provides specific guidelines and support to local clubs and organisations in order to help them to recruit and manage volunteers during competitions⁶⁶³. Moreover, the organisational structure of the European Swimming Federation (LEN) also strongly relies on the work of volunteers, as demonstrated by the fact that two of its main governing bodies - the LEN Bureau and LEN Committee - are composed by members performing their duties without any compensation.⁶⁶⁴

Main trends that affect the evolution of Swimming

Recent developments in swimming relating to the creation of a closed league suggest that **practices in organising competitions** are constituting a movement away from the European Sport Model. In 2017, the Russian-Ukrainian billionaire Konstantin Grigorishin founded the International Swimming League (ISL), a team-based professional swimming series.⁶⁶⁵ The founding organisation (International Swimming League Ltd.) promised large investments in the sport and particularly for athletes, with over \$4 million in appearance money and prize money for clubs and athletes to be awarded during the season.⁶⁶⁶ While several professional athletes supported the creation of this closed team-based league,

⁶⁵⁷ Federation International de Natation (FINA) (2021). *FINA by laws*, https://resources.fina.org/fina/document/2021/08/13/81c8304f-37f9-4235-992a-9558fcbd68d6/18_FINA-By-Laws_13_08_2021.pdf

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

⁶⁶⁰ Swim Ireland (2021). *Annual Report 2020*, <https://www.swimireland.ie/files/documents/Swim-Ireland-Annual-Report-2020.pdf>

⁶⁶¹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

⁶⁶² Ibid.

⁶⁶³ Swim Ireland (2021). *Volunteer engagement programme*, <https://www.swimireland.ie/news/volunteer-engagement-programme-2021>

⁶⁶⁴ Ligue Européenne de Natation (2018). *Constitutional rules*, <http://www2.len.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/LEN-CONSTITUTIONAL-RULES.pdf>

⁶⁶⁵ Lord, C. (2019). *International Swimming League wins latest round against FINA: Court backs 'discovery'*. Swimming World, <https://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/news/international-swimming-league-wins-latest-round-against-fina-court-backs-discovery/>

⁶⁶⁶ International Swimming League (ISL) (2019). *ISL to deliver 40 million global audience across broadcast and online in inaugural season*. Press release, <https://isl.global/2019/10/05/isl-to-deliver-40-million-global-audience-across-broadcast-and-online-in-inaugural-season/>

FINA did not recognise it and instead threatened to ban athletes competing in this league from one to two years.⁶⁶⁷

After negotiations between athletes and FINA, the athletes decided to not compete at ISL and the 2018 inaugural event in Turin was cancelled.⁶⁶⁸ Following this, ISL initiated a lawsuit against FINA for violating the US antitrust laws, as it imposed athletes to not take part in another competition. FINA issued a statement to say that it would no longer ban swimmers and it has since given permission for ISL competition to go ahead from October 2019.⁶⁶⁹ While the lawsuit is still ongoing in 2022, the ISL reached its fourth edition with ten clubs competing among themselves and drafting each year athletes willing to participate in this closed competition.⁶⁷⁰

The strong support toward the closed competition among professional athletes was also due to the larger revenues that this competition promised to generate and the larger investments that it aimed to mobilise. In particular, the ISL aimed to increase the **commercialisation** revenues of the swimming competitions deriving from sponsorships and broadcasting deals. In this context, the ISL founder claimed that the newly established closed competition was set to deliver a massive audience of 40 million viewers across broadcast, live streaming and social media in its inaugural season by also partnering with 10 different regular broadcasters and by making the matches available in 6 different continents.⁶⁷¹ Moreover, the promise to allocate more funds to prize and appearance money for professional athletes contributed to attract approximately 75% of all current Olympic and World Champions in the ISL competition.⁶⁷²

However, as also pointed by one consulted stakeholder, there is actually little evidence of the increased **internationalisation** of the audience for swimming, as well as of the impact of commercialisation practices and private investments in FINA-based competitions.⁶⁷³ Moreover, the alleged lack of effective solidarity principles and **redistribution mechanisms** to support the sport movement at grassroots level is also considered as an aspect that shall be taken into consideration at FINA level. As outlined by a consulted stakeholder, the support provided by international federations or by the national Olympic organisations is mainly used to sustain and fund elite level athletes, while the grassroots level is mainly funded through public sources or through self-generated income from local clubs and associations.⁶⁷⁴

The alleged lack of transparency and inclusion in the decision-making process at FINA level was also considered as a strong argument in favour of the creation of an international closed league.⁶⁷⁵ In response to these allegations, FINA is currently undertaking a process of reform of its governance structures, aimed at increasing transparency and implementing **good governance practices** in swimming.⁶⁷⁶ In this context, the FINA Reform Committee Report was published in October 2021 which highlighted good governance as the first pillar of the reform process to be inaugurated by the new FINA presidency.⁶⁷⁷ The FINA Committee proposed the creation of an Aquatics Integrity Unit to oversee three separate areas, i.e., antidoping; event manipulation and corruptible offences; and, ethical

⁶⁶⁷ Lord, C. (2019). *International Swimming League wins latest round against FINA: Court backs 'discovery'*. Swimming World, <https://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/news/international-swimming-league-wins-latest-round-against-fina-court-backs-discovery/>

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ International Swimming League (ISL) (2021). *Rules*, <https://isl.global/isl/rules/>

⁶⁷¹ International Swimming League (ISL) (2019). *ISL to deliver 40 million global audience across broadcast and online in inaugural season*. Press release, <https://isl.global/2019/10/05/isl-to-deliver-40-million-global-audience-across-broadcast-and-online-in-inaugural-season/>

⁶⁷² Ibid.

⁶⁷³ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁵ Rowbottom, M., (2018). *FINA v ISL. Blood in the water*. Inside the games. <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1073134/fina-v-isl-blood-in-the-water>

⁶⁷⁶ Federation International de Natation (FINA) (2021). *FINA shares key recommendations for future reforms, including establishing Integrity Unit*, <https://www.fina.org/news/2286902/fina-shares-key-recommendations-for-future-reforms-including-establishing-integrity-unit>

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

violations. The Committee also suggests modifications to the FINA Code of Ethics and its Constitution in order to address the lack of independence and transparency in the current FINA system.⁶⁷⁸ Finally, the Committee also advocates for the creation of a dedicated working group of athletes that shall contribute to the reform process within FINA and increase the representation of athletes in decision-making processes.⁶⁷⁹

Finally, there is increasing evidence of the benefits of practicing swimming on health and it is generally recognised by academia as a sport that can support the achievement of public health goals⁶⁸⁰ and contribute to savings in the health and social care system.⁶⁸¹ In this context, swimming is generally considered as a sport widely practiced at grassroots level, also because it provides vital life skills, as it prevents risks of drowning. However, one consulted stakeholder pointed out that more efforts would be needed to address the lack of investments in swimming related infrastructures and also suggested that it would be important to recognise swimming as a key discipline in each national sport policy.⁶⁸² The increased recognition of the importance of swimming would then ensure that this sport is adequately promoted and sustained in schools and more in general at community and grassroots level.⁶⁸³

⁶⁷⁸ Federation International de Natation (FINA) (2021). *2021 FINA Reform Committee Report*, <https://resources.fina.org/fina/document/2021/10/11/e741f152-ddfe-4a7d-8182-1f44d9137ad2/Report-on-Reform-FINAL-.pdf>

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁰ Swim England (2017). *New report shows health benefits of swimming*, <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/new-report-shows-health-benefits-swimming/>

⁶⁸¹ Swim England (2019). *Swimming helping to save health system £357 million a year*, <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/value-swimming-report-launched/>

⁶⁸² Information obtained through consultation with stakeholders.

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

Sport Fiche – Tennis

Study on the European Sport Model

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

Date produced: March 2022

Sport fiches

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each fiche summarises the main features and trends that affect the evolution of the 15 selected sports at EU level and in different Member States. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews and the survey is included where relevant – this shows key features and evolving trends in relation to tennis and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Background

With over 25 million players across Europe, tennis is the most popular individual sport in the European Union. The popularity of tennis is global and professional tournaments are organised all over the world. It is also an Olympic sport, with a continuous presence since 1988.

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) is the governing body of world tennis, wheelchair tennis, and beach tennis. It was founded in 1913 and there are currently 211 national and six regional associations that make up ITF's membership. The ITF's responsibilities include maintaining and enforcing the rules of tennis, regulating international team competitions, promoting the game, and preserving the sport's integrity via anti-doping and anti-corruption programmes. The ITF partners with the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) and the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) to govern professional tennis.⁶⁸⁴

Tennis Europe, comprised of 50 European member nations, is the largest regional association of the sport's governing body, the ITF. Based in Basel, Switzerland, the organisation was founded in 1975 and takes an active role in all aspects of the European game, executing tasks delegated by the ITF, and also by organising a number of competitions and events independently from the ITF, such as the European Tennis Championships. It supports and manages over 1,000 international tennis events each year.⁶⁸⁵

Main features of the Tennis Sport Model

The **organisational structure** of tennis is quite different to what we typically observe in European team sports. Tennis has a much more fragmented governance model, with different organisations managing their own tournaments: ATP, WTA, grand slams, alongside national and international federations.

- The ITF organises the Grand Slam events, annual team competitions for men (Davis Cup), women (Billie Jean King Cup), and mixed teams (Hopman Cup), as well as tennis and wheelchair tennis events at the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games on behalf of the International Olympic Committee.
- The Pro tours (ATP for men and WTA for women) are two separate organisations which manage the highest professional level of tennis. They manage their own tournaments (Masters 1000, ATP/WTA 500 and ATP/WTA 250 tournaments).⁶⁸⁶
- Four of the ITF's leading National Associations - Tennis Australia, the French Federation of Tennis, United States Tennis Association and, in the case of Wimbledon, a joint

⁶⁸⁴ <https://www.itftennis.com/en/about-us/>

⁶⁸⁵ Tennis Europe (2021), *Tennis Europe brochure*, <https://www.tenniseurope.org/file/28613/?dl=1>

⁶⁸⁶ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

Committee of Management consisting of The All-England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club and Lawn Tennis Association - own and organise each Grand Slam tournament.⁶⁸⁷

The ITF works closely with each Grand Slam tournament through its presence on the Grand Slam Board, and in providing governance, administrative, officiating and media support. The four grand slams tournaments are a key actor. They theoretically belong to ITF and operate under its umbrella, but in practice they rather have a strong cooperation with the ATP due to calendar reasons. Grand slams also have their own rules: matches are played with the best of five sets (whereas matches are played with the best of three sets in 99% of the tournaments). Each also have different end of game rules (6-6 tie-break, two games difference, 12-12 tie-break, etc.).⁶⁸⁸

The European **system of competition** is also quite specific, and the promotion/relegation system does not really apply to professional tennis (Pro tours simply have qualification mechanisms based on players' rankings, invitations and qualifying tournaments). However, the national teams do have an element of promotion/relegation, with one world group (best 16 teams), and then a pyramid of lower-level groups where a promotion/relegation system applies.⁶⁸⁹

There is also a pyramidal model at national level. In most countries the national federations are responsible for national teams, in partnership with regional federations. For instance, in Belgium, interclub competitions are organised 1) at national level (highest division) and then at regional level (eight divisions, then sub-categories per age groups). The promotion/relegation system works on the basis of the total points gained over a season (so no maximum clubs promoted/relegated).⁶⁹⁰ Tennis club competitions (Leagues) are most often managed by regional associations, at an amateur level. Professional players may be involved in such competitions as they may be licensed in a particular tennis club (most of the time the club they started playing tennis at).

In response to the COVID crisis, a package of **solidarity mechanisms** to support stakeholders impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing suspension of professional tennis was developed by ITF. The package was approved by the ITF Board in early June 2020 and represents a total relief fund of more than US\$2.6million. The new measures include \$1.449million in funding for National Associations to help facilitate the return to tennis through national and junior tournament grants, top ranked junior player grants, and a \$350,000 fund for players ranked 501-700. In May 2020, the seven tennis stakeholders had also collectively raised in excess of \$6 million to create a Player Relief Programme aimed at supporting approximately 800 ATP/WTA singles and doubles players in need of financial support.⁶⁹¹

The European Tennis Federation does not manage important TV rights deals and has little funding to allocate, so redistribution is different to other sports. It works in cooperation with ITF solidarity and development scheme (which comes on top of the above-mentioned relief package). This scheme does not only provide money but also education, training and coaching, mainly in developing countries.

In terms of **autonomy** and **good governance**, tennis tournaments operate quite autonomously. It is worth noting that the COVID-19 pandemic led to a more coordinated approach, as tennis stakeholders were forced to deal with the issue collectively. Two projects emerged: 1) T7 a gathering of one representative from each governing body (ITF, ATP, WTA, and each grand slam tournament) to decide more collectively on a set of key issues (calendar, points distribution, money redistribution). 2) Tennis United, a project between ATP and WTA to align rules on joint tournaments between men and women.

⁶⁸⁷ <https://www.itftennis.com/en/about-us/>

⁶⁸⁸ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ Association Francophone de Tennis statutes and regulations: <https://www.aftnet.be/> and Tennis Vlaanderen statutes and regulations: <https://www.tennisvlaanderen.be/>

⁶⁹¹ ITF (2020), *ITF announces further measures to support stakeholders*, Press release, 10 June 2020.

The **role of the public sector** is very important for amateur tennis. Tennis clubs and tennis courts are largely supported by public bodies, be it through national sport funding or through local authorities. For example, in Sweden, public funding is channelled through the Swedish Sports Confederation which currently receives almost SEK 2 billion in annual funding from the state. A total of SEK 15.5 million was allocated to tennis in 2020, including SEK 6.3 million for core funding to tennis associations and clubs, and SEK 9.2 million on infrastructure and specific projects.⁶⁹²

In tennis the role of **volunteers** is very important, almost 100% of clubs are run by volunteers (also board members) except for the largest clubs with 1,000+ members and 10-15 courts. Volunteers also play an important role in the management of tennis associations and federations, and also support the organisation of large-scale events including professional tournaments.⁶⁹³

Main trends that affect the evolution of Tennis

The governance structure of tennis has a bearing on trends related to **commercialisation**. Tennis accounts for only 1.3% of the total value of global sports TV and media rights, a smaller share than golf, hockey, or cricket, according to a 2018 report by data company SportBusiness. The article explains that the sales of TV rights is not organised collectively, and the tournament organisers fail to monetise their content on TV/online (except for the four grand slams). Before the pandemic, the sport generated roughly \$2.3 billion in annual revenue. About 60% comes from the four Grand Slams, each of which operates independently. These revenues more or less equally come from media rights (\$750 million), ticket sales (\$800 million) and sponsoring deals (\$750 million).⁶⁹⁴ The ATP has put forward a plan to increase media rights revenue, based on centralisation and aggregation of rights. Tennis Data Innovation, an entity set up in 2020 by AFP, has already delivered a 38% increase in gross sales of data and streaming revenues each year to date, compared to the last non-pandemic year in 2019.⁶⁹⁵

In terms of **solidarity and redistribution**, tennis is affected by a concentration of revenues towards the top 1% of the players. The ATP has recently issued a strategic 30-year plan with a review every 10 years. The plan proposes that total prize money at the Masters 1000s would increase by approximately 19%. That would raise it from about \$63 million in 2022 to \$75 million in 2023. The Masters 1000 bonus pool, set at \$11.5 million for 2022, will be raised by an additional \$4 million for 2023, and it will apply to 30 players, as opposed to the current 12. The plan calls for that number to increase to \$20 million by 2030.

The Strategic Plan of the ATP focuses on enhancing the premium product (top ATP tournaments and especially the Masters 1000), on maximising revenues from TV rights and sponsorship/merchandising, to be in a stronger position to distribute more resources down the pyramid into the lower tiers of professional tennis. The Professional Tennis Players Association (PTPA, an association launched in 2021 by some professional players, including Vasek Pospisil and Novak Djokovic) argues that a clear revenue-sharing model should be designed from the get-go, together with solidarity mechanisms.⁶⁹⁶

Practices in **organising competitions** are challenged by the emergence of parallel competitions. In 2018, Kosmos announced a partnership with the ITF, pledging to invest

⁶⁹² Swedish Sports Confederation (2021), *Annual Report 2020*, <https://www.rf.se/globalassets/riksidrottsforbundet/nya-dokument/nya-dokumentbanken/rfs-verksamhet/verksamhetsberattelse-2020.pdf?w=900&h=700>

⁶⁹³ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁶⁹⁴ Yaffe-Bellany, D. (2021), *The Missed Business Opportunity That Is Pro Tennis*, Bloomberg, 24 March 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-03-24/novak-djokovic-other-tennis-players-seek-to-reform-economics-of-the-sport>

⁶⁹⁵ Miles, S. (2020), *The ATP's blueprint for the future requires buy-in from all*, Open Court Article, 11 September 2020, <https://opencourt.ca/2020/09/11/the-atps-blueprint-for-the-future-requires-buy-in-from-all/>

⁶⁹⁶ Miles, S. (2021), *The ATP Tour answers the PTPA's questions (well, some of them)*, Open Court Article, 28 June 2021, <https://opencourt.ca/2021/06/30/the-atp-tour-answers-the-ptpas-questions-well-some-of-them/>

\$3 billion over 25 years in grassroots tennis development and in a revamped Davis Cup tournament that would take place over one week and continue to involve only men. The ATP brokered a separate agreement with the Australian tennis federation to start the ATP Cup, a team tournament with a similar structure.

While these are not closed competitions and the issues it raises are quite different to what can be observed in other sports (where parallel closed competitions emerge), this shows the challenges of coordination between different international organisations. This is particularly the case in tennis, where each player has a lot of freedom over the tournaments he/she participates in.⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹⁷ Yaffe-Bellany, D., (2021) *The Missed Business Opportunity That Is Pro Tennis*, Bloomberg, 24 March 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-03-24/novak-djokovic-other-tennis-players-seek-to-reform-economics-of-the-sport>

Sport Fiche – Triathlon

Study on the European Sport Model

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

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Sport fiches

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Background

Triathlon is an Olympic, individual sport. The sport was invented in the early 1970s by the San Diego Track Club in California as an alternative workout to the rigours of track training. The club's first event consisted of a 10km run, an 8km cycle and a 500m swim. Over the next decade, triathlon's popularity continued to build, and the sport soon featured at the Olympics, making its debut in the Sydney Olympics in 2000.⁶⁹⁸ The official distance for triathlon is taken from existing events in each discipline of the Olympic programme and is set at a 10km run, 40km cycle and 1,500m swim.⁶⁹⁹ The sport is particularly popular in the United States and the United Kingdom,⁷⁰⁰ while in continental Europe it is popular in countries such as Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.⁷⁰¹

Main features of the Triathlon Sport Model

Triathlon, like many sports, follows a pyramidal **organisational structure**. At the international level, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) recognise World Triathlon as the sport's world governing body. World Triathlon presides over five confederations, including Europe Triathlon, which is the governing body for triathlon, paratriathlon and all relevant multi-sports in Europe.⁷⁰² Europe Triathlon includes 47 National Federations (NFs).⁷⁰³ In some countries, for example in Spain, there are also regional federations organising competitions at the regional level.

As the world's governing body, World Triathlon's role is to enact and enforce rules governing triathlon, paratriathlon and its related multisports and to ensure in all competitions (whether sanctioned by World Triathlon, a Continental Confederation, a Member or an Associate Member) that such rules are applied in accordance with their terms.⁷⁰⁴ Either at the international (World Triathlon) or at the European (Europe Triathlon) level, federations are **autonomous** when it comes to decision-making.⁷⁰⁵ At the national level, this is not always the case. For example, in Spain, the government (which funds the federation) is also involved in decision-making. When it comes to the role of

⁶⁹⁸ Olympics.org (n.d.), *Triathlon*, <https://olympics.com/en/sports/triathlon/>

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁰ Triathlonbudgeting.com (n.d.), <https://triathlonbudgeting.com/where-in-the-world-is-triathlon-most-popular-is-the-sport-dying/>

⁷⁰¹ Based on World Triathlon's ranking of national federations. More information available at: <https://triathlonbudgeting.com/where-in-the-world-is-triathlon-most-popular-is-the-sport-dying/>

⁷⁰² Europe Triathlon (2018), *Articles of Association*, <https://europe.triathlon.org/downloads>.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ World Triathlon (2022), *Constitution*, https://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/World_Triathlon_Constitution_2022.pdf

⁷⁰⁵ For example, as per its constitution, Europe Triathlon's purpose is amongst others, to maintain harmonious and cooperative relations with appropriate governmental bodies, all the while preserving its autonomy and resisting all pressures of any kind, including those of a political, religious, discriminatory or economic nature. More information available at: Europe Triathlon (2018), *Articles of Association*, <https://europe.triathlon.org/downloads>.

other stakeholders in decision-making, it is worth noting that both World and Europe Triathlon have an Athletes Commission. At World Triathlon, the Athletes Commission chair and vice-chair are also members of the Executive Board.⁷⁰⁶ In Europe Triathlon, while athletes are not members of the Executive Board, they have the role to advise it on matters relating to elite athlete performance and racing in Europe Triathlon events.⁷⁰⁷ Fans are not part of the decision-making process.

With regard to the **system of competition**, the sport follows a ranking system based on sporting merits, with athletes accruing points from national, continental and international competitions. However, a small number of spots in international competitions is reserved for specific athletes on the basis of other merits (e.g., for development purposes, some spots are reserved for athletes who would not otherwise have the financial possibility to compete; bringing such athletes to international competitions helps the sport develop in their countries). International competitions follow a system similar to the one of Formula 1: there is not a single competition awarding the championship, but rather a series of competitions. While competitions falling within the pyramidal structure are the only ones qualifying athletes for the Olympic Games, Triathlon faces increasing competition by private parties, who organise external competitions, a trend that is further described in the following section below.

In terms of **solidarity mechanisms**, World Triathlon has different schemes (e.g., scholarships, sponsorships, etc) directly benefitting NFs. For example, through its sponsor, Asics, World Triathlon detects and supports talented athletes whose NF cannot financially support, to qualify for the Olympic Games. World Triathlon also helps confederations through providing them with educational material, helping them cover anti-doping test costs in competitions, etc.

In addition, World Triathlon distributes funds to Europe Triathlon, who then makes them available to NFs. In particular, in 2021 Europe Triathlon provided approximately €195,000 to NFs⁷⁰⁸ for activities including development camps, technical official courses, coaching courses, youth festivals, etc.⁷⁰⁹ To reduce inequalities between advanced and lagging federations, funding was open only for federations meeting certain eligibility criteria.⁷¹⁰ Europe Triathlon also reserved a small part of funding to help NFs to support para-triathlon in order to maintain the sport's position at the Paralympics. Moreover, at national level, NFs can also benefit from their National Olympic Committees (NOCs) as well as from government funding, which is often conditional on the application of good governance practices. For example, in Spain, almost a third of the federation's four million budget came from the government.⁷¹¹

World Triathlon is continuously seeking to improve their **good governance practices**, taking, however, into consideration, the reality of the sport on the ground. As highlighted below, triathlon federations are largely run by volunteers, and often the application of good governance principles can cause significant administrative and financial costs to them, leaving less money for a sport that is already underprivileged in terms of generating large revenue.⁷¹² In addition, some issues calling for good governance such as betting are not relevant for Triathlon yet, and thus triathlon has a less advanced structure in place to tackle them compared to sports where betting is a significant issue.⁷¹³ In Europe, Europe Triathlon has recently made significant steps towards good governance, in terms of

⁷⁰⁶ World Triathlon (2022), *Constitution*,

https://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/World_Triathlon_Constitution_2022.pdf

⁷⁰⁷ Europe Triathlon (2018), *Articles of Association*, <https://europe.triathlon.org/downloads>.

⁷⁰⁸ World Triathlon's share of this budget is approximately €135,000. For more information, please see:

https://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/ET_2021_Development_Agreement.pdf

⁷⁰⁹ Europe.triathlon.org (2021), *Development*, <https://europe.triathlon.org/development/>

⁷¹⁰ For more information, please see:

https://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/NF_Survey_Report_2020_Digital.pdf

⁷¹¹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁷¹² Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁷¹³ Ibid

restoring its financial situation, auditing NFs receiving funding for development purposes, and promoting gender equality, also through amendments in its constitution.⁷¹⁴

In terms of **public sector support**, at the European level, it is worth noting that Europe Triathlon offices is mostly run by volunteers, and while there were discussions within the federation to apply for Erasmus + schemes, those were abandoned as there was not enough organisational capacity. At national level, the situation varies. For example, as seen before, Spain receives a considerable amount of money from its national government. Interestingly, Spain's annual budget is almost 10 times bigger than the one of Europe Triathlon. Such big gaps also exist between countries in Europe, but also within regions of the same countries.

As highlighted above, triathlon relies heavily on the support of **volunteers**. At Europe Triathlon, the head-office is mostly run by volunteers while technical staff are also volunteers,⁷¹⁵ who sometimes even have to pay for their expenses. While relying on volunteering is positive, it also has its limitations. For example, the future of the sport in the absence of volunteers is questionable. At the same time, volunteers often do not have the necessary knowledge and cannot respond to trends such as commercialisation. In light of this, Europe Triathlon is developing a strategy in 2022 which will outline how the federation will aim to professionalise its media strategy and head office.

In light of the above, it can be seen that most of the main features of the European Sport Model are **relevant** to triathlon, particularly its pyramidal organisational structure, solidarity mechanisms and the importance of the role of volunteers to the sport.

Main trends that affect the evolution of Triathlon

This section presents the main trends that are seen to be affecting the evolution of triathlon. In particular, it focuses on how profit-driven investors have entered into the sport's market, and how World Triathlon and the Confederations have responded to them.

Triathlon's main revenue streams come from sponsorship at the Olympic Games and television rights. Recently, World Triathlon is aiming to increase its **commercialisation** by creating additional revenue streams through TriathlonLive.tv, an on-demand, OTT platform.⁷¹⁶ However, broadly speaking, triathlon is not as commercially attractive as more popular sports such as football and basketball.

In addition, **practices in organising competitions** are changing. Many triathlon competitions are organised outside of the federations by private entities who are backed by profit-driven investors. Examples include Ironman, Super League Triathlon, and more recently, the Professional Triathletes' Organisation. These competitions are commercially very successful. For example, Ironman was acquired for \$730 million from Orkila Capital, a growth equity firm, and Advance, a media company.

World Triathlon does not impose sanctions to athletes wanting to participate in the abovementioned competitions. In other words, athletes are free to choose and participate in these competitions. This can affect the European Sport Model as sometimes top athletes prefer to participate in private parties' competitions (e.g., Super League Triathlon) instead of national or even European competitions. This is because national and European competitions have smaller prizemoney (compared to private parties' competitions) and are less important (compared to World Triathlon's competitions) in helping them to get points that can qualify them for the Olympic Games.⁷¹⁷ This limits the value of European and national competitions. To address this issue, European and other continental competitions have recently been upgraded to give more points to athletes, something that

⁷¹⁴ Ibid

⁷¹⁵ Technical staff includes "everybody at the race" (e.g., technical officials, assistant technical delegates, technical delegates, head referees etc.)

⁷¹⁶ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁷¹⁷ Ibid

is expected to serve as a pull factor. In addition, World Triathlon has increased the amount of prizemoney that is awarded in its World Triathlon Championship.⁷¹⁸

World Triathlon follows a collaborative approach and is open to working with these private parties, to avoid timetable clashes, and is encouraging them to invest in the development projects that can benefit the sport as a whole. For example, recently World Triathlon has agreed to organise with the Super League a series of virtual events. Moreover, World Triathlon has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with these private parties.⁷¹⁹ World Triathlon's main objective is that it seeks recognition from these parties of its role as the sport's governing body: i.e., that World Triathlon sets the rules, deals with anti-doping issues, etc. In addition, the federation wants these parties to work together with NFs by for example using the NFs' referees and staff whenever they are organising an event in their respective countries.

Trends in **participation habits** are also seen to be having an impact on the evolution of triathlon. For example, there are estimates that while 35,000 members are part of federations, approximately 50,000 people are practising triathlon on their own informally.⁷²⁰ For instance, in a famous triathlon event in Barcelona organisers noticed that there were several non-licensed people wanting to compete. These people went to the race with a foldable bike, or bikes mounted with children's seats. This was a revelation for the Spanish federation, who are currently thinking of different ways to integrate these people into the sport.⁷²¹

Developments in **gender equality** and **sustainability** are also having a positive impact on the evolution of the sport at the world, European and national level.

When it comes to **gender equality**, triathlon is often cited as a leading sport.⁷²² Since 2004, the number of women competing in World Triathlon races globally is over 35% of the total competitors, while the numbers keep growing year by year.⁷²³ The numbers are also encouraging when it comes to equality in governance positions-World Triathlon's constitution mandates that all of its organisational bodies must have a minimum of 25% of the opposite gender.⁷²⁴ In addition, Triathlon also foresees a women's committee, which has the role of advising the Executive Board, Committees, Members and Associate Members on the development and implementation of policies for women and to promote equal opportunities for women to participate in all aspects of the sport of triathlon, para triathlon and its related multisport.⁷²⁵

In terms of **sustainability**, triathlon is a signatory of the United Nations Sports for Climate Action⁷²⁶ under which it pledged to halve the sport's carbon emissions by 2030 and zero them by 2050. In addition, it has issued relevant sustainability guidelines for event organisers⁷²⁷ as well as a Water Quality Statement, which allows local organising committees to run triathlon events on the condition that swimming water meets certain quality thresholds.

⁷¹⁸ triathlon.org (2021), *Triathlon approves 2021 bonus*, https://www.triathlon.org/news/article/world_triathlon_approves_2021_bonus_pool_prize_money_of_750000_rising_to_1m#:~:text=World%20Triathlon%20Partners-,World%20Triathlon%20approves%202021%20bonus%20pool%20prize%20money%20of,to%20%241million%20for%202022&text=In%202021%2C%20World%20Triathlon%20was,with%20fewer%20events%20than%20usual.

⁷¹⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁷²⁰ Ibid

⁷²¹ Ibid

⁷²² Triathlon.org (2020), *World Triathlon launches sustainability guidelines for event organisers*, https://www.triathlon.org/news/article/itu_launches_sustainability_guidelines_for_event_organisers

⁷²³ triathlon.org (2018), *Gender Balance*, https://www.triathlon.org/news/article/gender_balance_itu

⁷²⁴ triathlon.org (2022), *Constitution*, https://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/World_Triathlon_Constitution_2022.pdf

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

⁷²⁶ unfccc.int (n.d.), *United Nations Sports for Climate Action*, <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/sports-for-climate-action/participants-in-the-sports-for-climate-action-framework#eq-1>

⁷²⁷ triathlon.org (2020), *World Triathlon sustainability guidelines for event organisers*, https://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/ITU_Sust_v5.pdf

At the EU level, Europe Triathlon following the paradigm of the world's governing body, has recently started to include sustainability as an evaluation criterion in its procurement for the organisation of events, and works closely with national federations (through an ask, but do not demand approach) to promote sustainability, which will remain a focal point in the forthcoming period.⁷²⁸ Examples also exist at the national level. For example, Spanish Triathlon is part of numerous national sustainability projects. Examples include the Green Sport Flag and Eco-voluntarios.⁷²⁹ The Green Sports Flag is a flag that is given to sport events meeting certain environmental standards with municipalities and local councils showing strong interest in the initiative. Eco-voluntarios is an online training and certification programme which trains volunteers in environmental issues such as waste management.⁷³⁰

⁷²⁸ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁷²⁹ [greensportflag.com](https://www.greensportflag.com/) (n.d.) *Green Sport Flag, Ecovoluntarios*, <https://www.greensportflag.com/>, <https://www.greensportflag.com/ecovoluntarios/>

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

Sport Fiche – Volleyball

Study on the European Sport Model

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Sport fiches

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each fiche summarises the main features and trends that affect the evolution of the 15 selected sports at EU level and in different Member States. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews and the survey is included where relevant – this shows key features and evolving trends in relation to volleyball and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Background

Volleyball is an Olympic, team sport. Volleyball shares its history with basketball. Both sports were invented at Springfield College in Massachusetts, within a few years of one another. In particular, in 1895, William G. Morgan, decided to invent a less-strenuous sport for older people. He called this game "Mintonette". However, a local professor noted the ball being volleyed over the net, and the sport was quickly renamed.⁷³¹ The sport made its Olympic debut in Tokyo in 1964 while beach volleyball made its Olympic debut in Atlanta some 30 years after, in 1996.⁷³² Volleyball is amongst the most popular sports globally. In Europe, the sport is particularly popular in Poland, Italy, Germany and France.⁷³³ Outside of Europe, the sport is particularly popular in Brazil. The Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) is the governing body responsible for all forms of volleyball. FIVB has 222 National Federations (NFs) and presides over five Continental Federations (CFs),⁷³⁴ amongst which, the European Volleyball Confederation (CEV).

Main features of the Volleyball Sport Model

Volleyball follows a **pyramidal organisational structure** whereby there is one federation per country. Within this structure, FIVB governs all forms of volleyball (indoor, beach, snow) and presides over five CFs which govern the sport in their respective continents.⁷³⁵ NFs, have to abide by the statutes, regulations, rules of the game and decisions of FIVB and their respective CFs.⁷³⁶ At the same time, NFs are the main stakeholder in the decision-making process of their respective continental federations and FIVB. In Europe, CEV is responsible for making decisions around the sport, through its General Assembly (GA) and the preferences expressed therein by its 56 NFs. CEV has relative **autonomy**, in decision-making but generally factors the FIVB's preferences in its decisions (e.g., ensuring that CEV's events fit with the international calendar).

In volleyball, although athletes are not directly involved in decision-making, Federations have recently developed mechanisms to involve them in policymaking.⁷³⁷ While this is a positive development, stakeholders believe that there continues to be improve engagement with athletes and to incorporate their views in decision-making.⁷³⁸ Finally, while fans, alike athletes, are not involved in the decision-making of Federations, at least

⁷³¹ Olympics.com (n.d.), Volleyball, <https://olympics.com/en/sports/volleyball/>

⁷³² Olympics.com (n.d.), Beach volleyball, <https://olympics.com/en/sports/beach-volleyball/>

⁷³³ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation)

⁷³⁴ FIVB.com (n.d.), The federation, [https://www.fivb.com/en/thefivb/structure#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20the%20FIVB%20consists,\(North%20and%20Central%20America\);](https://www.fivb.com/en/thefivb/structure#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20the%20FIVB%20consists,(North%20and%20Central%20America);) The terms continental federation and confederation are used interchangeably

⁷³⁵ fivb.com (n.d.) the FIVB, <https://www.fivb.com/en/thefivb>

⁷³⁶ cev.eu (n.d.), Federations, <https://inside.cev.eu/institutions/federations/>

⁷³⁷ FIVB.com (n.d.), Athletes Commission, <https://www.fivb.com/en/players/athletes-commission>

⁷³⁸ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

when it comes to the CEV, their views are sought (e.g., through surveys after events) and are taken very seriously into account.⁷³⁹

Moving to the **system of competition**, it is worth noting that professional volleyball across the world has an open competition system based on sporting merits. Therefore, in all countries where volleyball is played professionally, the rule of promotion and relegation applies. Exceptionally in the times of COVID-19, in 2021, there has been no promotion and relegation for national teams participating in the Volleyball Nations League.⁷⁴⁰

In terms of the system of governance, FIVB, which is the organisation at the top of the pyramidal structure, aims to apply the **good governance principles** of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). CEV also aims to continuously look for ways to improve in terms of good governance issues, and especially in those related to the integrity of the sport and gender equality.⁷⁴¹ At the national level, Federations are also working towards strengthening good governance principles, especially as the development of such principles is often a prerequisite for government funding.

Volleyball has also various **solidarity mechanisms in place**. Apart from the IOC, FIVB and CEV provide various types of assistance to NFs, with funding levels based on need. For example, FIVB has a volleyball empowerment programme. The programme supports NFs through targeted and application-based support, as follows:

- Through targeted support, FIVB sends high-performance coaches, trainers, managers and physiotherapists to work with NFs and national teams to improve their performance and help identify new talent.
- Through application-based support, FIVB offers to NF the opportunity to apply for three types of support: coach support for the development of national teams, volleyball equipment support, and a knowledge transfer programme

In the previous Olympic Cycle (2017-2020), FIVB spent approximately US \$ 7 million to fund 408 projects coming from 180 NFs while in 2021, FIVB funded 87 projects from CEV's NFs.⁷⁴²

CEV also has strong solidarity mechanisms in place for the sport in Europe. For example, the Federation was the first sports organisation to distribute the prizemoney of its Champions League competition equally to all participating clubs, despite the league's cancellation due to COVID-19.⁷⁴³

At the European level, **the public sector**, and especially the European Commission through its Erasmus + programmes is also supporting the sport. For example, through the EU-funded CEV School Project 2019/2020, the Federation reached over 365 primary schools and 12,000 child participants.⁷⁴⁴ Often, national governments are also helping their respective Federations to promote the sport. For example, in Belgium, where there is not a National Ministry for Sports, but rather two regional governments: on the one hand, the regional government of Flanders funds Volleyball Vlaanderen (Volleyball Flanders) and, on the other hand, the regional government of Wallonia funds Fédération Volley Wallonie-Bruxelles (Volleyball Wallonia).

In both cases, funding is conditional: Federations have to submit to their respective governments four-years plans to receive funding. In these four-years plans they outline, amongst other things, the number and types of their activities, their good governance

⁷³⁹ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁴⁰ Olympics.org (2021). Volleyball nation's league. Everything you need to know. Retrieved from: <https://olympics.com/en/featured-news/volleyball-nations-league-vnl-2021-everything-you-need-to-know>

⁷⁴¹ More information is available in page 4

⁷⁴² FIVB.com (n.d.). Development. Volleyball Empowerment. Retrieved from: https://www.fivb.com/en/development/volleyball_empowerment/description%20of%20application-based%20support

⁷⁴³ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁴⁴ CEV.eu (n.d.). CEV school project results. Retrieved from: <https://inside.cev.eu/development/projects/cev-school-project/#results>

practices, etc. The governments monitor their implementation and hold the Federations accountable for any deviations.⁷⁴⁵

Volunteers have an important role in supporting the sport. In Europe, whenever CEV hosts a sporting event, the Federation actively engages with local volunteers through its local organisers. CEV maintains a central record of volunteers. According to the record, the volunteering mix in volleyball is truly diverse. For example, in terms of age, volunteers can be anywhere between six and 70 years old.⁷⁴⁶ At a national level, in clubs and NFs there is also a strong volunteer presence. For example, in Volleyball Vlaanderen (Volleyball Flanders), all board members are volunteers while there are also volunteers from local provinces forming working groups and taking part in the Federation's GA. While this is true, the operational part of the Federation is run by professionals who take care of development programmes, administration and other relevant activities e.g., in relation to events, coaches etc.

The literature review, combined with survey and interview data suggest that all of the features of the European Sport Model are relevant for volleyball in Europe. In particular, the pyramidal structure appears to work effectively as a vehicle for supporting the idea of volleyball as a sport for all, and especially through encouraging participation amongst young people.

Main trends that affect the evolution of Volleyball

This section summarises the main trends around volleyball and the extent to which they affect the evolution of the sport.

A first series of trends relate to the **internationalisation** of the sport in terms of audiences, player transfers, ownership and commercial deals.

In terms of **audiences**, volleyball is the fourth most popular sport globally, with more than 800 million fans and high participation across attractive markets, including Brazil, China, Italy, Japan, Poland and the United States. Volleyball was the most watched sport at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, with 2.6 billion viewer hours globally.⁷⁴⁷

The European Volleyball Confederation (CEV), works together with its partners to further increase the internationalisation of the sport. Currently, key overseas markets include Australia, China and Thailand, while in the European Union (EU), strong markets exist in Italy, France, Germany and Poland.⁷⁴⁸ Other countries such as Russia and Turkey also offer market opportunities. Broadly speaking, both FIVB and CEV have identified the potential in internationalising the sports audience and are exploring opportunities to tap into different markets. For example, already in 2017, FIVB organised the FIVB 2017 Women's World Grand Prix Group 1 Finals in China, an event that was very successful in terms of ticketing, merchandise, media coverage, TV ratings, and exposure for FIVB's sponsors and relevant TV partners across Asia.⁷⁴⁹

Increasing internationalisation creates new revenue streams (e.g., through media deals) that can generate unprecedented profits for the sport. This affects the European Sport Model in two ways:

- Exploiting the monetisation opportunities of internationalisation requires commercialising volleyball (e.g., through signing deals with media outlets to improve production / delivery of events, increase digital footprint etc.). This might provide leverage to profit-driven media outlets to influence the sport.

⁷⁴⁵ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁴⁶ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁴⁷ CEV.eu (2021), FIVB partners with CVC Capital, <https://inside.cev.eu/articles/fivb/fivb-partners-with-cvc-capital-partners-to-drive-global-growth-of-volleyball/>

⁷⁴⁸ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation; In Poland, volleyball is the second most popular sport. Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁴⁹ Hostcity.com (2018), Interview: The secrets of FIVB's global success,

<https://www.hostcity.com/news/event-management/interview-secrets-fivbs-global-success>

- By the same token, to deal with the increasing demands of commercialisation, Federations have to become more professional, in order to increase their credibility towards media companies and investors wanting to invest in the sport.

While some might argue that the above trends mark a shift from the European Sports Model, stakeholders maintain that as long as the pyramidal structure of volleyball with the principle of promotion and relegation is preserved, commercialisation will not pose a threat to the sport.⁷⁵⁰ For CEV, this is a sine-qua-non condition: every time the Federation is entering into commercial discussions, a pre-requisite is that it maintains the integrity of the sport and that it is responsible for the competition format, i.e., when, where, and how the sport is done. For example, the Federation is cautious about not having athletes to compete in different parts of the world within a short timeframe.⁷⁵¹

Despite trends in internationalisation in terms of audiences, **club ownership** in European volleyball remains very traditional and there are no major foreign investments. In most cases, local companies are the main investors in local clubs, which is often enough for them to compete at European competitions.⁷⁵² In Belgium, for example, most clubs are owned, sponsored or both, by local stakeholders, who often consider this ownership as their contribution to the local community, and more broadly, to the society.⁷⁵³ While this is true, national leagues are also looking into new revenue streams. For example, in Belgium, Volleyball Flanders is in close cooperation with the league and its clubs on how they can sign global deals with sponsors, while Volleyball Flanders has recently made a deal with the national lottery, with the league taking the national's lottery name.⁷⁵⁴ Therefore, it can be argued that commercialisation in volleyball is not necessarily seen as a negative development or a threat to the principles of the European Sport Model.

While currently, the sport both at an International and at a European level appears to be strong, the approach of federations towards commercial parties, is one of collaboration. On the one hand, Confederations and NFs seek to strengthen collaboration with their leagues and their clubs to discuss and evaluate commercialisation opportunities that are not ephemeral but can support the sport on the long-term; on the other hand, Confederations and NFs are also willing to collaborate with third parties, in a manner that can benefit the sport but not compromise their position in governing the sport.⁷⁵⁵

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the increasing commercialisation and sequentially the new revenue streams appear to trickle down to grassroots sports through **redistribution of revenues and solidarity**. In Europe, since 2015, the confederation's leadership decided to put emphasis on promoting development / grassroots activities at the entry level of the volleyball game. Therefore, many activities are geared towards engaging with schools and getting young people to practice the sport. This commitment was reiterated from stakeholders, who suggested that in Europe, the confederation is strongly committed in helping volleyball teachers and attracting more young people to the sport. Currently, CEV spends about 7% of its annual budget on grassroots activities. The confederation provides ready-made educational and material support to its NFs but it also partially subsidises them to enable them to organise under-age (i.e., youth) activities, often with the help of the European Commission. In addition, part of the revenues of indoor volleyball is redistributed towards beach and snow volleyball that are currently weaker in terms of revenues.⁷⁵⁶

Staying within the topic of governance, it is worth noting that federations aims for continuous improvement in **good governance principles**. In this context, recently, the European Olympic Committee (EOC) office in Brussels has helped CEV to benchmark its performance in terms of good governance and provided to the confederation an enabling

⁷⁵⁰ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁵¹ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁵² Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁵³ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁵⁴ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁵⁵ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁵⁶ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

structure to improve its performance (e.g., educational material, roadmaps, meetings). CEV is also taking individual steps towards the direction of good governance. For example, beyond activities leading to equality in participation (e.g., by offering equal prizemoney etc.).⁷⁵⁷ CEV seeks to improve equality in governance. In this respect, it includes gender quotas in the composition of its Executive Committee and Board of Administration, while it is also planning to work with NFs further towards this direction. Another initiative helping in good governance, is that CEV, through its media partner, will analyse 24/7 betting activity on all CEV competitions, cross-referencing real-time odds movements with predictive algorithms to automatically flag any potentially suspicious activity. This will contribute to transparent and fair volleyball games and preserve competitions from betting-related corruption.⁷⁵⁸ Finally, the confederation publishes all of its GA meetings' minutes. At the national level, federations are also working on good governance principles in terms of gender equality, financial transparency, etc., especially as these are often linked to government funding.⁷⁵⁹

Finally, societal trends such as **sustainability** are also pushing the sport in becoming more sustainable. At international level, FIVB is organising a number of activities. One interesting activity is the Good Net Project. Launched in 2019, this activity aims at repurposing disused finish nets into volleyball nets.⁷⁶⁰ In Europe, CEV is working on improving its statuses to ensure that its events meet certain parameters to protect the environment. Simultaneously, through Erasmus +, the Federation is working together with Surf rider Foundation Europe, Green Cycling Norway and BCW to provide materials and toolkits to enable local organisers measure the footprint of its events. CEV will make all of the material and toolkits publicly available, so that its 56 NFs but also Federations across the world can use them to work towards sustainability. This project is part of a broader effort of CEV to obtain an internationally recognised certification for all of its top events, so that every local organiser who wants to host such events, will have to meet certain environmental standards.

⁷⁵⁷ For example, see Volleyballworld.com (2021), Initiative to champion gender equality: Volleyball world launches the "Equal Jersey", <https://en.volleyballworld.com/en/vnl/2019/news/initiative-to-champion-gender-equality-volleyball-world?id=94348>

⁷⁵⁸ cev.eu (2021), CEV selects Genius Sports as its Official Technology Partner to drive the digital transformation of European Volleyball, <https://inside.cev.eu/articles/cev/cev-selects-genius-sports-as-its-official-technology-partner-to-drive-the-digital-transformation-of-european-volleyball/>

⁷⁵⁹ Information obtained through stakeholder consultation

⁷⁶⁰ goodnetproject.com (n.d.), Ghost Nets to Goods Nets, <https://goodnetproject.com/>

Annex Two: Literature list/Inventory

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
14. Sportbericht der Bundesregierung. Unterrichtung durch die Bundesregierung. https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/19/091/1909150.pdf	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/19/312/1931202.pdf	German	2021	The 14th Sport Report of the Federal Government refers to the Federal Government's sport promotion in the period from 2014 to 2017. The report refers to the diversity in the Federal Government's sport promotion that has been established for many years. The compendium expresses the social anchoring of sport in particular, as well as underlining the many socio-political fields of action.
ADESP (2018) Estudio comparativo internacional de los modelos de deporte de alto nivel.	https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/es/Documents/tecnologia-media-telecomunicaciones/Deloitte-ES-TMT-estudio-modelos-deporte-altonivel.pdf	Spanish	2018	This report commissioned by the Spanish Sport Association (ADESP) to Deloitte analyses the Spanish sport model, by looking at the financial and organisational structure, the support received and its impact on social integration.
Andreff, W., Dutoya, J., & Montel, J. (2009). A European model of sports financing: under threat. <i>Revue Juridique et Économique du Sport</i> , 90, 75-85.	https://www.playthegame.org/news/news-articles/2009/a-european-model-of-sports-financing-under-threat/	EN	2009	The article looks into sport financing structures across the EU and update considerations as regards a European model of sport financing, highlighting a number of threats hanging over the European model of sport organisation. The article enumerates the main sources of sport financing (public and private) and notes that the average amount of sport finance per capita has been increasing in past years across the EU. The article emphasises a discrepancy in government financing of sport, between the orientation of sport policy towards health and wellbeing and the actual orientation of financing towards elite sports and events. The article reiterates the pyramidal structure of sport organisation and how it impacts the financing model,

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
				concluding that in order to secure further sport financing, the European model of sport must be updated. The article proposes several common guidelines for a more efficient financing model of sport.
Bourg, J. & Gouguet, J. (2012). III. Les modèles d'organisation du sport professionnel. Dans : Jean-François Bourg éd. , Économie du sport (pp. 58-78). Paris: La Découverte. [EN: <i>Models of high performance sport</i>]	Link	FR	2012	The chapter discusses whether the European Model of high-performance sport will converge on the American model due to the increasing importance of clubs' financial capacities to participate in competitions.
Brune, Freya (2011). Running for Europe – European Sports Policy and the Role of Civil Society. PhD Thesis. Available at: https://d-nb.info/1027017746/34	https://d-nb.info/1027017746/34	English	2011	"This PhD Thesis (later published in a Book) focuses on European Sports Policy and the Role of Civil Society. It has the following chapters: 1. Sports and European Integration, touching (amongst others) on the role of the European Civil Society and Sports 2. EU Sports Policy, examining (amongst others) whether there is one European Sports Policy Model 4. Running for Europe, examining what the EU can draw from civil society inclusion into EU Sports Policy" 3. The present and future of EU Sports Policy, examining (amongst others) policy issues (implementation of White Paper on Sports, Specificity of Sports, Doping, Gambling), actors (including DG EAC) and stakeholders. The chapter also touches on the interplay between professional and amateur sports as well as the interplay between different national sports policies versus One European Sports Policy.
Colin Miège (2021, January 21). Where does the "European model of sport" stand, 25 years on from the Bosman ruling?	https://www.sportetcitoyennete.com/en/articles-en/where-does-the-	EN	2021	This article presents a brief review of the main trends and legislation shaping the evolution of the European Model of Sport since its introduction at the end of the 1990s. It makes the case for an increasingly fragmented ESM which no longer holds the principles of its foundation. Miège argues that the commercial logic has surpassed the traditional value of sport, rendering

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
Available from: https://www.sportetcitoyennete.com/en/articles-en/where-does-the-european-model-of-sport-stand-25-years-on-from-the-bosman-ruling#_ftn5	european-model-of-sport-stand-25-years-on-from-the-bosman-ruling#_ftn5			current practices and legislation unsuitable to face rising issues - the most pressing of which is the possibility of federations using their monopolistic power to advance their own economic interests at the expense of quality and fairness in sport. According to the author, the challenge for the EU lies in striking the right balance between exercising its regulatory power to keep the ESM's humanist values alive, while respecting the independence of sports organisations.
CONI (2008). Sport&Società [Italian Olympic Committee (2008). <i>Sport&Society</i>]	https://www.coni.it/images/documenti/SINTESI_SPORT_SOCIETA_MARZO.pdf	Italian	2008	This report from the Italian Olympic Committee aims to investigate the link between sport and society. The different chapters cover many aspects of this link, presenting key figures on sport participation, the legal and organisational framework of sport, the role of associations, of media, education, tourism, employment, health and also providing an overview of the public expenditure on sport. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the organisational framework of the Italian sport, highlighting the pyramid structure of sport organisations. In this context, the report highlights the difficulties of the local sport organisations and clubs to attract investments and sponsors to fund their activities and improve their facilities. Chapter 7 focuses on the link between sport and education and identifies some critical elements in the Italian education system: i.e. the lower number of hours dedicated to sport in school in comparison with other EU countries; the lack of adequate sporting facilities in schools. Chapter 8 focuses instead on the relationship between sport and media, outlining how the relationship between TV and sport is well established in Italy only for football or most important international events (Olympic Games), while for other sports the impact of TV broadcasting revenues is negligible due to the limited audience, thus not providing less popular sport federations with enough revenues.
Council of the European Union (2017). Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the	https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9639-2017-INIT/en/pdf	English	2017	This document sets out the Council of Europe's intentions to establish a third EU Work Plan for Sport for Member States and Commission actions, between 01/07/17 to 31/12/20. The Work Plan's three key priorities are the integrity of sport (inc. specificity of sport), the economic dimension of sport, sport and society. The paper calls for MS and the Commission to collaborate to deliver against these themes.

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
European Union Work Plan for Sport (1 July 2017 - 31 December 2020).				
Ducrey, Pierre & Ferreira, Carlos & Huerta, Gabriel & Tallec Marston, Kevin. (2003). UEFA and Football Governance - A new model. 10.13140/RG.2.2.23023.94887.	https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323663265_UEFA_and_Football_Governance_-_A_new_model	English	2003	This paper aims to answer how international sport governing bodies adapt and respond to the pressures of lobby groups. To answer the question, it examines the interplay between the interests of such governing bodies (i.e., UEFA) and the clubs as well as additional factors that could be creating or amplifying conflicts.
Edge Hill University, 30 August 2019"	https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/law/files/2019/10/European-Model-of-Sport-2019-v2.pdf	English	2019	This presentation first describes the pyramidal structure of the European Sports Model. Then, it presents a number of famous legal cases showing how this pyramidal structure through different mechanisms has acted as a monopoly, blocking competition and therefore being in contrast with the relevant provisions of the TFEU (Article 101 on prohibiting cartels and Article 102 on prohibiting abuse of dominant market position). These legal cases (amongst which (ISL vs FINA, SBF vs KKV, Swedish Bodybuilding and Fitness Competitions, Show Jumping Ireland, Global Champions League, Euroleague Basketball vs FIBA and FIBA Europe) bring forward the question as to whether the pyramidal structure of the European Sports Model is under threat.
ENGSO General Assembly (2018). ENGSO Policy Programme From grassroots to societies: sport as an agent for a more active and healthy Europe. Available at: https://0690ebf5-3596-4c37-9165-d3a4e8d20b85.filesusr.com	https://0690ebf5-3596-4c37-9165-d3a4e8d20b85.filesusr.com/ugd/8ade9a_aa8bec62beab409184b35c44104f528f.pdf	English	2019	Policy document for ENGSO - the voice of grassroots sport. This states the positions of its member organisations (national sports confederations and National Olympic Committees) and one of the topics covered is the European Model of Sport as well as good governance. The paper covers the EU's competence and the role of sport, and the Societal Role of Sport before discussing the organisation and financing of sport with particular reference to the EU Sport Model. It argues the Model ensures that revenue generated in elite sport benefits grassroots sport. However it raises concerns that grassroots sports are facing difficulty in adjusting to a more competitive environment.

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
m/ugd/8ade9a_aa8bec62beab409184b35c44104f528f.pdf				
EU Athletes Response to the Lobby for a European Sport Model (2021)	https://euathletes.org/eu-athletes-response-to-the-lobby-for-a-european-sport-model/	EN	2021	The paper presents a response from the EU Athletes to the call to preserve and enforce the European Model of Sport issued by the Olympic movement (published on both the IOC and COE websites). EU Athletes strongly opposes the attempt to recognise and protect the European sport model and its elements arguing that there is no unique European model of sport, rather that European sport is based on a mixture of dynamic elements that vary from country to country. Furthermore, EU Athletes argue that the concept of the European Model of Sport has emerged to protect the monopolistic position of the Olympic movement and sport federations, with disregard for the fundamental rights and interests of athletes. The paper concludes that the European Model of Sport is merely an attempt to exempt commercial sporting activities from European competition law.
European Commission (1998). The European model of sport: Consultation document of DG X. Brussels: European Commission.	https://www.sportaustria.at/fileadmin/Inhalte/Dokumente/Internationales/EU_European_Model_Sport.pdf	EN	1998	This was the first paper to put forward the idea of a “European model of sport”, to lay out the foundations and define the different dimensions of sport within the EU. The first chapter is dedicated to identifying and explaining the organizational characteristics and main features of the ESM; the pyramid structure and the promotion/relegation system are explained in detail, as well as other defining features, such as the grassroots approach, and the commitment to national identity. This chapter also analyses the main changes shaping the sector developments from the 50s to the late 90s, as well as the problems arising from such changes; it tackles the (changing) role of sports federations, competition law, multiple ownership, and finance. The second chapter analyses the relationship between the development of television broadcasting and sport; it addresses broadcasting rights, including ownership of these rights, collective selling, exclusivity, and the phenomenon of media groups acquiring football clubs. It also explores the right to information - should free access be guaranteed to sports considered to be of national or heritage importance? -, and how the future role of public TV in Europe might impact access to televised sports events.

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
				<p>The third and final chapter focuses on the social value of sport, namely from the perspective of how it can be used as a tool for social policy; it tackles the relationship between sport and matters of social relevance such as education, social inclusion, environment, and public health. It also addresses the problem of doping in sports, and finally, the contribution of sports to employment.</p> <p>At the end of each chapter, the document provides a list of questions with the aim to re-think and re-structure the current sports model in place.</p>
European Commission (2011). Communication on Developing the European Dimension in Sport. Brussels, 18.1.2011, COM(2011) 12 final	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0012:FIN:en:PDF	EN	2011	"This Communication document builds on the 2007 White Paper of sport in order to further develop the European dimension in sport. Based on three thematic chapters, each dealing with a dimension of sport (societal, economic, and organisational), it develops a list of key themes identified as priorities in the EU agenda for sport.

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
European Commission, White Paper on Sport, COM(2007) 391 final, Brussels 11.7.2007	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52007DC0391	EN	2007	The paper addresses sport-related issues in a comprehensive manner (it is the first initiative of the Commission in this direction). The overall objective is to give strategic orientation on the role of sport in Europe, to encourage debate on specific problems, to enhance the visibility of sport in EU policy-making and to raise awareness of the needs and specificities of the sport sector. The paper thus discusses the role of sport for health and well-being, education and training, social inclusion and identity, sustainable development and in forging active citizenship through volunteering activities. It then emphasises the economic dimension of sport and its important, still under-estimated contribution to economic growth, employment, and to regional development. It finally discusses the organisation of sport through the European Sport Model, which acknowledges the specific characteristics of sport, the common challenges for the organisation of sport in Europe and at the same time, the diversity and complexity of the sport structures at European and national levels. The Commission pledges to implement a number of actions, as a follow-up of this paper. The actions formed the "Pierre de Coubertin" action plan and included a recurring consultation with sport stakeholders via an annual EU Sport Forum, support to projects encouraging social dialogue in the field of sport at European level and ongoing cooperation with Member States through informal ministerial meetings.
Gasparini, C. (2020). L'europeanisation du sport : entre modèle social et modèle libéral. 37ème Universités Sportives d'Eté -UNCU-Université de Bordeaux, Oct 2019, Bordeaux, France. [EN: <i>The europeanisation of sport: between the</i>	Link	FR	2020	The author argues that the development of a supposed European model of Sport should be understood as part of the European integration process, as the sport sector has followed the same fate as other services, going from non-commercial to commercial and from public to private.

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
<i>social model and the liberal model]</i>				
Gasparini, W. (2020). Le Conseil de l'Europe et le sport : genèse et circulation d'un modèle sportif européen, <i>Encyclopédie d'histoire numérique de l'Europe</i> . [EN: <i>The Council of Europe and sport: genesis and dissemination of the European model of sport</i>]	Link	FR	2020	The article discusses the role of the Council of Europe in promoting the europeanisation of sport overtime.
Geeraert, Arnout (2013). Limits to the autonomy of sport: EU law. Available at: https://www.playthegame.org/fileadmin/documents/Good_governance_reports/AGGIS-report_-_14Limits_to_the_autonomy_of_sport_p_151-184_.pdf	https://www.playthegame.org/fileadmin/documents/Good_governance_reports/AGGIS-report_-_14Limits_to_the_autonomy_of_sport_p_151-184_.pdf	English	2013	The article starts by explaining the specificity of sport, and that sport self-governs its activities which are of sporting (and not economic) interest. The article examines the autonomy of sport through a number of important legal lenses: freedom of movement, competition law, sport media rights and the enforcement of EU law on sports bodies. It contains multiple references to legal cases to illustrate the implementation of the European Model of Sport in real scenarios.
Henning Eichberg (2008). Pyramid or Democracy in Sports? Alternative ways in European Sports Policies. Published on the Internet:	https://www.idrottsforum.org/artikles/eichberg/eichberg080206.pdf	English	2008	This paper describes how the EU's White Paper in 2007 has shown a preference towards a "socio-cultural" Sports Model that was at odds with the hierarchical and monopolistic pyramid structure that big organisations such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Football Federation (FIFA) were opting for. The paper then shows how this "socio-cultural" mode is more compatible with the reality on the ground, where sports such as street football, peoples' football, childrens' football, grassroots football, football for peace and reconciliation have an important role to play in terms of pedagogy, social cohesion, cultural togetherness etc. Finally, the paper shows how sports governance structure vary across Member-States,

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
				with some having a single and some having multiple central bodies regulating sports, owing often to tradition (e.g., the paper suggests that Germany and Italy having one sports association due to their fascist traditions). The paper is largely critical towards José Luis Arnaut (2006), suggesting that the "independent review" was not all that independent, but rather driven by the interests of the football industry.
Henry, I. (2009). 'European Model of Sport. Governance, organisational change and sports policy in the EU', in Hitotsubashi Journal of Arts and Sciences 50, pp.41-52	https://hermes-ir.lib.hit-u.ac.jp/hermes/ir/re/18054/HJart0500100410.pdf	EN	2009	The paper addresses organisational aspects of European sports policy, primarily at national level, but also at EU level. It aims to identify and evaluate the nature and structure of policies and the changes such policies might be undergoing. In doing so, the paper bases its comparison on the VOCASPORT report commissioned by the EC in 2004 which was the only source to address sport policies from mass to elite with a comparative approach between Member States. The paper enumerates the main types of sport policy system across Europe and the features of governance and policy delivery in each of these identified types. Based on the analysis of these models, and on the identified relationship between policy configurations at national and EU level, the paper proposes a direction of change within the European Sport Policy System, which would tackle the tensions and pressures identified.
International Olympic Committee (2014). Olympic Agenda 2020. Context and Background. Available at: https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/Documents/Olympic-Agenda-2020/Olympic-Agenda-2020-Context-and-Background.pdf	https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/Documents/Olympic-Agenda-2020/Olympic-Agenda-2020-Context-and-Background.pdf	English	2014	This report provides 40 recommendations which (put together) aim to provide a clear vision on where Olympic Movement will be heading to, how we can protect the uniqueness of the Games and strengthen Olympic values in society. The reforms come from extensive consultation with all stakeholders of the Olympic Movement as well as external experts and the public. More than 40,000 submissions were received from the public, generating some 1,200 ideas.

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
International Olympic Committee (2020). The European Sport Model, A call for the sports movement and public authorities to join forces. Available from: https://rm.coe.int/the-european-sport-model-paper-by-the-ioc/1680a1b876	https://rm.coe.int/the-european-sport-model-paper-by-the-ioc/1680a1b876	EN	2020	This document presents a call for the sports movement and public authorities to join forces in order to preserve the European Model of Sport, which is currently under threat by (1) the context of ever-growing globalisation and commercialisation, and (2) failure to properly apply the principle of solidarity. The document underlines the fundamental social importance of sport for the EU, and highlights the need for a high degree of good governance, transparency, and accountability in order to preserve the autonomy of sport, thus ensuring the full realization of sport's societal role.
International Olympic Committee (IOC) (2020). IOC Annual Report 2020. Available at: https://olympics.com/ioc/documents/international-olympic-committee/ioc-annual-report	https://olympics.com/ioc/documents/international-olympic-committee/ioc-annual-report	English	2020	<p>"Every year, IOC issues an Annual Report. The present report includes the following chapters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leading the Olympic movement 2. The COVID-19 Pandemic 3. Celebrating the Olympic Games 4. Supporting and protecting clean athletes 5. Promoting Olympism in society 6. Olympic Agenda 2020 highlights 7. Financial statements <p>The issue touches on the role of sports post in the recovery of the COVID-19 Pandemic which might be an interesting topic for DG EAC. In particular, it places sports as an important element for all Member States in their post-pandemic recovery plans and their respective plans for sustainable development."</p>
José Luis Arnaut (2006). An Independent Review on European sport, with a focus on European football, setting out precise Terms of Reference to tackle the	http://eose.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/independent_european_sports_review_1.pdf	English	2006	<p>"This review was commissioned by the Council of the European Union, UK Presidency of the EU 2005. The review refers to historical and distinctive aspects of the European Sports Model (ESM) that set it apart from its American counterpart, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the principle of financial solidarity to the grassroots - the principle of promotion and relegation embedded in the pyramid structure of the ESM

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
specific issues which this sport face.				<p>The review notes that it is almost universally acceptable that there is a need to protect and preserve these distinctive aspects of the ESM in light of the increasing commercialisation of sports. It suggests that the solution shall be found within the pyramid structure of sports: it does not identify a problem in authorities combining regulatory and commercial capacities, as long as they do not abuse these powers to distort competition. Rather, it suggests that authorities should use these to re-distribute funds in a transparent and accountable way."</p> <p>"Katarina Pijetlovic (2019). The European Model of Sport Under Threat? Presentation. Third Annual Sports Law and Policy Summer School</p>
<p>Lefebvre-Rangeon, F. (2014). L'émergence d'un modèle sportif européen. Contribution à l'étude de la construction juridique européenne. Thèse pour obtenir le grade de Docteur de l'Université de Limoges.</p> <p>[EN: <i>The development of the European model of sport. Contribution to the study of the EU legal system, PhD thesis</i>]</p>	Link	FR	2014	<p>The thesis analysis the interactions between national sport organisations and UE law to propose a new legal model for European Sport. According to the author, the relationship between EU law and sport organisations is instable and lacks coherence. To allow both entities to function efficiently, the new European Model of Sport must be based on a new model of governance in which the roles of both EU institutions and sport organisations are clearly defined. This model protect both the ethics and aesthetics of sport, in other words its four virtues: integrity, equity, intelligibility, and uncertainty.</p>
<p>Long, Michael (2016). What Fiba's new Basketball Champions League means for European hoops. Available at: https://www.sportspromedia.com/analysis/what-fibas-new-basketball-champions-league-means-for-european-hoops</p>	https://www.sportspromedia.com/analysis/what-fibas-new-basketball-champions-league-means-for-european-hoops	English	2016	<p>Article describes the format of the new Basketball Champions League and explains how it came about after Europe's top clubs broke away from Fiba (International Basketball Federation) in 2000 to join a Spanish-owned EuroLeague. Article argues that this is Fiba's attempt to regain control over top level competitions. Fiba were in talks with top clubs promising greater revenues for 'defecting' to its new Champions League, and in response EuroLeague announced a joint corporate venture to create two even more</p>

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
<p>dia.com/analysis/what_fib as_new_basketball_champ ions_league_means_for_e uropean_hoops</p>	<p>ans_for_europe an_hoops</p>			<p>lucrative competitions, albeit with fewer teams in a more closed competition style.</p>
<p>Lubrano, E. (2008). I rapporti tra ordinamento sportivo ed ordinamento statale nella loro attuale configurazione. Lineamenti di diritto sportivo, 5.</p>	<p>http://www.studiolubrano.it/articolo_sport-stato_giuffre.pdf</p>	<p>Italian</p>	<p>2008</p>	<p>The paper discusses the Italian organisational sport framework, by also presenting the relationship between national and international sport organisations, the relationship between national sport organisations and the institutions. The paper then discusses the autonomy of sport in Italy and its limitations. Chapter 2 describes the sport organisational system as sectorial system, part of the wider institutional framework, explaining how the pyramid structures has the International Olympic Committee and the International Sport federations at the top, followed by the different continental and national committees and federations, which are then responsible for the organisation of the Italian Olympic Committee and the Italian Sport federations. The national judicial system recognises then the autonomy of the sport system and it includes a specific judicial sector for the resolutions of sporting disputes. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the historic evolution of the autonomy of sport in Italy and its relation with the institutional system. Chapter 4 explains the impact of the Law 280/2013 on the autonomy of sport, defining when and how the national judicial system is responsible for sport disputes and controversies. The paper concludes that the law 280/2013, even if recognises the autonomy of sport and the fact that sport should have its own sectorial judicial system, puts some limitations to it, by safeguarding the interests of the different actors part of the sport sector.</p>
<p>Miège, C. Qu'en est-il du "modèle sportif européen", 25 ans après l'arrêt Bosman, <i>Sport et citoyenneté</i>.</p> <p>[EN: <i>What is the state of the European model of</i></p>	<p>N.A</p>	<p>FR</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>The article discusses the evolution of the European Model of Sport since the Bosman ruling. While the article debunks some of the misconceptions about the supposed common features of European Sports Model, it also recalls the social and political arguments for keeping the myth of a European Model of Sport alive.</p>

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
<i>sport, 25 years after the Bosman ruling]</i>				
Miège, Colin (2020). Where does the “European model of sport” stand, 25 years on from the Bosman ruling?. Available at: https://www.sportetcitoyennete.com/en/articles-en/where-does-the-european-model-of-sport-stand-25-years-on-from-the-bosman-ruling	https://www.sportetcitoyennete.com/en/articles-en/where-does-the-european-model-of-sport-stand-25-years-on-from-the-bosman-ruling	English	2020	This article explains the European Model of Sport and how around the time of the Bosman ruling in the late 90s the European Commission was already questioning whether federations can be regulatory bodies and commercial entities. Explains how the Commission supported the principle of the 'specificity of sport' to co-exist with the implementation of its rules on free movement of persons and goods and on free competition.
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.	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652251/IPOL_STU(2021)652251_EN.pdf	EN	2021	The study assesses past, current and future developments in sport policy and politics, distinguishing before and after the Lisbon Treaty. Based on these assessments, the study points out four thematic areas relevant for the future of European sport politics and policies: coordination and cohesion, policy fields, the role of the EP, knowledge and information. In each of these areas, the study makes recommendations in order to improve the development of sport policies at EU level. The study also approaches the issue of the European Model of Sport, notably the evolution of the concept, its gradual acknowledgement in EU policy developments and the debate around the International Skating Union (ISU) decision of the European Union General Court and the most recent related ruling of the European Court of Justice. On this topic, the study concludes that the European Model of Sport remains a relevant topic, with impact on the issues of solidarity, inclusivity, good governance and the overall organisation of the sport sector across Europe.
Notaristefano, C. (2003). Il modello Europeo di Sport (the European Model of Sport)	http://www.cosimonotaristefano.it/files/75_modello_europeo_sport.pdf	Italian and English	2003	the dossier outlines the main features of the European Sport Model, by also presenting its historical background. It then analyses the main changes and issues arising in the globalisation period and after the 80s and 90s. The dossier identifies the main issues that are producing changes to the ESM (discussed in cell J2).

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
Petry, K. (2013) Zur Rolle des Sports und der Sportorganisationen in Deutschland – ein Überblick. In: OWEP 4/2013	https://www.owep.de/artikel/1086-zur-rolle-des-sports-und-sportorganisationen-in-deutschland-ueberblick	German	2013	The decentralised sports structures in Germany can look back on a complex history, which has resulted in today's diversity of clubs and associations. Important changes were the reconstruction after the Second World War and the integration of the GDR sports system into the structures of the Federal Republic of Germany.
Pijetlovic, Katarina (2018) European Model of Sport: Alternative Structures. In: Research Handbook on EU Sports Law and Policy. Edward Elgar Publishing. ISBN 1784719501	https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/624312/3/European%20Model%20of%20Sport%20Alternative%20Structures.pdf	English	2018	This chapter describes the monopolistic pyramid of the European Sports Model and its evolution over the course of time. The chapter suggests that while there is no uniform organisational structure of the European Sports Model, each sport corresponds to the monopolistic pyramid in various degrees. Next, the chapter provides an overview of the EU Policy on the European Model of Sport. It shows how the EU has historically opted for a "socio-cultural" sports model, resisting pressures of "Americanisation". The chapter argues that such a model is often at odds with the monopolistic pyramid whereby the functioning of governing bodies both as regulatory and commercial limit market entry. To illustrate the point, a series of the most famous legal cases in sports are put forward.
Position paper (2020) on Further Developing the European Sports Model agreed by members of the EPAS Consultative Committee	https://rm.coe.int/further-developing-the-european-sports-model-european-sport-charter-pa/1680a1b1cf	EN	2020	The paper describes the key elements of the European Sport Model, acknowledging its importance for European sport and its contribution to education, social inclusion, public health, as well as to economic development. Next, the document calls for joint action from public authorities and the sport movement to preserve the European Sport Model, in the context of an increasingly market- and profit-oriented development of the sector, so that sport continues to fulfill its societal role, in line with CoR core values. To justify this call for action, the document lists a number of negative developments in the sport sector, should the European Model of Sport lose ground and recognition across Europe.
Pulleiro Méndez, C. (2018). La estatalidad del deporte internacional.	https://www.reDALYC.org/journal	Spanish	2018	The paper analysis the evolution of the international sport organisational model which undermined the centrality of the role of the states in international sports, by looking at the main changes introduced by the

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
Pasado, presente,¿ futuro?. Foro internacional, 58(2), 343-379.	al/599/59957257005/html/			intermediation of the national sport federations, the impact of broadcasting and sponsorships revenues, as well as the internationalisation of big sporting events.
The Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) (2019). Future of Global Sport. Available at: https://www.asoif.com/sites/default/files/download/future_of_global_sport.pdf	https://www.asoif.com/sites/default/files/download/future_of_global_sport.pdf	English	2019	In recognition of the fast-evolving world in sport, the ASOIF commissioned a piece of thought leadership from key influencers and policy makers on the trends which will affect international sport federations (IFs) and the model under which sport will be managed in the future. The report discusses the history behind the European and American sport models, unpicks global trends and challenges impacting the sports sector, and presents a vision of the future. It recommends that IFs should uphold the highest standards of governance and remain open to developing current and new competition and broadcast formats.
Weatherill, Stephen (2021). Never let a good fiasco go to waste: why and how the governance of European football should be reformed after the demise of the 'SuperLeague'. Available at: https://www.asser.nl/SportsLaw/Blog/post/never-let-a-good-fiasco-go-to-waste-why-and-how-the-governance-of-european-football-should-be-reformed-after-the-demise-of-the-superleague-by-stephen-weatherill	https://www.asser.nl/SportsLaw/Blog/post/never-let-a-good-fiasco-go-to-waste-why-and-how-the-governance-of-european-football-should-be-reformed-after-the-demise-of-the-superleague-by-stephen-weatherill	English	2021	A professor of Law at Oxford University's blog on why the advancement of the proposed European Super League reveals a weakness in the internal governance of football in Europe and the inadequacies of legal regulation within the EU and its member states. It highlights the fragility of the pyramidal system, as Super League teams would have continued to play in their respective national leagues whilst competing midweek in the Super League - in short, teams have enough influence to pick and choose which structures to compete within. Article argues that the application of EU competition law in this case (and EU Law to sport in general) is rather unclear and open to interpretation and it is impossible to predict how far UEFA's autonomy is constrained by EU Competition Law - especially in light of the ISU case. The article also cites other relevant articles, e.g. Meca Medina and Majcen v Commission, and Motosykletistiki Omospondia Ellados NPID v Elliniko Dimosio (Greek Motorcycling case).

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
Zigorraga, I. A. (2016). La transformación del Derecho Deportivo por influencia de la Unión Europea. <i>Revista de administración pública</i> , (200), 385-408.	https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5635326	Spanish	2016	The paper summarises the main changes brought by the EU law on sporting law, by explaining the impact of the Bosman case, the specificity of the sport sector, the football transfer rules and the issues of state aids to elite football clubs in Spain, as well as the legal framework behind the pyramidal structure of sport in Spain.
Zuev, V., Popova, I. (2018), The European Model of Sport: Values, Rules and Interests, <i>International Organisations Research Journal</i> , Vol.13, No. 1 (2018)	https://iorj.hse.ru/data/2018/05/23/1149410186/The%20European%20Model%20of%20Sport%20Values,%20Rules%20and%20Interests.pdf	EN	2018	The paper aims to identify the specificities of the European model of sport in the context of the recent transformations in the way sport is managed. It equally aims to identify and analyse the instruments and resources used by the EU to promote the model in its Member States and determine what factors make the European approach universal, helping it to expand to other regions in the world. The paper starts by enumerating recent research endeavours in the field of sport, in relation to its socio-economic impact and its management models, namely on the transfer market, the organisation of major sport events, financial fairplay, its political dimension or the integration of the specificity of sport in the European legal system. It then continues by enumerating the various EU policy developments towards a common model of sport for the EU, with a focus on the provisions of the specificity of sport formulated in the 2007 White Paper. It enumerates the basic organisational principles within the European sport model. It then delves into the EU competences in the field of sport and its role in defining the legal and organisational framework for sport management in the EU. The paper argues that the universality of the European sport model is determined by EU's significant place in international political and economic relations and its soft power in the sport sector, especially football, backed by the success and market leadership of European federations.
Zylberstein, J. (2008). La specificità dello sport nell'Unione Europea. <i>Rivista di diritto ed economia dello sport</i> , 4(1), 59-61.	http://www.rdes.it/RDES_1_08_Zylberstein.pdf	Italian	2008	The paper provides an overview of the specificity and autonomy of sport in the EU. It provides information on the autonomy of the sport federations in the EU, outlining the autonomy of international federations in relation to the public authorities and explaining the impact of the Court of Arbitration of Sport on this aspect. It then analyses the issue of the non-competence of the EU law on sport, explaining how Member States are the main responsible

Citation (full reference)	Website Link	Language	Date (1996-2021 time period)	Summary
				<p>actors for their national federations. The Bosman Case shows how EU rules can be applied to sport, but these rules relate to the economic dimension of sport, while the fair competition dimension of sport is secured by competence and autonomy of the federation rules (e.g., a football player can freely transfer to another club when contract is expiring, but it still needs to be signed during a specific timeframe in order to be eligible to play - a principle which still goes against the free competition rule for other economic sectors). However, the Meca-Medina case (swimming doping case) highlights how sport is being regarded as a mere economic activity, which might undermine the autonomy and specificity of sport.</p>

Annex Three: Case Studies

Case Study 1 – Archery: reliance on the role of volunteers and related challenges (EU level)

Study on the European Sport Model

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA
Date produced: March 2022

Background

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each case study provides granular information on particular sports, describing aspects of their different models including interesting features, evolving trends experienced for the particular sport, and highlighting any threats or challenges that a particular sport and its model experienced. Any good practice initiatives or measures that have been put in place to address these threats or challenges will also be detailed.

Some case studies focus on the European perspective (with some international level information), while others focus on national situations. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews is included where relevant – this shows key features, evolving trends, threats or challenges in relation to archery and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Reason for inclusion

This case study provides an example of the **reliance of the ESM on the role of volunteers**.

As a smaller sport, archery is significantly more reliant on the role of volunteers compared to more developed sports, such as football or basketball. This reliance on the role of volunteers poses a significant challenge for the development of the sport, and also highlights stark difference among countries in the EU: while countries with more access to financing (such as Germany, France, and Italy) are able to not only attract but retain more volunteers to work alongside a larger team of full-time dedicated employees, countries with less access to financing (such as Monaco and Cyprus) tend to face difficulties in finding and retaining volunteers, while at the same time facing challenges to recruit permanent staff. This poses a challenge in terms of professionalisation and knowledge transfer within archery. How can smaller sports like archery build a structure that allows for a sort of continuity to be maintained and knowledge transfer secured, while still relying heavily on the role of volunteers? How can volunteers be better trained to make a long-lasting impact as staff involved in the sport's structure and not leave 'blind spots' behind? What role can national and extra-national (e.g., World Archery Federation) play in the training/professionalization of volunteers?

Key features of relevance to the European Sport Model

Archery relies heavily on **volunteers**, especially at the grassroots level; however, even in higher levels of competition where more professionals are involved, volunteers play an essential role.

Volunteers are often considered by leaders as one of the most important resources of federations on a national level, along with the athletes who remain active and practice the sport.

For those national federations who are not able to finance professional staff for all their activities – which seems to be the case for most national federations –, the existence of volunteers is absolutely essential to pursue the federations' goals and activities.

Volunteers are not only needed to ensure the quality of the activities and events of the federations they support through their work; they are also paramount in maintaining the social element of sport, or the transmission of values, one that is at the very basis of the ESM. They do this, for example, by bringing young people into the sport. Thus, volunteer work is far from being seen as a "cheap" resource for federations; rather, volunteers are often at the very foundation of the European Sport Model.

One federation representative even mentioned that volunteers are seen by their federation not just as people who are at their service, but in a relationship of partnership, 'equal-to-equal'. For them, volunteer work does not equal 'unprofessional' work. Events are mostly organised and supported by volunteers, to a "very high professional standard". The Federation has its volunteers in very high regard.⁷⁶¹

Evolving trends of relevance to the European Sport Model

Federations find it **increasingly hard to find volunteers** willing to commit to working for them, particularly in the long term. This might be due to the fact that people have other obligations, such as their families or jobs. As a result, nowadays, volunteer engagement tends to be more short-term.

Volunteers have also become **more demanding** in terms of what they can take from their volunteering experience - not only in terms of the "more reimbursement, single room accommodation" type of requests but in ways of recognition. They want to feel they are in a partnership relationship with the federations - not simply working for them, but *with* them. This has prompted federations to approach their relationships with volunteers more critically, asking themselves: "What do I expect? What do I give? What do I receive?".

This partnership relationship where both parties expect to gain something has put **volunteer training** programmes on the agenda of most federations. In order to recruit and retain volunteers, federations need to match their increasing demands. This often means providing education programs (webinars, workshops), where volunteers can develop valuable skills that they can then transfer to their personal and professional life - including management, community, social, and leadership skills.

Threats or challenges to the sport

Disparities in the ability to access funding. Some countries are more volunteer based than others. For instance, while countries like Switzerland, with only 1 part-time secretary to run the federation, and Cyprus are fully or almost fully volunteer-based, other countries such as Italy, France, and Germany count on a team of employees (around 25+) working full time for the federation. The Netherlands has a staff of around 5 which still manages to be successful, but in many countries, the full-time employed staff might be of just 1 or 2 people. This impacts the ability that each country has to tap into funds and to therefore develop their sport. Even though funds are theoretically available to all, they are in reality more available to those with more human resources to reach out and actively apply for them.

Education of volunteers. With recruiting and keeping volunteers becoming increasingly more difficult, the training of the volunteers, both for coaching and administration, therefore becomes very important. The ability of each federation to offer attractive benefits for volunteers, and/or implement captivating development programs depends, once again, on its ability to attract funds to carry out these activities. This poses a challenge, given that the federations that depend on volunteers the most are probably the ones having to fight the hardest to keep them. In any case, some federations are coming up with innovative ways to train and retain volunteers with the resources that they currently have - for instance, the region of Orveau in Switzerland recently launched a specific training on how to run clubs (from finances to marketing).

Transfer of knowledge. Being based on an almost purely volunteer model poses an issue for the transfer of knowledge within archery. In other words, it is difficult to ensure the continuity of processes (legal, etc) with a rotating staff dependent on ad-hoc workers.

⁷⁶¹ Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the German Shooting and Archery Federation (GSAF), December 2021.

When someone leaves, it might be harder for the person that comes next to pick up where they left off, causing processes to be stalled and knowledge to be lost.

Good practices to address threats or challenges to the sport

It is possible to overcome the issue of **knowledge transfer**, and there are actions that can be taken by federations and/or public authorities, namely:⁷⁶²

- Guarantee a repository in every country of certain information per federation to prevent lack of knowledge transfer when there is a change in leadership;
- Make the transfer more fluidly: share as much information as possible through all possible means, by sport, and across sports;
- Stimulate learning initiatives.

Another representative suggested that it is a good practice to maintain active and close relationships with the members of a federation, which is usually where the federations find their volunteers. In other words, to **build a community** around the sport that makes people feel like they are part of something. This might be hard to do on a national or continental level, but it is certainly possible where the size of the federation allows it (i.e. regional or local levels). Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the membership rates in several Dutch federations suddenly dropped, with many members choose not to renew their membership. The leaders in these federations decided to pick up their phones and call their members directly, to understand what made them give up their membership, and whether they thought there was something to be improved in the archery community. This kind of 'human connection' is what this representative really advocates for, as a way to combat the increasing individualism present in our societies, which damages the community-based values that sustain the European Sport Model.⁷⁶³

⁷⁶² Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the World Archery Federation (WA), December 2021.

⁷⁶³ Information obtained through consultation with a representative from the Dutch Archery Federation, January 2022.

Case Study 2 – Athletics: ‘Your Sport for Life’ manifesto

Study on the European Sport Model

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA
Date produced: March 2022

Background

The ‘Study on the European Sport Model’ provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each case study provides granular information on particular sports, describing aspects of their different models including interesting features, evolving trends experienced for the particular sport, and highlighting any threats or challenges that a particular sport and its model experienced. Any good practice initiatives or measures that have been put in place to address these threats or challenges will also be detailed.

Some case studies focus on the European perspective (with some international level information), while others focus on national situations. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews is included where relevant – this shows key features, evolving trends, threats or challenges in relation to athletics and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Reason for inclusion

This case study provides an example of good governance. European Athletics, the governing body for the sport across Europe, embedded their governance principles into a manifesto called ‘Your Sport for Life’. The manifesto is addressed not only to the stakeholders inside the European Athletics, but to the overall athletics movement, from elite level to grassroots. The mission and values promoted through the manifesto are a positive example of the development, safeguarding and promotion of a healthy European Sport Model amongst athletes, youth and the general European public.

Key features of relevance to the European Sport Model

The European Athletic Association (commonly known as European Athletics) is the governing body for Athletics in Europe. It was established in 1970, currently counts 51 members and is headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland. Its main mission is to promote the sport of athletics (track & field, cross country, road running, race walking and mountain walking) throughout Europe.

European Athletics’ roles include staging and regulating championships and elite competitions, showcase the sport, driving public interest in athletics and supporting its members’ activities to reach out and engage more people and deliver the benefits of the sport.⁷⁶⁴

The ‘Your Sport for Life’ **manifesto**⁷⁶⁵ is a written declaration of the mission, values and goals that must guide the actions of European Athletics and its member federations. The manifesto is considered a tool to maximise the value of the brand ‘European Athletics’ and to communicate consistently about it, thus strengthening the desired image of the sport at all levels throughout Europe.

The manifesto was written in collaboration with the Member Federations and contains an overview of the European Athletics strategy of development. The messages that the manifesto puts forward are packaged in different ways for presentation to various audiences, both by European Athletics and by other stakeholders.

‘Your Sport for Life’ states that the values of the sport of athletics are: competition, excellence, fair play and sportsmanship, discipline, personal development, physical fitness,

⁷⁶⁴ <https://www.european-athletics.com/>

⁷⁶⁵ <https://www.european-athletics.com/european-athletics/who-we-are/your-sport-for-life?s=f>

healthy lifestyle, equality, inclusiveness. This set of values are central to the promotion and development of athletics and are therefore thought to all individuals who want to join this sport from amateurs to professionals. Very importantly, European Athletics acknowledges that these values are shared by other sports in Europe and so the sport of athletics subscribes to a wider movement to promote a universal framework for learning human values through sport, as advanced within the European Model of Sport.

The manifesto equally puts forward a second set of values specific to the organisation of the sport. Such values include integrity, unity, social and environmental responsibility and innovation. These values shape the good governance framework of this sport, in line with overarching EU policies. European Athletics aims to integrate these values as objectives in its work and encourage its Member Federations to do the same.

The manifesto provides a detailed overview of the development strategy which is built around the main mission of the governing body: to promote their sport at all levels for all individuals. In formulating their mission, European Athletics emphasises the double nature of the sport of athletics, which mustn't be seen only through the competitive perspective, but also as having the ability to contribute to the personal development, healthy lifestyle, education and environmental responsibilities of individuals. This double meaning promoted through this sport is perfectly in line with the concept of the European Sport Model.

The development strategy embedded in the manifesto rightfully identifies the challenges this sport is experiencing and provides solutions to overcome these challenges. These are described in the following sections.

Evolving trends of relevance to the European Sport Model

Recent research indicates that **participation in sport** amongst young people (especially adolescences) has significantly decreased in past years.⁷⁶⁶ A recent study⁷⁶⁷ on sport participation of young people in Europe confirms this trend: while participation rates generally increase among young children (between 8 and 14 years old), a significant decrease is observed in adolescence (from 14 to 18 years old). The study collected data from several countries in Europe and on several sports, including athletics. This trend was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and by the series of measures taken by governments worldwide to stop the spread of the virus, which have affected the entire sport sector. The various lockdown periods have further decreased sport participation, with sport clubs and sport facilities closed down.

Moreover, the lockdown measures have put increased pressure on the sport sector, including athletics, as event organisation and promotion became increasingly difficult. As a result, the sport sector worldwide registered significant **decrease in revenues**. In 2020, the profits of World Athletics heavily dropped reaching the small amount of \$2.1 million (€1.8 million), due chiefly to reduced costs. In 2021, international revenues dropped from sponsorship and media rights. While revenue from broadcast rights was little changed at \$14.8 million (€12.6 million), commercial rights dipped from \$18 million (€15.4 million) to \$13 million (€11.1 million).⁷⁶⁸ The decrease of revenues has burdened the redistribution mechanism from elite level to grassroots level, both in terms of remunerating athletes and investment in development and educational programmes.

⁷⁶⁶ See Eime, R.M., Harvey, J.T. and Charity, M.J., 2019. Sport drop-out during adolescence: is it real, or an artefact of sampling behaviour?. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 11(4), pp.715-726, Alberga, A. S., Sigal, R. J., Goldfield, G., Prud'Homme, D., & Kenny, G. P. (2012). Overweight and obese teenagers: why is adolescence a critical period?. *Pediatric obesity*, 7(4), 261-273

⁷⁶⁷ Dr. Stacey Emmonds et.al., Youth Sport Participation Trends in Europe – An output of Erasmus+ Sport Project ICOACHKIDS+, 2021, <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/schools/schoolofsport/ick--io1---eu-youth-sport-participation-report-final-1.pdf>

⁷⁶⁸ World Athletics, Annual Report and Accounts 2020, <https://worldathletics.org/news/press-releases/annual-report-accounts-2020>

Threats or challenges to the sport

Given the context described above, sport governing bodies have to find innovative solutions not only for the organisation and promotion of large sport events, but also to increase interest in their sport at grassroots level, increase participation and prevent dropout among teenagers.

'Your Sport for Life' manifesto rightfully identifies one important challenge for their sport: **to increase the relevance of athletics**, both to individual Europeans and within European society. This translates into an increased engagement at grassroots level, by giving meaning to sport participation. European Athletics acknowledges that overcoming this challenge is possible only through good governance and innovative change.

Another challenge that arises in this context is **to attract increased public and private support** from governments, the media, commercial partners and volunteers. European Athletics acknowledges that overcoming the current threats is possible through better partnerships and increased solidarity. Through the manifesto, European Athletics engages to build greater awareness, popularity and loyalty for their sport and to effectively communicate on their values and on the opportunities for each individual within experiencing athletics.

Good practices to address threats or challenges to the sport

In order to address the above-mentioned challenges, 'Your Sport for Life' manifesto establishes key areas of action within two main pillars of their sport: High-Performance and the Athletics Community.

The pillar of high-performance refers to the high-quality of top-level athletes, their preparation and the organisation of elite events within the sport. European Athletics identifies key areas of action to continue to stage successful events in a safe environment and create spectacle for the public: integrity and the fight against doping, ensuring the best international competition system, so that athletes have the opportunity to excel, supporting the development of well-equipped facilities and training halls required for high-performance athletes and grassroots activities, and continuing to ensure athlete development, from identifying talents, to training and supporting performance.

European Athletics rightfully understands the importance of digitalisation, in a world shaped by rapid technological advancements, in which content is created at a faster pace than ever and consumed anytime, anywhere, on any device (ATAWAD). Moreover, against the background of the changes created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the vision of the European governing body is that the next important athletics competition will be highly anticipated on any electronic device as an important part of the lives of an increased number of Europeans. Therefore, digital transformation was a major focus of European Athletics' communications activities in 2020 and despite the cancellation and postponement of major events, sizable growth across all platforms was achieved, building on a series of social media successes that date back to 2016. European Athletics has achieved the following figures across their social media channels in 2020: 337,000 Facebook followers, 160,000 Instagram followers, 127,000 Twitter followers and 19,000 YouTube followers.⁷⁶⁹

Moreover, European Athletics has sought to strengthen its commercial contracts, in order to create new visibility and value, to create and deliver commercially attractive events. Part of the commercialisation process was the creation of a new agency to manage the sales of European Athletics sponsorship rights, as mentioned in the manifesto. The European Athletics Marketing Agency was created – a joint venture between the European

⁷⁶⁹ idem

Athletics and the Tridem Sports agency⁷⁷⁰ – to act as a service company for the commercial strategies and sales activities of European Athletics, including sponsor account management and rights delivery. European Athletics is the sole shareholder of the company, with the federation maintaining ownership and control of its commercial properties. This joint venture paved the way for the European Athletics to create additional values and revenues from the events and activities.

The second development pillar is the Athletics Community which refers to the grassroots level of this sport considered also its strength. European Athletics aims to increase and strengthen its community, so that their sport benefits a wider range of audiences. The manifest foresees initiatives in several key action areas: engaging future generations from early ages, through school programmes, increase the quality services and communication to runners (the biggest group in athletics), better supporting National Federations and their programmes to strengthen the club systems, engaging and attracting a wider number of volunteers. European Athletics believes that the value of time given by volunteers is higher than the value of all sport's television and sponsorship contracts.

The Athletics Community is considered a vehicle for athletics to offer relevance to individuals and to grow social cohesion in local communities, which bring advantages that go beyond the elite pathway and showcase events.

The solidarity principle plays an important role in strengthening the Athletics Community. Therefore, European Athletics has enforced the distribution of its revenues in past years, through the introduction of the Athletics Olympic Dividend (AOD) by World Athletics in 2016 delivered US\$17.2m in new grant funding directly to Member Federations over 2016-2020.⁷⁷¹ AOD is a project-based grant designed to provide tailored support to meet Member Federations individual long-term strategic development needs. AOD subscribes to the pledge of European Athletics to create customised support to Member Federations, with the collaboration with World Athletics, aimed at strengthening club systems, developing sustainable business models and anti-doping programmes.

Finally, a system of support was also initiated aimed at assisting Member Federations in accessing support from their governments, national agencies or European institutions for the development of the sport including its facilities. In this matter, an important moment took place in October 2020, when the European Commission awarded the Royal Spanish Athletics Federation (RFEA) €300,000 to develop European Athletics' Dynamic New Athletics for use in schools and clubs, as part of the Commission's "Grassroots sport programmes and infrastructure innovation" call for proposals published in May 2020.⁷⁷² This important milestone recognises the ability of the sport of athletics and its governing bodies to access EU funding and thus to contribute to the overarching EU policies in the fields of healthy lifestyle for all, social cohesion, education or the green transition.

⁷⁷⁰ Mike Rowbottom, 'European Athletics creates new marketing company with Tridem Sports to boost revenue', in *insidethegames.biz*, 2015, <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1027040/european-athletics-creates-new-marketing-company-with-tridem-sports-to-boost-revenues>

⁷⁷¹ World Athletics, Annual Report and Accounts 2020, <https://worldathletics.org/news/press-releases/annual-report-accounts-2020>

⁷⁷² Preparatory Action "Grassroots sport programmes and infrastructure innovation", <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/pppa-sport-2021-grassroots-innovation>

Case Study 3 – Basketball: closed league

Study on the European Sport Model

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

Date produced: March 2022

Background

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each case study provides granular information on particular sports, describing aspects of their different models including interesting features, evolving trends experienced for the particular sport, and highlighting any threats or challenges that a particular sport and its model experienced. Any good practice initiatives or measures that have been put in place to address these threats or challenges will also be detailed.

Some case studies focus on the European perspective (with some international level information), while others focus on national situations. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews is included where relevant – this shows key features, evolving trends, threats or challenges in relation to basketball and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Reason for inclusion

This case study provides an example of a closed basketball league in which top teams from a range of European countries compete in addition to their national leagues. The semi-closed nature of the league creates a number of concerns around the autonomy of the European basketball federation, open competition and the value of merit, solidarity schemes, talent development, commercialisation and sponsorship. This case study will therefore be focused at a European-level rather than a Member State level.

Evolving trends of relevance to the European Sport Model

The EuroLeague was originally established by the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) in 1958 and operated under its control until the year 2000. In the summer of 2000, FIBA changed its name and format by launching the FIBA SuproLeague. In response, the European Union of Basketball Leagues (ULEB), an independent organisation who represents the interests of its member national basketball leagues,⁷⁷³ created and managed a breakaway competition – EuroLeague Basketball. A total of 24 of the biggest European clubs competed in the first year of the newly established pan-European cup competition, which continued to be called EuroLeague since FIBA had not trademarked the competition name.⁷⁷⁴ This meant that in 2001 there were two clubs crowned European Champions which was not thought to be a viable organisational model. As such, ULEB and FIBA Europe negotiated terms which allowed EuroLeague Basketball to run European professional club competitions under the guidance of the ULEB whilst FIBA Europe's remit shifted towards national team competitions such as the European Championships and lower-tier international club competitions.⁷⁷⁵

As it gained in popularity, EuroLeague increased the number and breadth of official sponsors, and in 2006 ownership was passed onto a private company, EuroLeague Commercial Assets (ECA). Following this, they announced a new strategic plan which granted long-term licenses to 13 teams whose participation was guaranteed,⁷⁷⁶ in effect making it a **semi-closed competition**. EuroLeague argued that these licenses would

⁷⁷³ ULEB (2022) *History*, <https://www.uleb.com/history>

⁷⁷⁴ World of Basketball (2009) *About Euroleague*, <https://www.worldofbasketball.org/euroleague-basketball.htm>

⁷⁷⁵ World of Basketball (2009) *About Euroleague*, <https://www.worldofbasketball.org/euroleague-basketball.htm>

⁷⁷⁶ EuroLeague Basketball (2009) *Euroleague Basketball - History timeline*, <https://www.euroleaguebasketball.net/euroleague-basketball/news/i/54664/euroleague-basketball-history-timeline>

provide more stability to clubs and the EuroLeague competition, and would have a positive impact on sponsorship agreements, ticketing revenues and television contracts. The following season EuroLeague reported a 20% increase in overall revenue, including a 22% increase in income from television rights and a 73% increase in income from sponsorship.⁷⁷⁷

In 2015, EuroLeague announced a new ten-year joint venture with IMG which saw it establish two new competitions in a revamp of the existing top two tiers of European basketball. Teams now compete in a round-robin competition before end of season playoffs determine the league champion, making the format resemble a league competition rather than a knock-out cup style competition.⁷⁷⁸ Since then, the number of participating teams in the top competition dropped from 24 to 18, 11 of which hold long-term licenses. The remaining places are reserved for clubs with short or medium-term wild-cards, as well as the finalists of the previous season's second tier European competition, also run by EuroLeague.⁷⁷⁹ These recent changes to the allocation of non-guaranteed league places means there is no longer any direct connection to any of the domestic European leagues; instead remaining slots are granted at the discretion of EuroLeague.

Threats or challenges to the sport

The creation of a privately-run, semi-closed competition presents a threat to FIBA Europe's **autonomy** as the European basketball federation, which is notably manifested in the organisation of fixtures. Currently, EuroLeague clubs usually play their games during midweek to avoid clashes with national league fixtures which are typically played on weekends. However FIBA Europe's power to prevent fixtures across both leagues from clashing is limited. This tension is evident in international fixtures, where qualifying matches for the World Cup and European Championships (EuroBasket) clash with EuroLeague fixtures twice a year. Whilst national leagues suspend club fixtures during these times, EuroLeague choose not to, and do not always permit their players to play for their country during these windows. Since EuroLeague clubs pay their salaries, players often feel duty-bound to turn down opportunities to play for their countries and instead remain with their club.⁷⁸⁰ Stakeholders report that the absence of top players detracts from the value of those international fixtures, making them a less attractive proposition for fans and media broadcasters. This has a direct impact on the sport, as FIBA Europe reinvest the revenue from these international competitions into grassroots basketball, and so the clash in fixtures indirectly limits the development of European basketball.

In contrast, the revenue generated from EuroLeague is mostly reinvested into its shareholder clubs.⁷⁸¹ Through its clubs, EuroLeague does reinvest some of its profits into grassroots development and via its own corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes. For example, each EuroLeague club has its own 'One Team' project⁷⁸² tailored to local community needs which benefits groups in danger of social exclusion due to issues such as gender, physical or intellectual disability, and substance abuse. However, there are no established **solidarity mechanisms** between EuroLeague and the wider basketball ecosystem. Stakeholders have therefore accused EuroLeague of profiting from its top talent (i.e., players, coaches, officials) without reinvesting into the development of future talent, therefore threatening the sustainability of the sport. A knock-on effect of this is that in

⁷⁷⁷ EuroLeague Basketball (2009) *Euroleague Basketball - History timeline*, <https://www.euroleaguebasketball.net/euroleague-basketball/news/i/54664/euroleague-basketball-history-timeline>

⁷⁷⁸ Long, M. (2015) 'Euroleague snubs FIBA to launch new competitions with IMG' in Sports Pro Media, https://www.sportspromedia.com/news/euroleague_snubs_fiba_to_launch_new_competitions_with_img/

⁷⁷⁹ Eurohoops (2019) *The EuroLeague changes in the summer of 2020* <https://www.eurohoops.net/en/euroleague/905734/the-euroleague-changes-in-the-summer-of-2020/>

⁷⁸⁰ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Euroleague (2020) About One Team, <https://www.euroleague.net/one-team/about>

order to compete with EuroLeague teams, other clubs are having to direct more revenue towards an elite level in an attempt to remain competitive with EuroLeague clubs, which consequently means diverting funds which would have otherwise been spent on grassroots basketball.⁷⁸³

The majority of teams who compete in EuroLeague are direct or indirect members of their national basketball federations and all of them compete in their respective national competitions. This enables them to benefit from the financial support provided by their national federations which often distribute public funds to member organisations.⁷⁸⁴ Stakeholders report that this has created a gulf in competition within national leagues, with EuroLeague clubs able to compete at a higher level than other teams in their national league. This is due to the increased revenue-earning potential of competing in EuroLeague, where participating clubs are able to profit from larger sponsorship and broadcasting deals. EuroLeague has encouraged its clubs to play in larger capacity stadiums and has implemented a league-wide ticketing and marketing programme to help clubs grow their attendance rates and generate more spectator revenue.⁷⁸⁵ So, whilst the national leagues are **open competitions** with promotion and relegation, national champions are often EuroLeague teams which calls into question the extent to which these competitions are truly based on value of merit. Even if non-EuroLeague clubs win their national leagues, there is no longer an opportunity for them to progress into the EuroLeague and play at the highest level through their championship.⁷⁸⁶

Euroleague clubs are able to obtain higher sponsorship deals, attract more fans to their matches, and recruit the best players.⁷⁸⁷ This is to the detriment of non-EuroLeague teams, who – without the chance of progressing to the top division – struggle to attract and retain top talent and are therefore less **commercially** attractive to investors, sponsors and TV broadcasters who prioritise top-level competition. In contrast, the absence of **promotion and relegation** in the EuroLeague has made investing in EuroLeague teams a more attractive proposition for **owners, investors and sponsors**, who can feel confident in the scale and duration of their investments.⁷⁸⁸ Despite this, a number of EuroLeague teams reportedly have deficit budgets and rely financially on the football departments of their clubs (e.g., FC Barcelona, Real Madrid, Fenerbahce Istanbul).⁷⁸⁹ This access to additional investment beyond what is attainable within basketball itself means that non-EuroLeague clubs are unable to compete financially, and often make losses whilst trying to do so, calling into question EuroLeague’s impact on the financial sustainability of the sport in the long-term⁷⁹⁰.

Addressing threats or challenges to the sport

In response to the ongoing calendar dispute between EuroLeague, together with ULEB and 10 domestic leagues, FIBA and FIBA Europe (jointly hereafter “FIBA”) formed a rival

⁷⁸³ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁵ Long, M. (2015) ‘European basketball in rude health as the Euroleague turns 15’ in Sports Pro Media, https://www.sportspromedia.com/analysis/european_basketball_in_rude_health_as_the_euroleague_turns_15/

⁷⁸⁶ Eurohoops (2019) *The EuroLeague changes in the summer of 2020*

<https://www.eurohoops.net/en/euroleague/905734/the-euroleague-changes-in-the-summer-of-2020/>

⁷⁸⁷ ULEB (2020) *ULEB files competition complaint before European Commission against EuroLeague organizer*

ECA, <https://www.uleb.com/files/press/file/4/ULEB%20press%20release%20-%20ULEB%20files%20competition%20complaint%20before%20EC%20versus%20ECA%20-%20v2.pdf?t=1620230171>

⁷⁸⁸ Sport Business (2019) *Euroleague Basketball’s great leaps forward*,

<https://www.sportbusiness.com/2019/09/euroleague-basketballs-great-leaps-forward/>

⁷⁸⁹ Ting, Timur (2020) ‘Intrigues under the basket’ in Frankfurter Rundschau, <https://www.fr.de/sport/sport-mix/raenkespiele-unterm-korb-13537649.html>

⁷⁹⁰ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

European club competition in 2016 - the Basketball Champions League - which was based on the principle of open competition and meritocracy.⁷⁹¹ Specifically, its aims were:

- To nurture new European talent;
- To protect the domestic leagues;
- To promote sporting results and openness of competitions;
- To provide a sound business model for all stakeholders;
- To bring coherence, transparency, and unity to European club competitions;
- To protect the integrity of the game by treating all clubs equally;
- To advance common interests through an even partnership between FIBA and the national leagues.

FIBA attempted to entice Europe's top sides to switch to their new competition by allegedly offering financial incentives and threatening sanctions, whereby national federations which did not discipline their clubs who participate in EuroCup competitions would lose their national team rights to participate in FIBA competitions (including the 2016 Olympic Games). Sanctions were threatened because, in FIBA's opinion, EuroLeague violated EU competition law by illegally "tying" participation to EuroLeague with participation in EuroCup, in order to enhance the position of the latter against the Basketball Champions League. This "tying" practice involved EuroLeague proposing (and in some cases signing) agreements with several National Leagues, whereby the National League would receive a spot for its Champion to play in the EuroLeague only if the next best-ranked teams would commit to play in the EuroCup and not in the Basketball Champions League.⁷⁹²

In response, ECA filed a complaint against FIBA Europe to the European Commission, citing anti-competitive behaviour on the basis of EU Competition Law as laid out in Article 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).⁷⁹³ Weeks later, FIBA launched a counter-complaint (again based on Article 102 TFEU) alleging that ECA's recent complaint was a 'smokescreen' intended to mask their own anti-competitive behaviour.⁷⁹⁴ Specifically, they contended that ECA was:

- Imposing pressure on leagues and clubs, and threatening exclusion from EuroLeague;
- Allowing a small number of shareholder clubs to control all EuroLeague decisions;
- Harming the commercial and sporting value of domestic leagues by 'cherry-picking' EuroLeague clubs to participate in EuroLeague;
- Discriminating against financially weaker clubs, placing them at a further competitive disadvantage.

The European Commission has not ruled on any complaint to date, almost six years later. Still, FIBA Europe has refrained from sanctioning national federations, leagues, or clubs on the basis of their association with EuroLeague.⁷⁹⁵ FIBA Europe proceeded with the Basketball Champions League in a 50-50 partnership with the national leagues and ULEB. The competition currently operates alongside EuroLeague competitions and is viewed as a competing second-tier of pan-European club basketball. The creation of FIBA Europe's competition prompted ECA to revamp its own competitions⁷⁹⁶ as described above.

⁷⁹¹ Basketball Champions League (BCL) (2021) <https://www.championsleague.basketball/21-22/presentation>

⁷⁹² Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁷⁹³ Pijetlovic, K. (2018) *European Model of Sport: Alternative Structures, Research Handbook on EU Sports Law and Policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing ISBN 1784719501, <https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/624312/3/European%20Model%20of%20Sport%20Alternative%20Structures.pdf>

⁷⁹⁴ FIBA (2016) *FIBA files complaint against Euroleague*, <https://www.fiba.basketball/news/fiba-files-complaint-against-euroleague>

⁷⁹⁵ Pijetlovic, K. (2018) *European Model of Sport: Alternative Structures, Research Handbook on EU Sports Law and Policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing ISBN 1784719501, <https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/624312/3/European%20Model%20of%20Sport%20Alternative%20Structures.pdf>

⁷⁹⁶ Long, M. (2016) 'What Fiba's new Basketball Champions League means for European hoops' in Sports Pro Media,

Whilst the two competitions have co-existed for a number of years, stakeholders expressed concern that, alongside the various national leagues, European club basketball has become a saturated market. They worry that the current set-up of basketball, which sees teams playing multiple fixtures per week, is a confusing proposition to fans and investors and arguably off-putting to new basketball fans.⁷⁹⁷

More recently, following EuroLeague's announcement that teams will no longer be able to qualify for EuroLeague based on their standings in their national league,⁷⁹⁸ ULEB filed a complaint against ECA for anti-competitive behaviour.⁷⁹⁹ It alleged that EuroLeague granted long-term licenses to its 11 shareholder clubs without any transparent award process, whilst limiting the competition by reducing the number of other slots available in the league and granting those other slots on the basis of their own discretion. ULEB argued that this model is harming European basketball by depriving clubs of the opportunity to compete at the highest level, and is ultimately jeopardising the European Model of Sport.

It is clear that EuroLeague, which is effectively a closed competition, directly contradicts the European Model of Sport by preventing teams from having an opportunity to compete at the highest level. This means that other clubs struggle to attract fans, sponsorship, and investment, and therefore lack the opportunity to compete with the same financial resources as EuroLeague clubs. In turn, less revenue generated directly impacts investment into grassroots sport, threatening the sustainability of basketball. FIBA Europe and ULEB insist they do not want to 'destroy' EuroLeague; rather they want an open competition where league places are granted on value of merit. This will require open dialogue and compromise between key stakeholders, whose immediate focus is on ensuring the calendars of these various competitions are aligned so that Europe's top players have the opportunity to play for both their club and country.

Further information

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https://www.sportspromedia.com/analysis/what_fibas_new_basketball_champions_league_means_for_european_hoops/

⁷⁹⁷ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁷⁹⁸ Eurohoops (2019) *The EuroLeague changes in the summer of 2020*, <https://www.eurohoops.net/en/euroleague/905734/the-euroleague-changes-in-the-summer-of-2020/>

⁷⁹⁹ ULEB (2020) ULEB files competition complaint before European Commission against EuroLeague organizer ECA, <https://www.uleb.com/files/press/file/4/ULEB%20press%20release%20-%20ULEB%20files%20competition%20complaint%20before%20EC%20versus%20ECA%20-%20v2.pdf?t=1620230171>

Case Study 4 – Football: financial sustainability and solidarity mechanisms

Study on the European Sport Model

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA
Date produced: April 2022

Background

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main traits of the European Sport Model(s) and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each case study provides granular information on particular sports, describing aspects of their different models including interesting traits, evolving trends experienced for the particular sport, and highlighting any treats or challenges that a particular sport and its model experienced. Any good practice initiatives or measures that have been put in place to address these threats or challenges will also be detailed.

Some case studies focus on the European perspective (with some international level information), while others focus on national situations. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews is included where relevant – this shows key traits, evolving trends, threats or challenges in relation to football and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Reason for inclusion

This case study details the initiatives around financial sustainability and solidarity mechanisms in European football. Financial sustainability is a key topic in football and its urgency has been highlighted by the unprecedented impact of the COVID 19 crisis, including on football clubs and leagues. The recent period shows a number of important developments, including the announcement of the new UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Sustainability Regulations and the ongoing Convention on the Future of Football which was launched by UEFA to develop a shared vision on addressing key issues faced by football, for example the financial sustainability of clubs. We can also observe strong public and political / policy pressure at EU and national levels for financial sustainability and solidarity mechanisms in football, often driven by concern of excesses at the elite level and vulnerabilities at the local and community level (e.g. with clubs going bankrupt).

Evolving trends of relevance to the European Sport Model

The financial sustainability of football clubs remains a challenge across Europe, despite the popularity of the sport and the important revenues it generates.

This has a bearing on the European Sport model as it affects the **organisation of competition and notably the promotion/relegation system**, since clubs may be subject to economic sanctions and relegations.⁸⁰⁰

Lack of financial sustainability can cause a range of interrelated issues at different levels of the football ecosystem and for different stakeholders. For example, it can challenge investments in the infrastructures of clubs, undermine the development of redistribution mechanisms⁸⁰¹ towards lower leagues and hinder the competitiveness of sport (level of the players' staff, investment in players and training centres).⁸⁰²

⁸⁰⁰ Union of European Football Associations, UEFA (2018) Club Licensing and financial fair play regulations, Edition 2018.

⁸⁰¹ Drut B, Raballand G (2012) Why does financial regulation matter for European professional football clubs? *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 11(1/2), 73–88. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijsmm.2012.045488>

⁸⁰² Storm RK, Nielsen K (2012) Soft budget constraints in professional football, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 12(2), 183–201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2012.670660>

In this context, financial sustainability remains a common priority for the governing bodies (UEFA and national associations) and major stakeholders of European football working alongside public authorities including the EU.

Faced by serious and worsening financial conditions in European club football, UEFA's Executive Committee unanimously approved a Financial Fair Play (FFP) concept for the game's well-being in September 2009. The concept recognised the need for Europe-wide action to restrict some of the worst excesses in football. The UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play (FFP) regulations came into force in 2011 with the objective to control club finances and strengthen their sustainability over time. Since 2011, clubs qualifying for UEFA competitions "have to prove they do not have overdue payables towards other clubs, their players and social/tax authorities".⁸⁰³

The development, introduction and continued evolution of Financial Fair Play remains one of UEFA's most ambitious but successful governance projects. Since the Financial regulations for clubs in UEFA competitions were first introduced in June 2010, there has been an extraordinary improvement in the finances of European clubs at all levels. Overdue payables (payables to football clubs, employees, social/tax authorities, and UEFA) have been all but wiped out. Club finances have been turned around: in 2009, net losses across Europe's top division clubs stood at €1.6 billion. By 2018, that had been transformed to a profit of €140 million.

But COVID-19 has had a negative impact on clubs' finances given the loss of operating revenues, inflexible wage costs, and a collapse of player transfer profits such that top-division clubs suffered losses of €7 billion.

Indeed, the relevance of financial sustainability is further highlighted by the manifold impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as in many other sports. Pre-COVID, top division club revenues had surged: with annual growth of 8.2%, the 711 top-division clubs added €1.9 billion to their revenues in 2019 (for a total of €23 billion, while operating profits were the second highest ever recorded and club cash reserves and balance sheets were the strongest on record.

The impact of the pandemic is important for football clubs, which are estimated to lose around €9 billion in revenues due to the pandemic consequences. UEFA pointed to a "new financial reality" for the sport. According to UEFA, top-tier clubs were set to suffer a €7.2bn drop in revenues over the 2019-20 and 2020-21 seasons, with lower-level leagues taking a €1.5 billion hit. The revenue shortfall has only been partially offset by cost savings and could be as high as €8.1 billion for the top-tier leagues as a consequence of the pandemic.⁸⁰⁴

Structurally, football clubs generate little or no profits and their equity is limited. At best, as was the case before the COVID-19 crisis, the best-managed clubs made no (or limited) losses at best. Some analysts believe that it will take several years to return to pre-crisis levels.⁸⁰⁵ The question of sustainability of clubs and how solidarity mechanisms can sustain the whole sport pyramid has therefore become more acute than ever.

UEFA's first financial regulations helped pull European football finances back from the brink and improved how European football clubs are run. However, the evolution of the football

⁸⁰³ UEFA. (2015). Financial Fair Play: all you need to know. Retrieved from: <http://www.uefa.com/community/news/newsid=2064391.html>

⁸⁰⁴ UEFA (2021) The European Club Footballing Landscape report. 11th edition: <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/uefaeuropeanclubfootballinglandscape/>

⁸⁰⁵ Franck Bancel and Henri Philippe (2021) COVID-19: How the pandemic has made football's structural problems worse. World Economic Forum, 30 June 2021: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/06/covid-euro-2020-how-the-pandemic-has-changed-football/>

industry, alongside the inevitable financial effects of the pandemic, showed the need for wholesale reform and new financial sustainability regulations.

New improved financial solutions were needed to deal with this new reality, and the reality that the European football industry has evolved since 2010 with greater globalisation and technological innovation.

UEFA launched the new proposals – the Financial Sustainability and Club Licensing Regulations (FSCLR) in April 2022⁸⁰⁶.

According to UEFA, the regulations are designed to protect the game and prepare it for any potential future shocks while encouraging rational investments and building a more sustainable future for the game. The key objective of the new regulations is to achieve financial sustainability, and this will be achieved through three key pillars: solvency, stability, and cost control.

- For solvency, the new no overdue payables (towards football clubs, employees, social/tax authorities, and UEFA) rule will ensure better protection of creditors. Controls will be performed every quarter and there will be less tolerance towards late payers.
- The new football earnings requirements are an evolution of the existing break-even requirements and seeks to bring greater stability to club finances. To ease the implementation for clubs, the calculation of football earnings is similar to the calculation of the break-even result. While the acceptable deviation has increased from €30 million over three years to €60 million over three years, requirements to ensure the fair value of transactions, to improve the clubs' balance sheet, and to reduce debts have been significantly strengthened.
- The biggest innovation in the new regulations will be the introduction of a squad cost rule to bring better control in relation to player wages and transfer costs. The regulation limits spending on wages, transfers, and agent fees to 70% of club revenue. Assessments will be performed on a timely basis and breaches will result in pre-defined financial penalties and sporting measures.

The new regulations will come into force in June 2022. Their implementation will be gradual over three years to allow clubs the necessary time to adapt.

Threats or challenges to the sport

The issue of financial instability, heightened by the COVID-19 crisis, whilst not easily solved, is an area where under UEFA's leadership major European football stakeholders and public authorities have come together to plan the way out of the crisis by helping repair the economic and social damage that European football has suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and laying the foundations for a modern and more sustainable European football ecosystem.

Several challenges can be mentioned here. The first one is the risk of unregulated investments, especially in terms of club ownership. Investment in football clubs is growing fast. For example, the 2017 UEFA club licensing report shows that private investment in club acquisition continues to rise.⁸⁰⁷ In Europe, 2016 was the most active year for foreign club takeovers, with ten new acquisitions by November, including eight new Chinese owners. Forty-four clubs in major European leagues were under foreign ownership in 2017,

⁸⁰⁶ UEFA (2022) UEFA Executive Committee approves new financial sustainability regulations. 7 April 2022 <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/mediaservices/mediareleases/news/0274-14d9f32dd3ea-b0b8ca4dca0a-1000--uefa-executive-committee-approves-new-financial-sustainability-/>

⁸⁰⁷ Among others, Forbes publishes every year an overview of club ownership and revenues: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mikeozanian/2017/06/06/the-worlds-most-valuable-soccer-teams-2017/#6dd73a8377ea>

by owners of 18 different nationalities, representing 19% of clubs in those leagues. Most of these clubs were acquired after 2008 (39 out of 44), with peak years of acquisition in 2015 and 2016.⁸⁰⁸

While investments are generally helpful and support the development of football, concerns have been raised over the sustainability of some investors and their volatility, leading to an imbalance of profitability over sporting success.⁸⁰⁹ According to survey respondents, investment from sovereign states has created troubling issues. Sovereign states have financial resources far beyond any individual owner or ownership group, which pose a risk to competitive balance.

Finally, some investments are arguably predatory and hostile to the values promoted by football and UEFA, or can cause financial instability for clubs. What definitely matters is the ability to manage investments and there is therefore a need to design regulations in the right way to support more sustainable investment in football.⁸¹⁰

Another challenge is the tendency for clubs in distressed financial situations to make self-interested attempts to increase revenues at the expense of the sustainability of the entire football ecosystem, for example through the development of **parallel or breakaway competitions**. A good example of this is the failed attempt of 12 elite European clubs to form a Super League, announced in April 2021,⁸¹¹ which was partly driven by the willingness to secure new revenue streams for top clubs many of whom were in dire financial health.⁸¹² €3.5 billion euros were earmarked for participating clubs "to support their infrastructure investment plans and to offset the impact of the COVID pandemic", in exchange for their long-term commitment. The plan also promised to deliver €10 billion in solidarity payments to other clubs.⁸¹³ However this and other claims made by the leaders of the European Super League project that they would triple solidarity were widely rejected and criticised as wildly misleading in the 2021 European Club Football Landscape report.⁸¹⁴

The super league attempt was highly controversial, causing significant public and political backlash over its potential impact on the overall European football ecosystem (including domestic leagues). The fact that around 16 Member States/EEA countries would submit formal legal observations on a potential super league case at the CJEU can be perceived as an indication of how strong opposition to the proposed model was.⁸¹⁵

Most of the club owners and leaders involved and even the project's financial backers⁸¹⁶ quickly abandoned the project. Whilst three club leaders still continue to promote the project, there are growing calls on national governments and the EU, driven by fans and

⁸⁰⁸ UEFA (2017) The European Club Footballing Landscape. Club Licensing Benchmarking Report - Financial Year 2015. 8th edition. Nyon, Switzerland.

⁸⁰⁹ See for example some testimonies here <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/business/china-football-inter-milan-suning.html> or here <https://www.goal.com/en-gb/news/some-are-just-coming-to-make-quick-money-wenger-warns-ligue/7r8x73ucwd9jzozbh2mgcmke>

⁸¹⁰ Information retrieved from stakeholder consultation with UEFA, carried out in October 2021.

⁸¹¹ <https://thesuperleague.com/>

⁸¹² Benjamin Russell (2021) How some Super League clubs have millions in debts with money driving force behind new competition. 20 April 2021 <https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/european-super-league-funding-who-esl-plans-explained-finance-motivated-money-964314>

⁸¹³ <https://thesuperleague.com/press.html>

⁸¹⁴ UEFA (2021) European Club Football Landscape Report 2021, https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/026a-128c5dffdb5f-64d49e6e5300-1000/210615_ecfl_pandemic_eng.pdf

⁸¹⁵ Information retrieved from stakeholder consultation with UEFA, carried out in October 2021.

⁸¹⁶ Jasper Jolly (2021) JP Morgan 'misjudged' football fans over European Super League. The Guardian, 23 Apr 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/apr/23/jp-morgan-misjudged-football-fans-over-european-super-league>

citizens movements to safeguard the model of European football and to block against further super league attempts in EU law.⁸¹⁷

Indeed, as it was developed, the super league arguably did not meet any of the key aspects of the European Sport Model (no promotion/relegation mechanisms based on sporting merit, no clear solidarity mechanism, and no responsibility of the super league towards other actors of football) as considered by UEFA and by the European Commission which would circumvent the promotion-relegation concept, bringing a so-called Americanisation to football.⁸¹⁸

Addressing threats or challenges to the sport

Solidarity mechanisms in football are currently structured along a pyramidal model, whereby elite clubs and competitions generate the vast majority of revenues for football. These revenues are then redistributed through different solidarity schemes:

- UEFA distributes revenues from European competitions to participating clubs and associations depending on the revenue UEFA that generates. The total distribution amounted to €2.42 billion for 2019-2020 (2018/19: €3.09bn), and is distributed as follows: UEFA Champions League: €1.646 billion; UEFA Europa League €478 million; European Qualifiers, UEFA Nations League and friendlies: €278 million.
- UEFA also provides **solidarity payments** (roughly €270 million per year, and €242 million for 2019-2020), which are made available to: member associations to develop their infrastructure, contribute to their running costs, or as incentive payment. Clubs may also directly receive payments for youth development, or for contributing players to national teams.
- The **HatTrick programme** also provides for yearly solidarity payments in favour of member associations: €750,000 as a solidarity payment to cover the running costs of the member association and good governance projects; and €1,150,000 maximum in annual incentive payments (depending on a number of good governance criteria, support to grassroots football, etc).
- **Training compensations and a solidarity mechanism** are foreseen for international transfers by the FIFA Regulation on the Status and Transfer of Players for the clubs that have contributed to train the player (from 12 to 23 years old) However, the amounts received and the percentage on total transfer fees remain much below the threshold set in the latest version of the FIFA RSTP (5% for both mechanisms)⁸¹⁹: in 2021 the total amount of international transfers reached USD 4.86bn, whereas solidarity payments only amounted to USD 42.8 million (0.88% of the total transfer fees) and USD 12.4 million for training compensation (0.88% of the total transfer fees).⁸²⁰ As noted in a previous study,⁸²¹ the low level of redistribution towards smaller

⁸¹⁷ Amital Winehouse (2022) Fans group launches campaign to block Super League breakaways through EU law. The Atlantic, 26 March 2022 <https://theathletic.com/news/fans-group-launch-campaign-to-block-super-league-breakaways-through-eu-law/IpXep0tneF9n/>

⁸¹⁸ Haring, B., (2021) 'How the European Super League will ruin football', in Medium, <https://medium.com/top-level-sports/how-the-european-super-league-will-ruin-football-efccdc38117>

⁸¹⁹ FIFA (2021) Regulation on the Status and Transfer of Players. Retrieved from: <https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/196c746445c58051/original/Regulations-on-the-Status-and-Transfer-of-Players-August-2021.pdf>

⁸²⁰ FIFA (2021) FIFA TMS 2021 Global Transfer Market Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.fifa.com/legal/football-regulatory/player-transfers/tms-reports>

⁸²¹ KEA (2018) An update on change drivers and economic and legal implications of transfers of players. Final Report to the DG Education, Youth, Culture and Sport of the European Commission, March 2018.

clubs through the solidarity mechanisms and training compensation is a longstanding issue, with similar figures observed through the 2012-2016 period.

Several additional initiatives are taking place to address the above-mentioned challenges and increase the sustainability of football:

- Generating increased revenues and solidarity payments. Annual solidarity from the UEFA Champions League to other competitions and clubs amounted to €558m per year throughout the 2018-21 cycle. This includes €108m for clubs that do not progress past the qualifying rounds, €32m for clubs knocked out in the UEFA Champions League play-offs, €130m in youth development funding for clubs across Europe that do not qualify for any UEFA competitions, €269m in competition subsidies and assumed costs for the UEFA Europa League and €21m for UEFA that is fed back to national associations across Europe. With commercial contracts almost concluded for the 2021-24 cycle, this solidarity mechanism is set to grow significantly from the 2021 summer, with an increase of up to €35m in direct solidarity payments to clubs.⁸²²
- Rethinking the organisation of football and its sustainability. The Convention on the future of football, launched by UEFA in 2021 and involving the European Clubs Association (ECA), the European Leagues and FIFPRO, National Associations, Supporters, Agents, Broadcasters and Sponsors identified key elements to be addressed in regards to financial sustainability: 1) The need for regulations on financial sustainability; 2) reinforcing the protection of creditors; 3) allow for better cost control; 4) allow for sustainable investments that can encourage growth; 5) take into account the huge diversity of football clubs in terms of size, legal structure and business models; 6) Regulations that allow to identify breaches as they occur; 6) Regulations with dissuasive financial and sporting penalties.

Additional focus will be placed on involving athletes and fans representatives in the development of this plan.⁸²³

This cooperation is concretising already through ECA and UEFA's cooperation through proposals to put in place a multi-billion Euro debt fund to allow clubs of all tiers to accelerate their COVID recovery strategies, as well as an emergency UEFA-ECA fund for future crises.⁸²⁴

- Other relevant initiatives are seeking to address financial issues around professional football, with a focus on football players. In 2020, FIFA and FIFPRO, the World Players' Union, reached an agreement to establish the FIFA Fund for Football Players (FIFA FFP), which aims to provide financial support to players who have not been paid and have no chance of duly receiving the wages agreed with their clubs. FIFA has set aside USD 16 million for the fund up to 2022, with this allocation to be divided as follows: USD 3m in 2020, USD 4m in 2021 and USD 4m in 2022, plus a further USD 5m for the retroactive protection of players' salaries for the period between July 2015 and June 2020.⁸²⁵ Finally, the ECA has also promoted a separate initiative to re-distribute around 50 million Euros per year more of solidarity money for the benefit of smaller clubs not participating in European Club Competitions.⁸²⁶

⁸²² UEFA (2021) UEFA Annual report 2019-2020: https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/0268-1215a1e8bf40-512630baee20-1000/uefa_annual_report_2019-20.pdf

⁸²³ Information retrieved from stakeholder consultation with UEFA, carried out in October 2021.

⁸²⁵ FIFA and FIFPRO (2020) Protocol governing the FIFA fund for football players. https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/5ff56de859422053/original/Protocol-Governing-the-FIFA-Fund-for-Football-Players_2021__EN.pdf

⁸²⁶ ECA (2021) European Club Association General Assembly - Chairman's Address. 6 September 2021. <https://www.ecaeurope.com/news-media-releases/european-club-association-general->

Further information

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Case Study 5 – Ice Hockey (Finland)

Study on the European Sport Model

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA

Date produced: March 2022

Background

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each case study provides granular information on particular sports, describing aspects of their different models including interesting features, evolving trends experienced for the particular sport, and highlighting any threats or challenges that a particular sport and its model experienced. Any good practice initiatives or measures that have been put in place to address these threats or challenges will also be detailed.

Some case studies focus on the European perspective (with some international level information), while others focus on national situations. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews is included where relevant – this shows key features, evolving trends, threats or challenges in relation to ice hockey and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Reason for inclusion

This case study provides an overview of ice hockey, focusing on Finland. The case study begins with a historical overview of ice hockey, in a global and Finnish perspective. It then presents the evolution of Liiga, a closed ice hockey league in Finland. Liiga, is a private company owned by its 15 clubs, and this closed league represents a deviation from the European Sport Model, and in particular from its pyramidal organisational structure. However, Liiga works closely with the Finnish Ice Hockey Association to develop the sport in the country, and to address the challenges that it is facing. The relationship between the two organisations, appears to create a unique Finnish sport model for ice hockey, combining elements of the European and the American ice hockey models.

Ice Hockey: a global and Finnish perspective

Ice Hockey is an Olympic, team sport. Despite claims attributing the origin of the sport to Canada, Ice Hockey is not a Canadian invention. Nonetheless, it is true that important developments in the modern game stemmed from the Great White North.⁸²⁷ The sport made its Olympic debut at the 1920 Summer Olympics in Antwerp, but quickly moved to Winter Olympics in 1924 and has ever since featured at every Winter Games.⁸²⁸ Ice hockey is more popular in North America, with the National Hockey League (NHL) being arguably the best professional hockey league in the world.⁸²⁹ In Europe, ice hockey is less popular, with the exception of Czechia, Sweden, Switzerland, Russia and Finland, the holder of the men's gold medal of the Olympic Games in Beijing 2022.⁸³⁰

In Finland, with its cold weather climate, ice hockey is a natural fit. The sport became increasingly popular in the country during the 1970s and the 1980s when indoor facilities

⁸²⁷ Martel, J. (2020), *Origins of Ice Hockey*. In *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/origins-of-ice-hockey>. Great White North is a nickname for Canada.

⁸²⁸ Olympics.com (n.d.), *Ice Hockey*, <https://olympics.com/en/beijing-2022/sports/ice-hockey/>

⁸²⁹ Thehockeywriters.com (2022), *Top 10 best Ice Hockey Leagues*, [https://thehockeywriters.com/top-10-best-ice-hockey-leagues/#:~:text=1.\)&text=With%2031%20teams%20in%20the,world%20vying%20for%20one%20trophy](https://thehockeywriters.com/top-10-best-ice-hockey-leagues/#:~:text=1.)&text=With%2031%20teams%20in%20the,world%20vying%20for%20one%20trophy).

⁸³⁰ Olympics.com (2022), *Finland win historic ice hockey gold with win over great rivals ROC*, <https://olympics.com/en/news/medals-update-finland-win-historic-ice-hockey-gold-at-beijing-2022-by-beating-gr>

became widespread⁸³¹ and it is currently the biggest entertainment sport in the country in terms of turnover and audiences while it is also popular amongst athletes.⁸³²

In particular, in Finland, 1.3% of the population (71,064 athletes) is registered with the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF).⁸³³ This represents the highest per capita participation in ice hockey in the world, with the exception of Canada. Liiga, the country's top professional ice hockey league, together with its clubs, has an annual turnover of approximately €120 million. This annual turnover is four times bigger than the annual turnover of the second most popular sports league in the country, Veikkausliiga, in football. In addition, an average Liiga game has 4,850 spectators while the sport also enjoys strong viewership figures. For example, 69% of the Finnish population watched their national team compete against Canada in the ice hockey World Championship final in 2016.⁸³⁴ This explains Liiga's broadcasting deal, which, at €20 million, is approximately five times bigger than the one of Veikkausliiga.⁸³⁵ Interestingly, Liiga splits this amount equally between its 15 participating teams regardless of their standings, in what appears to be a social-democratic system of redistribution.⁸³⁶

Key features of relevance to the European Sport Model

The first game of ice hockey in Finland took place in the north shore of Helsinki in 1899.⁸³⁷ Some 30 years after, in 1929, the Finnish Ice Hockey Association (FIHA) was founded, and has ever since been the governing body of the sport in the country.⁸³⁸ For a long period, the sport has followed a **pyramidal organisational structure**. This was until 1975, when SM-liiga (now: Liiga)⁸³⁹ was created as a separate league which is able to make its own decisions (including marketing and broadcasting deals). There were both external and internal reasons for this. On the one hand, Finnish hockey was drawn into what was happening in North America, where the sport was becoming increasingly professional.⁸⁴⁰ On the other hand, the ability of small clubs to influence how the sport was played at top level through FIHA's General Assembly (GA) was causing friction points.⁸⁴¹

SM-liiga was an **open league** until it became a **semi-closed league** in 2000. During the same period, Finnish authorities drawing on the *Bosman* case started to think that clubs should have a company, rather than an association status, and prepared the necessary legal framework. This enabled in 2001 SM-Liiga and its participating clubs to switch their status from non-profit to for-profit organisations.

SM-Liiga was then temporarily opened in 2005 and 2009⁸⁴² only to return to a semi-closed league system with no relegation in 2013. According to this system, top teams from the second league (Mestis) are eligible to apply for a promotion upon the agreement of the Liiga clubs if they match certain financial criteria (for example, having an ice hockey arena with a capacity of at least 4,000 people). While this clause limits open competition, there

⁸³¹medium.com (2017), *Hockey is Finland's game - how the sport embedded itself to the hearts of the Finns*, <https://medium.com/@silvastioskari/hockey-is-finlands-game-how-the-sport-embedded-itself-to-the-hearts-of-the-finns-844a48212f8c>

⁸³² Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁸³³ IIHF.com (n.d.), *Survey of Players*, <https://www.iihf.com/en/static/5324/survey-of-players>

⁸³⁴ sidmartinbio.org (2020), *Is ice hockey popular in Finland?*, <https://www.sidmartinbio.org/is-ice-hockey-popular-in-finland/>

⁸³⁵ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁸³⁶ Ibid

⁸³⁷ finhockey.fi (n.d.), *History*, <http://www.finhockey.fi/index.php/info/historia>

⁸³⁸ Ibid.

⁸³⁹ SM-liiga was rebranded as Liiga in 2013. In this case study, the two terms are used interchangeably.

⁸⁴⁰ medium.com (2017), *Hockey is Finland's game - how the sport embedded itself to the hearts of the Finns*, <https://medium.com/@silvastioskari/hockey-is-finlands-game-how-the-sport-embedded-itself-to-the-hearts-of-the-finns-844a48212f8c>

⁸⁴¹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁸⁴² In 2009 while a new system of promotion-relegation between the last placed team on SM-liiga and the Mestis champion was introduced, there were still financial criteria that should be met in order to allow promotion.

appear to be practical reasons behind it: Mestis, is essentially a semi-professional league, with an annual turnover almost 20 times smaller than Liiga.⁸⁴³ Therefore, having promotion-relegation between the two would cause financial instability to clubs and likely lead them to bankruptcy.

In its current form, Liiga includes 15 clubs, which are its shareholders. While this can be argued to mark a transition from the European Sport Model, Liiga still adheres to IIHF's rules, with few exceptions, commonly agreed with FIHA.⁸⁴⁴ In addition, Liiga and FIHA work closely together to develop the sport and to address the challenges that it is facing. For example, the CEOs of Liiga and FIHA sit on the boards of both organisations. This is possible through an agreement between the two organisations, which describes their relationship.

According to the agreement, FIHA is responsible for governing the sport and organising competitions in Finland. In turn, Liiga, while independent and able to make its own decisions, including marketing and broadcasting deals, has certain obligations towards FIHA. For example, Liiga has the mandate to make its players available for international competitions, such as the Olympics, something, for example, which is not the case with the NHL. The NHL has disallowed its players to participate at the Winter Olympics of PyeongChang (2018) and Beijing (2022).

In terms of **solidarity mechanisms**, Liiga clubs have the mandate to have an affiliation to and fund underage clubs (youth clubs). Liiga clubs have the same legal entity as U20 clubs.⁸⁴⁵ In addition, they have a close connection with and fund underage clubs (e.g., U16). These lower underage clubs are registered as non-profit organisations and own the logo of the Liiga clubs with which they are affiliated.⁸⁴⁶

Liiga clubs can use underage clubs for talent acquisition and volunteering activities, but otherwise do not have a direct return in investment from them. Nonetheless, a stakeholder consulted from Liiga indicated that it is their duty to sponsor these teams, and create a pathway for young players to join the top team, a view that appears to be common across different stakeholders in the sport. The amount of funding is typically high. For example, *Idrottsföreningen Kamraterna, Helsingfors* (HIFK), one of the most historical teams in Finnish Ice Hockey, spends about 10% of its revenue (approx. €800,000) on underage and women clubs.

FIHA also undertakes its own solidarity activities to develop the sport in Finland. The federation has a budget approximately six times smaller than Liiga, however, it uses almost 2/3 of it for youth club activities through multi-annual projects. To implement those projects, the federation often uses a cash reserve that it obtains from the organisation of World Championships in Finland, which is an important source of revenue. For example, from 1997 to 2004, the federation managed to hire more than 100 professional coaches for the sport. More recently, through a project that has been running from 2012 for a 12-year period, the federation has created an umbrella system. Through this system, FIHA helped clubs hire a professional coach, who then had to also support two to five smaller clubs, in order to make sure that clubs across the whole country benefit from that support. Currently, the federation has a new plan for the period 2021-2024 aiming to strengthen clubs sporting activities through umbrella actions and dedicated projects. In all of the above actions, the budget line is normally approximately €1 million per annum.

Apart from FIHA, the **public sector** also supports the sport. At a national level, the government and the National Olympic Committee (NOC) provide funding to FIHA. In addition, in Finland, municipalities own the majority of ice hockey facilities, and often offer

⁸⁴³ The annual turnover of Mestis is approximately €7 million. Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁸⁴⁴ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁸⁴⁵ This does not apply to all U20 teams

⁸⁴⁶ This does not apply to all under-age teams

subsidies for local clubs wanting to use them.⁸⁴⁷ Recently, public-private partnerships are forming, where private parties are helping municipalities to modernise ice hockey rinks.

Finally, the role of **volunteers** is particularly important for ice hockey in Finland. In the country, volunteering appears to be a historical part of the Scandinavian or Nordic model, where volunteers are the ones who are helping to deliver the sport at the local level.⁸⁴⁸ Indeed, in Finland, the overwhelming majority of coaches are volunteers, often parents of the children.⁸⁴⁹ Therefore, the importance of volunteering is particularly true for lower-tier, semi-professional or amateur leagues. In top-tier leagues, there are often enough resources to have a mix of professionals and volunteers that can respond to the needs of the sport (e.g., in terms of commercialisation).

Threats or challenges to the sport

While, it appears that stakeholders across the board are supporting ice hockey in Finland, the future of the sport in the country does not come without its threats and challenges. This section, highlights those that are the most relevant.

An increasingly competitive transfer market

Finnish ice hockey is increasingly facing difficulties in retaining its top players as the global transfer market is becoming more and more competitive. In particular, outward mobility of athletes from Finnish Hockey to NHL, and more recently, to the Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) in Russia⁸⁵⁰ and to European leagues in Germany, Sweden and Switzerland is increasing. While systems are in place to ensure that Finnish hockey benefits from transfers to NHL, this outward mobility still has a negative return on investment for Finnish ice hockey.

As Finnish ice hockey is amongst the most widely known for developing young players, Liiga manages to compensate for the outward mobility and maintains very high quality thresholds. Nonetheless, as other markets are more commercially attractive for athletes, Liiga might turn into a famous youth league, that can serve other markets.

Towards americanisation?

The in-between organisational model of Finland, whereby Liiga is having a very close link with and finances youth clubs, can increase its negotiating power against FIHA and raise claims to intervene in the organisation of the sport.

This scenario is not to be dismissed, as despite Liiga being the most independent league in Western Europe, central European countries that are powerhouses of ice hockey, are moving towards americanisation.

To avoid this situation, FIHA seeks a cooperation and not a conflictual approach, and aims to closely work together with Liiga as the relationship between the two will be crucial for the future of the sport in the country.⁸⁵¹

Women participation

Despite the very good development in terms of youth, promoting the participation of women in the sport remains a challenge. Currently, women represent only 10% of ice

⁸⁴⁷ More information about no. of facilities: FIHA (n.d.), *Jäähallit Suomessa*, <https://www.jaahallit.fi/index.php/jaahallit>

⁸⁴⁸ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid

⁸⁵⁰ The attitude towards KHL has totally changed after the Russian attack on Ukraine. Finnish KHL team, Jokerit, will not participate in play offs of the KHL. The club has also released its players to the other Finnish teams playing in the Liiga.

⁸⁵¹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder

hockey players in Finland. Women participate in clubs falling under youth organisations, and often have to pay to participate.⁸⁵²

Currently, while there are activities promoting the participation of women in the sport, there does not appear to be a coherent plan. For example, in Sweden, men's clubs come together with women's clubs under the same professional umbrella. This helps women's clubs benefit from access to coaches, physiotherapists, professional marketing staff, etc⁸⁵³ and could be replicated in Finland.

Changing consumption habits

Another challenge that ice hockey in Finland as a whole is facing, are changing consumption habits. While it is true that the sport generates the overwhelming majority of its revenues from sponsorship, with hospitality and VIP services having an upward trend, changing consumption habits and especially digital consumption opens new revenue streams for the sport.⁸⁵⁴

As a response to this trend, Liiga is further looking into how it can improve its digital footprint while FIHA following the example of Sweden has recently installed AI-cameras in 70 ice-rinks in order to broadcast matches. In addition, Liiga is also linking data from cameras mounted on the top of arenas with data from microchips in players' jerseys, something that creates new opportunities for betting companies, but also for the fans and the sport itself.⁸⁵⁵

Decreasing birth rates

Finally, and perhaps more importantly, ice hockey in Finland is experiencing the consequences of the country's decreasing birth rate. In the context of the case study, there was a shared concern amongst stakeholders across the board as to how the sport is going to respond to this threat.⁸⁵⁶

Indeed, decreasing birth rates, coupled with inward migration to major cities is limiting the capacity of smaller cities and villages in the countryside to maintain ice hockey clubs. In such villages, often there are only 20 births, and these are not enough.

While there is no definite answer to this issue, stakeholders have shown strong commitment in addressing it. One way would be to revise the rules of the game, to enable mixed-gender teams, and games between three versus three instead of five versus five players, plus the goalkeeper. Another way would be to lower the financial threshold for participating in the game and work more closely with the government and cities to effectively integrate immigrants (including those who come from countries where ice-hockey is not a popular sport) into the sport.⁸⁵⁷

Further information

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- Olympics.com (n.d.), *Ice Hockey*, <https://olympics.com/en/beijing-2022/sports/ice-hockey/>
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⁸⁵² Ibid

⁸⁵³ Ibid

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid

Case Study 6 – Tennis: More liberalised organisational structure

Study on the European Sport Model(s)

Produced by: Ecorys & KEA
Date produced: March 2022

Background

The 'Study on the European Sport Model' provides an overview of the main features of the European Sport Model and the main trends that affect the evolution of the model. Each case study provides granular information on particular sports, describing aspects of their different models including interesting features, evolving trends experienced for the particular sport, and highlighting any threats or challenges that a particular sport and its model experienced. Any good practice initiatives or measures that have been put in place to address these threats or challenges will also be detailed.

Some case studies focus on the European perspective (with some international level information), while others focus on national situations. Feedback from selected stakeholders gathered through interviews is included where relevant – this shows key features, evolving trends, threats or challenges in relation to tennis and does not necessarily represent the views of all potential stakeholders.

Reason for inclusion

This case study describes the more liberalised and flexible organisational structure of the tennis sport model, and the impact such an approach has had on the sport. The governance model of tennis is comprised of seven main bodies (ITF (International Tennis Federation), ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) the WTA (Women Tennis Association), and the four Grand Slam tournaments. The organisational structure is a lot more liberalised with tournament organisers having a lot more influence over professional tennis compared to federations. This has led to the development of parallel competitions, difficulties to align calendars between competitions, solidarity mechanisms being challenged and an overall lack of redistribution of revenues across tennis professionals. The case study describes these challenges and some good practices that have been introduced to address such challenges.

Key features of relevance to the European Sport Model

The history of tennis governance and the formation of the main tennis federations stray away from the usual features of the European Sport Model and the unified governance model we can observe. At the beginning of tennis's establishment, there was already a discrepancy between professional tour tournaments with prize money and the prestigious amateur tournaments organised by the national federations and the International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF, now known as ITF). Players were not authorised to compete in both, as amateurs were not allowed to have an income from playing tennis. In 1968, this situation changed when a tour of 12 open tournaments with prize money was organised. This is considered as the start of professional tennis as it is known today. This professional circuit led to an increase in popularity of the sport, income from broadcast contracts and hence the availability of prize money.⁸⁵⁸

Nevertheless, conflicts between national federations, ILTF and other commercial tours remained. The dispute led to the foundation of the syndicate ATP by male professional tennis players as a protection of their interests against federations and commercial tours in 1972. The foundation of the WTA followed one year later. The history and reasons behind

⁸⁵⁸ Balliauw, M., Verlinden, T., Van Den Spiegel, T., & Van Hecke, J., (2017), *Towards a sustainable financial model for professional tennis players*, University of Antwerp, Department of transport and regional economics Research Paper 2017-006, May 2017, <https://econpapers.repec.org/paper/antwpaper/2017006.htm>.

the emergence of the main tennis organisations still play an important role in how tennis is organised today by ATP, WTA, ITF and to a lesser extent by the national federations.

Currently the ITF manages the national teams competitions, including the Davis cup (men) & Fed cup (women). The Pro tours (ATP for men and WTA for women) are two separate organisations which manage the highest professional level. They manage their own tournaments (Masters 1000, ATP/WTA 500 and ATP/WTA 250 tournaments).⁸⁵⁹

Parallel to that, the four grand slams tournaments theoretically belong to the ITF but in practice have a strong cooperation with the pro tours. Grand slams also has its own rules: best of five sets (whereas it is best of three sets in 99% of the tournaments). Each also have different end of game rules (6-6 tie-break, two games differences, 12-12 tie-break, etc...)⁸⁶⁰.

As a result of its specific **organisational structure**, tennis strays away from the European Sport Model: there is **no promotion and relegation** system per se (the ranking system and the different tiers of tournaments: from grand slam to masters 1000, ATP 500 & 250 and futures/challengers) would be the main 'pyramidal' elements of tennis.

Additionally, the joint **governance** structure of tournaments is much weaker compared to other sports: there is no collective sales of TV rights and no unified body representing all tournaments.⁸⁶¹

Evolving trends of relevance to the European Sport Model

Important evolutions are linked to increased needs for **revenue diversification**, which has a direct influence over the governance model of tennis. Before the pandemic, the sport generated roughly \$2.3 billion in annual revenue. About 60% comes from the four Grand Slams, each of which operates independently. These revenues more or less equally come from media rights (\$750 million), ticket sales (\$800 million) and sponsoring deals (\$750 million).⁸⁶²

While tennis is arguably the most popular individual sport globally, it accounts for only 1.3% of the total value of global sports TV and media rights, a smaller share than golf, hockey, or cricket, according to a 2018 report by data company SportBusiness. Since the sales of TV rights for most is not organised collectively, tournament organisers fail to adequately monetise their content on TV/online (except for the four grand slams).⁸⁶³

As a result, proposals are emerging to review the **organisation** and **commercialisation** of tennis. In 2020, the ATP has put forward a plan to restructure the governance model of tennis and is seeking to increase cooperation between tennis tournaments, review the current arrangements for collective selling of TV rights, and develop a new revenue-sharing model between players and tournaments. Several core pillars are proposed:

- In the first phase, the ATP plans on setting up a 50-50 profit sharing model between players and tournament, for a "fair and sustainable long-term growth formula",⁸⁶⁴ based on a comprehensive, independent financial audit. This mainly applies to Masters 1000 tournaments.

⁸⁵⁹ Information obtained through consultation with stakeholder.

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁶¹ Yaffe-Bellany, D., (2021), *The Missed Business Opportunity That Is Pro Tennis*, Bloomberg, 24 March 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-03-24/novak-djokovic-other-tennis-players-seek-to-reform-economics-of-the-sport>

⁸⁶² Ibid.

⁸⁶³ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁴ ATP (2020), *United For Growth: ATP Strategic Vision*, <https://www.atptour.com/en/news/atp-strategic-plan-2020>

- In the second phase, this model would be extended to all seven main tennis stakeholder organisations (including the more lucrative grand slams, which generate 58% of the tennis broadcasting revenues).
- The plan also involves restructuring the calendar of competitions with an extended duration for Masters 1000 tournaments, adding a 10th Masters 1000 event on grass and additional ATP 250-level events, which would be subsidized by the ATP.
- This plan seeks to develop the overall revenue share of tennis via the development of bundled rights and the production of several digital products, including matches highlights, and ultimately strengthen revenue-sharing mechanisms to nurture the entire tennis ecosystem.⁸⁶⁵

Masters 1000 and ATP 500 tournaments would pay a fee to finance the expansion of the digital rights, as well as including a contribution towards the less wealthy ATP 250 tournaments. In return, they would get a category protection guarantee (30 years in the case of the Masters 1000s, 15 years for the 500-level events), along with the possibility of increased revenues over the long term.⁸⁶⁶

This also includes a plan to restructure ATP Media so that it is more representative of smaller ATP 500 and 250 tournaments. ATP Media is currently controlled by the nine Masters 1000 tournaments which each own a 10% equity stake in the company (90% in total), while the ATP holds a final 10% share in the media company. ATP 500 events and a large number of ATP 250 events are currently licensed by the ATP to ATP Media for the agency to sell, produce and distribute their rights. The plan would be to review the ownership structure of ATP Media, restructuring the way revenues and voting power are allocated, with a view to make it the exclusive licensing hub for the whole of the ATP Tour. The overall plan is partially adopted at the moment, though the main challenge is arguably to ensure all tennis governing bodies collectively agree on the project, especially in its second phase.⁸⁶⁷

Threats or challenges to the sport

The governance structure of tennis also makes it easier to launch **new competitions** and opens up opportunities for new formulas. The men's team competition, the Davis Cup was recently revamped. Kosmos announced a partnership with the ITF in 2019, pledging to invest \$3 billion over 25 years in grassroots tennis development and in a new formula Davis Cup tournament that would take place over one week and continue to involve only men (the competition was previously organised throughout the season). However at the same time, the ATP brokered a separate agreement with the Australian tennis federation to start the ATP Cup, a team tournament with a similar structure. The coordination of tournaments and competition calendars quickly becomes an issue due to the multiplicity of stakeholders involved in the governance of tennis.⁸⁶⁸

A similar calendar issue arose in 2020 when one of the Grand Slam Tournaments (Roland Garros) was postponed due to the sanitary restrictions in place, which placed the tournament at the same time as the Laver Cup, which was ultimately postponed. The

⁸⁶⁵ Tandon, K., (2021), *ATP board approves "key aspects" of its strategic plan, including increase in 12-day Masters 1000 events*, Tennis.com, 18 September 2021, <https://www.tennis.com/news/articles/atp-board-approves-key-aspects-strategic-plan-12-day-masters-1000-prize-money>

⁸⁶⁶ Miles, S., (2020), *The ATP's blueprint for the future requires buy-in from all*, Open Court Article, 11 September 2020, <https://opencourt.ca/2020/09/11/the-atps-blueprint-for-the-future-requires-buy-in-from-all/>.

⁸⁶⁷ Cronin, B., (2022), *ATP Board votes to remove conflicts of interest, spelling end for IMG seat*, Sport Business, 22 February 2022, <https://media.sportbusiness.com/news/exclusive-atp-board-votes-to-remove-conflicts-of-interest-spelling-end-for-img-seat/>.

⁸⁶⁸ Yaffe-Bellany, D., (2021), *The Missed Business Opportunity That Is Pro Tennis*, Bloomberg, 24 March 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-03-24/novak-djokovic-other-tennis-players-seek-to-reform-economics-of-the-sport>

calendar shift – decided unilaterally by the Roland Garros organisers – was unanimously criticised by the ATP, the WTA and the ITF.⁸⁶⁹

Good practices to address threats or challenges to the sport

The pandemic led to a more **coordinated approach** amongst the main tennis organisations, as tennis stakeholders were forced to deal with the consequences of the pandemic collectively (including financial issues, but also reopening measures, overlapping calendars due to the postponement of many tournaments).

Two projects emerged:

1. T7 a gathering of one representative from each governing body (ITF, ATP, WTA, and each grand slam tournament) to decide more collectively on a set of key issues. This includes examining areas such as a unified calendar, points distribution, money redistribution, as well as shared commercial offerings, sponsorships and TV deals.⁸⁷⁰
2. Tennis United, a project between ATP and WTA to align rules on joint tournaments between men and women. These initiatives align well with the call for increased cooperation of the ATP strategic plan.

Additional **solidarity measures** were developed in response to the COVID crisis. A package of measures were set up to support stakeholders impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The package was approved by the ITF Board in early June 2020 and represents a total relief fund of more than US\$2.6million. The new measures include \$1.449million in funding for National Associations to help facilitate the return to tennis through national and junior tournament grants, top ranked junior player grants, and a \$350,000 fund for players ranked 501-700. There will also be development support available for officials, as well as provisions for the return of Beach Tennis. This latest support follows previously announced measures, which include financial support for wheelchair tennis and free training resources for coaches.⁸⁷¹ Moreover, in May 2020, the seven tennis stakeholders had also collectively raised in excess of \$6 million to create a Player Relief Programme aimed at supporting approximately 800 ATP/WTA singles and doubles players in need of financial support.

Further information

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⁸⁶⁹ AFP (2020), *Anger against Roland-Garros unites the world of tennis*, 18 March 2020, <https://www.beinsports.com/en/roland-garros/news/anger-against-roland-garros-unites-the-world-/1436311>

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⁸⁷¹ ITF (2020), *ITF announces further measures to support stakeholders*, Press Release, 10 June 2020, <https://www.itftennis.com/en/news-and-media/articles/itf-announces-further-measures-to-support-stakeholders/>.

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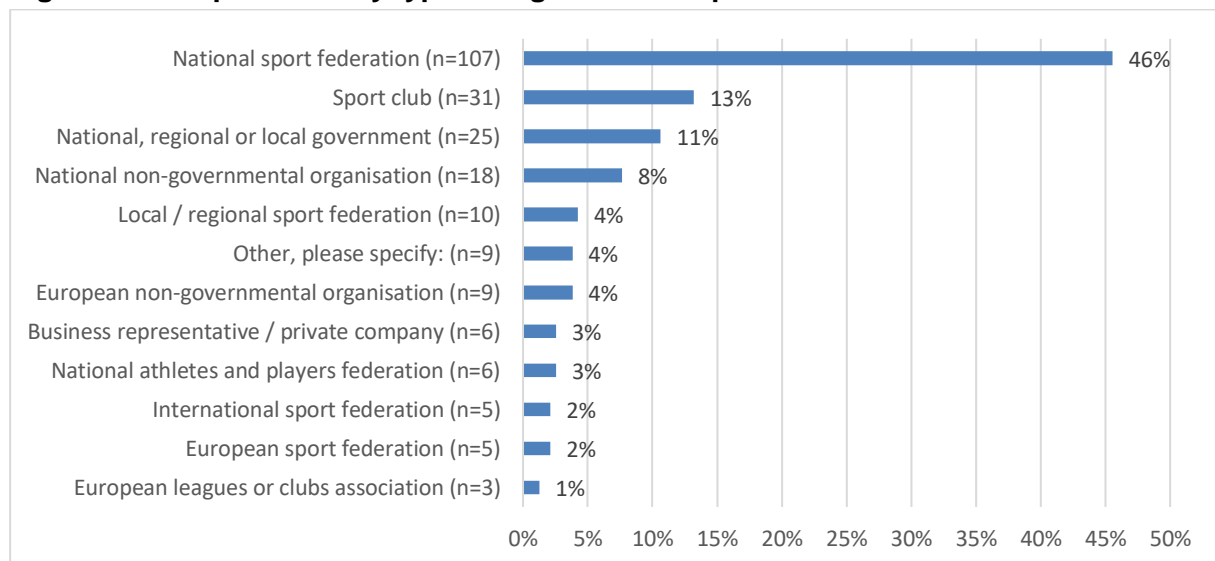
Annex Four: Survey Report

This annex provides an overview of the main findings which emerged from the survey we conducted on the European Sport Model among sport stakeholders. The survey was launched on 2 November 2021, and it was closed on 10 December 2021, collecting 235 responses in total.⁸⁷² The following section provides an overview of the background information collected through the initial questions of the survey on the type and location of the organisations represented by the respondents. The subsequent sections then explore the views of the respondents on the relevance of the different features of the European Sport Model and on the main trends that are constituting a movement away from the Model.

Background section

The survey results show that almost half of the respondents work in national sport federations (46%), while 13% of them work in sport clubs and 11% of them in public authorities at national, regional or local level. A few respondents (4%) specified that they work for other types of organisations, such as universities or research institutes.

Figure 14: Respondents by type of organisation represented

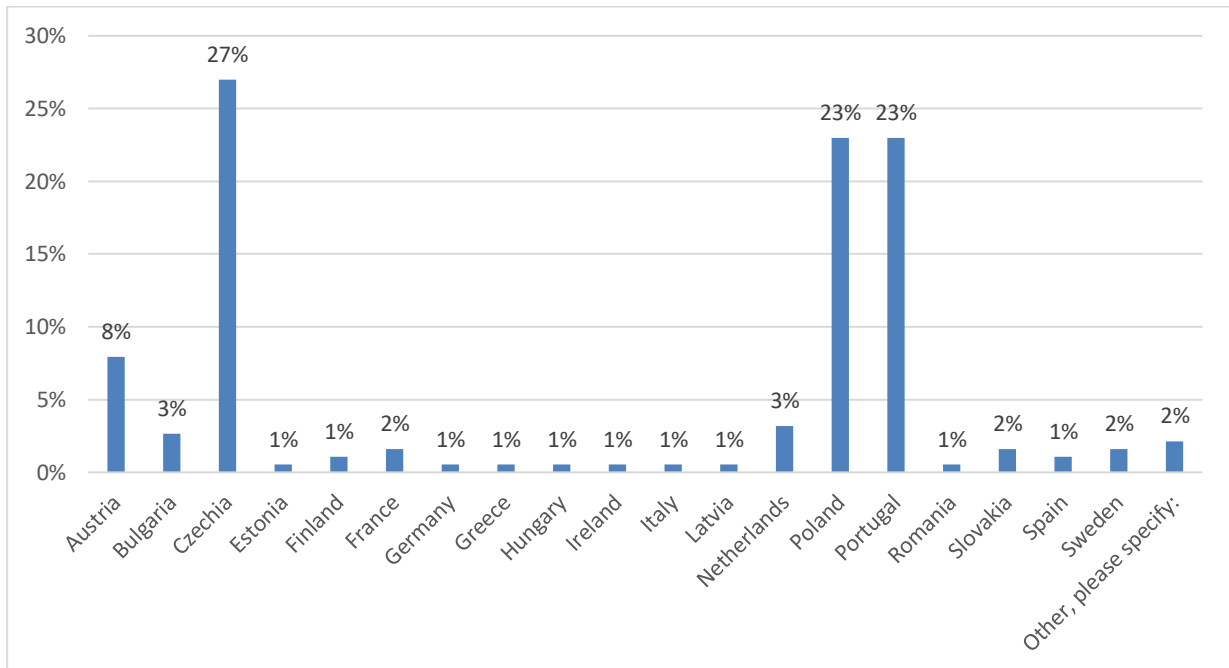


Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=235]. Q2: Which of the following best describes your organisation?

Respondents working for national entities (i.e., national NGOs, national, regional or local public administration, national federations, etc.) were also asked to specify the relevant country where they work. As shown in the figure below, the most represented countries in the survey are Czechia (27%), Poland (23%) and Portugal (23%). Among the four respondents (2%) mentioning that they come from another country, two of them specified that they work in Iceland, one in Serbia and another one in the United Kingdom.

⁸⁷² The total number of responses received was 487. However, 252 responses were not deemed complete enough to be considered for the analysis and have then been disqualified. For this reason, the final number of responses considered for the analysis is 235.

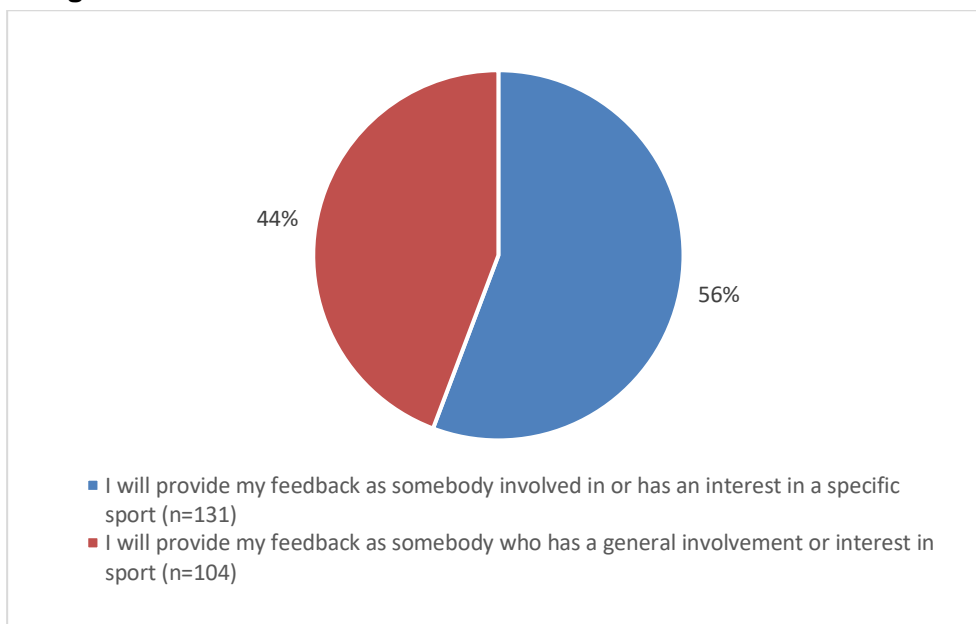
Figure 15: Respondents by country in which their national organisation is based



Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=189]. Q3: Please indicate the relevant country

In order to assess whether the feedback provided by the respondents was mainly based on a specific sport or on sport in general, the respondents were asked in what capacity they would be answering the survey questions. The figure below shows that over half of the respondents provided their feedback as somebody involved or with an interest in a specific sport (56%).

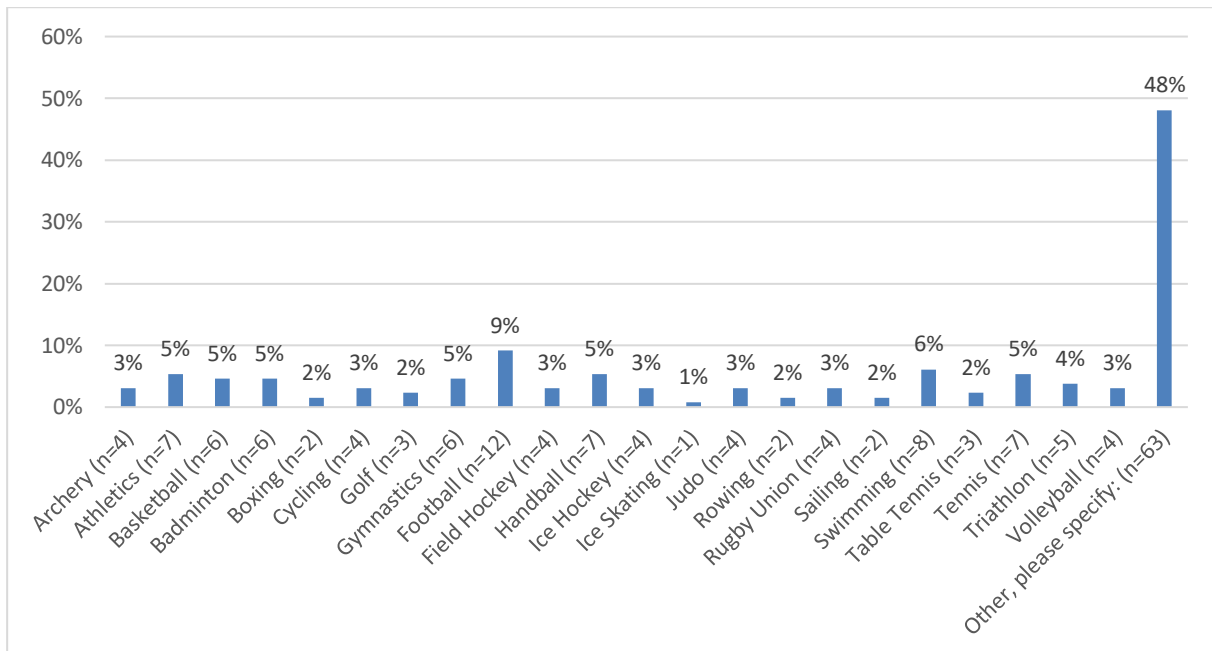
Figure 16: Breakdown of respondents providing their feedback on a specific sport or at a general level



Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=235]. Q4: Please indicate in what capacity you will be answering these questions.

The respondents who indicated that they are involved in or have an interest in a specific sport were also asked to indicate the relevant sport. As shown in the figure below, nearly half of the respondents reported that they are interested in or involved in a specific sport that was not included in the list of response options for this question. Among these, four respondents specified that they are involved in or interested in surfing, three respondents in taekwondo, and two respondents each in canoeing, curling, fire sports, kickboxing, padel, shooting sports, squash and wrestling.

Figure 17: Respondents by sports in which they are directly involved or have an interest



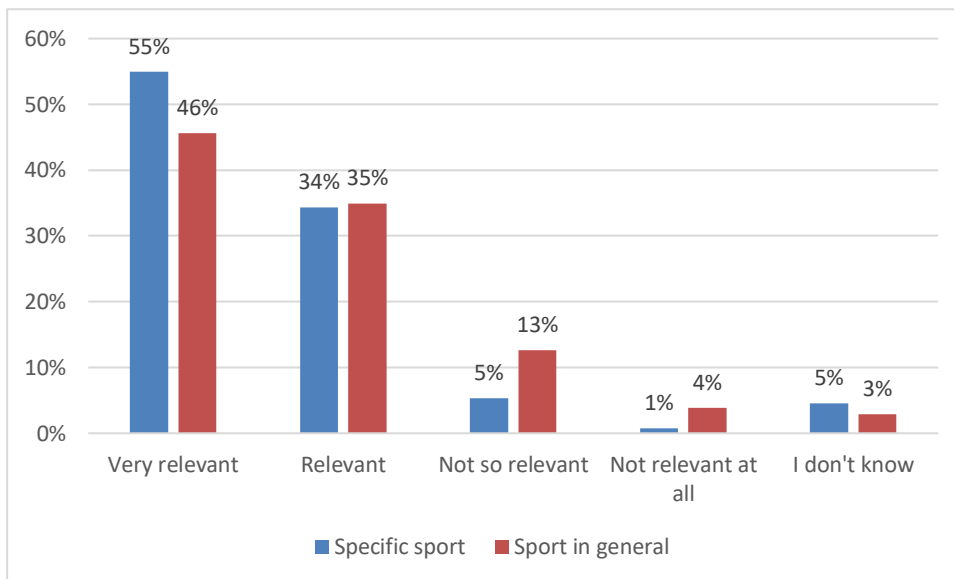
Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=131]. Q5: Please specify the relevant sport you will be focusing on for this survey

Relevance of the main features of the European Sport Model

Pyramidal structure of sport

The figure below provides an overview of the relevance of the pyramidal structure of the European Sport Model for respondents providing their feedback on a specific sport or on sport in general. The pyramidal structure is considered as either very relevant or relevant by 89% of respondents involved in or with an interest in a specific sport. A similar result was also observed among the respondents providing their feedback on sport in general, with 81% of them reporting that the pyramidal structure of sport is either a very relevant or a relevant feature of the European Sport Model.

Figure 18: Relevance of the pyramidal structure as a feature of the European Sport Model



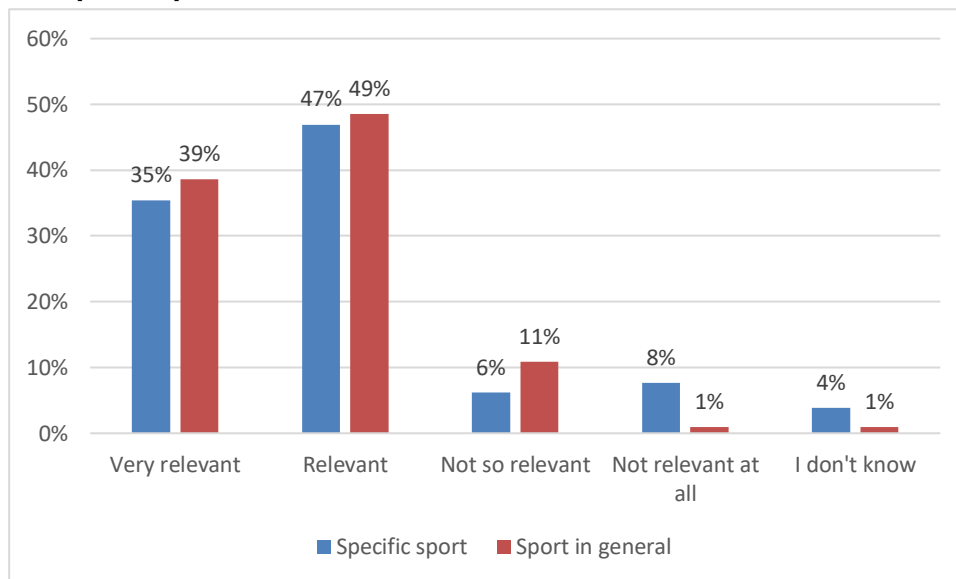
Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=234]. Q6: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the sport(s) you selected? AND Q7: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the organisation of sport in Europe?

A few respondents who indicated that the pyramidal structure of sport is not a relevant feature of the European Sport Model highlighted that the structure is not inclusive enough. A couple of respondents argued that it does not reflect the reality of sport in Europe as not all sport organisations, stakeholders or athletes are adequately represented in this organisational structure. Another respondent also added that the pyramidal structure does not represent the interests of people practicing sport at non-competitive or grassroots level and it is not relevant at all for specific sport disciplines, such as yoga, gymnastics or fitness.

Principle of promotion / relegation

A large majority of the respondents who provided their feedback on a specific sport or on sport in general consider the principle of promotion / relegation as a relevant feature of the European Sport Model. For example, 88% of respondents who provided their feedback on sport in general consider this principle as either very relevant or relevant. Similarly, 82% of respondents interested or involved in a specific sport also consider this principle as a very relevant or relevant feature of the European Sport Model.

Figure 19: Relevance of the principle of promotion and relegation as a feature of the European Sport Model



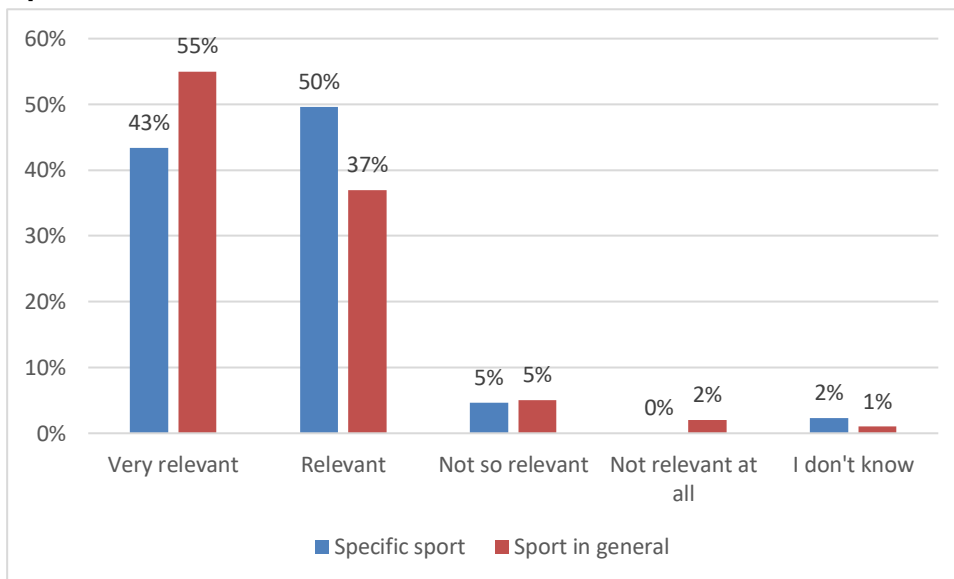
Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=231]. Q6: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the sport(s) you selected? AND Q7: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the organisation of sport in Europe?

A few respondents who indicated that the principle of promotion and relegation is not a relevant feature of the European Sport Model argued that this principle does not apply to a large number of individual sports (i.e., golf, wrestling, surf, taekwondo, etc.) and it may also constitute a barrier to the development of sports at grassroots level, as this principle is mainly relevant at highly competitive level.

Reliance on voluntary work

As outlined in the table below, the reliance on voluntary work is generally considered as either a very relevant or a relevant feature of the European Sport Model by respondents with an interest in a specific sport or with an interest in sport in general (93% and 92% of them respectively). In fact, only 2% of respondents with a general interest in sport and none of the respondents with an interest in a specific sport reported that this feature is not relevant at all for the organisation of sport in Europe.

Figure 20: Relevance of the reliance on voluntary work as a feature of the European Sport Model



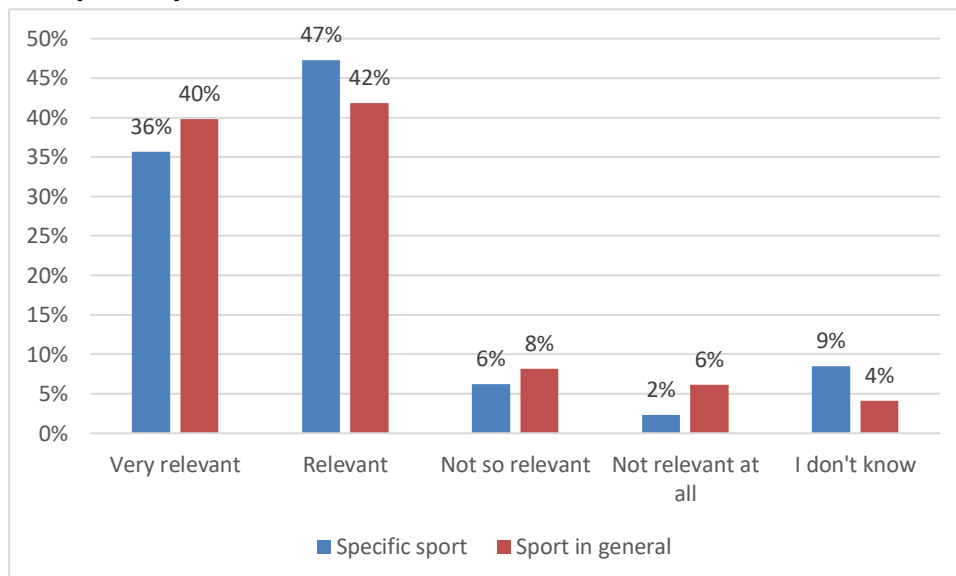
Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=229]. Q6: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the sport(s) you selected? AND Q7: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the organisation of sport in Europe?

Among the few respondents who indicated that the reliance on voluntary work is not a relevant feature of the European Sport Model, one respondent mentioned that sport work in high level competitions should always be paid, and it is therefore important to protect and respect the fundamental principles and rights of work. Another respondent confirmed this view and added that sport organisations should not rely on volunteers, also due to the increasing professionalisation of the sport sector.

Principle of financial solidarity

As outlined in the figure below, the majority of respondents with an interest in a specific sport or in sport in general considered that the principle of financial solidarity is either a very relevant or a relevant feature of the European Sport Model. However, among those respondents providing their feedback on the organisation of sport in general, 14% of them mentioned that this feature is either not so relevant (8%) or not relevant at all (6%).

Figure 21: Relevance of the principle of financial solidarity as a feature of the European Sport Model



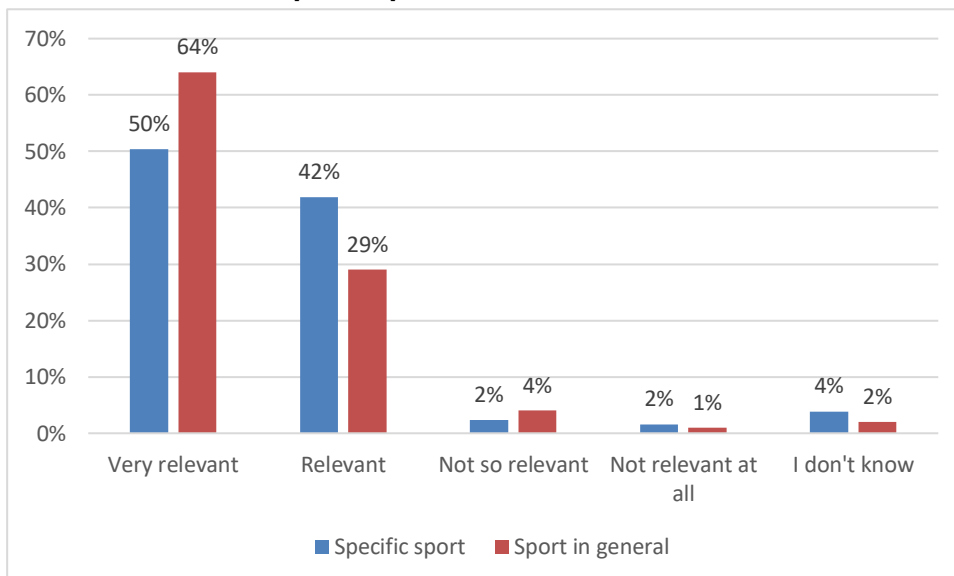
Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=227]. Q6: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the sport(s) you selected? AND Q7: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the organisation of sport in Europe?

The majority of respondents who indicated that the principle of financial solidarity is not a relevant feature of the European Sport Model argued that even if there are redistribution mechanisms in place, these only concern a small or negligible share of the amount of funding needed at grassroots or lower-competition levels. Another respondent argued that grassroots sport is primarily financed by the participants and due to the limited impact of redistribution schemes it might be preferable to sustain grassroots sport through bottom-up investments. Moreover, another respondent highlighted that the principle of financial solidarity is not at all relevant in certain sports where sport governing bodies need to sustain the development of sport at all levels (i.e., mountaineering, climbing, hiking, etc.).

Autonomy and independence of sporting organisations

The autonomy and independence of sporting organisations is also generally considered as a very relevant or a relevant feature of the European Sport Model by respondents providing their feedback on a specific sport or on sport in general. However, more respondents reporting on the organisation of sport in general (64%) consider this feature of the European Sport Model as very relevant in comparison to respondents providing their feedback on a specific sport (50%).

Figure 22: Relevance of the autonomy and independence of sporting organisations as a feature of the European Sport Model



Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=229]. Q6: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the sport(s) you selected? AND Q7: To what extent are the following features of the European Sport Model relevant for the organisation of sport in Europe?

Only a couple of respondents provided their feedback on why the autonomy and independence of sport organisations does not represent a relevant feature of the European Sport Model. In particular, it was argued that the autonomy and independence of sport organisations becomes a relevant feature only when sporting bodies are characterised by effective good governance practices, including adequate levels of transparency and accountability, that can prevent corruption cases in sport.

Gaps in the European Sport Model

A small number of respondents provided their feedback on the potential gaps in the European Sport Model and suggested which main organisational features and elements should be included in the Model.

A few respondents pointed out that the pyramidal structure of the Model does not reflect the reality of the entire sport movement, as it does not include recreational sport, and thus a broader perspective is needed to ensure that all people practicing sport in any form are adequately represented in this structure. Moreover, another respondent argued that the Model does not consider the diversity of sporting activities, as some sports are not organised following a pyramidal structure or with sport stakeholders and clubs that are part of national or international umbrella organisations.

Another aspect highlighted by a couple of respondents relates to the lack of recognition in the Model of the athletes' rights. In this context, it was argued that the Model should promote opportunities for athletes to negotiate their collective rights with their relevant international or national federations and to foster their involvement in decision-making processes within the relevant sport governing bodies.

There were also mixed views on whether the Model should also define and outline the possibility to create closed competitions, with a couple of respondents mentioning that the Model should be more flexible and provide rules and guidelines on how and in which cases closed competitions can be created. On the contrary, a few respondents argued

that the Model should instead clearly point out that closed competitions cannot exist within this organisational model.

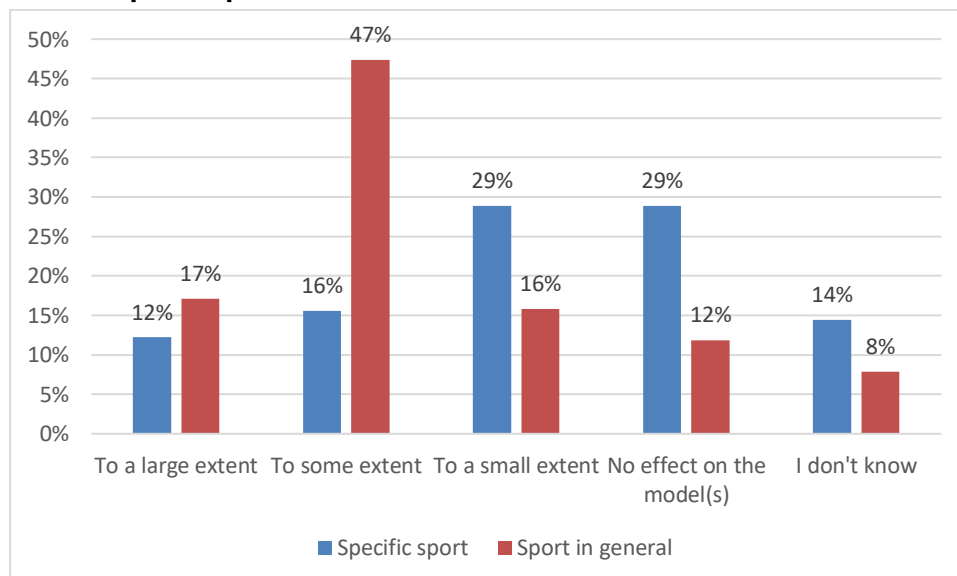
Finally, a few respondents mentioned that the Model shall prioritise the application of good and ethical governance principles by identifying and promoting key values that shall be respected by all organisations, i.e., democracy, transparency, accountability, integrity, solidarity, gender equality, social responsibility and respect of fundamental human rights. In this context, one respondent argued that federations not complying with these key values should not be considered as organisations adhering to the European Sport Model and should then not be supported by the European institutions.

Main trends

Internationalisation

The figure below describes to what extent the respondents providing their feedback on a specific sport or at general level consider that internationalisation practices in sport are constituting a movement away from the European Sport Model. On the one hand, the figure shows that the majority of respondents providing their feedback on a specific sport do not consider these practices as a threat to the European Sport Model (58%). On the other hand, the majority of respondents providing their feedback on the organisation of sport in general believe that practices of internationalisation are actually constituting a movement away from the European Sport Model (64%).

Figure 23: Extent to which internationalisation practices show a movement away from the European Sport Model



Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=166]. Q14: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected above? AND Q15: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model?

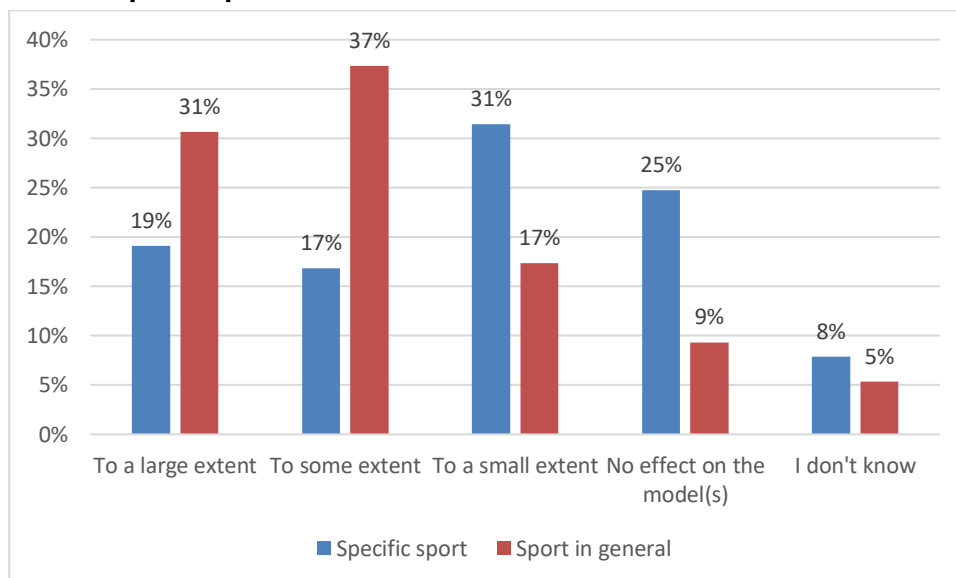
When asked to explain how internationalisation practices are constituting a movement away from the European Sport Model, the respondents mentioned that the internationalisation of audiences, investments and players might have a strong impact on the principle of financial solidarity, as it increases the economic advantages that elite level sport clubs have on smaller ones. In this context, a respondent argued that elite level clubs can more easily attract foreign investments or profitable sponsorship deals, and this might then prevent other clubs from competing on equal terms. Moreover, one

respondent argued that internationalisation practices might undermine the connection between sport and fans, thus hindering the level of community engagement generated by sport and hence resulting in lower levels of interest towards sport in general.

Commercialisation

As illustrated in the figure below, commercialisation practices constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model for the majority of respondents providing their feedback on the organisation of sport in general (68%), as well as for over one third of respondents providing their feedback on specific sport(s) (36%). However, one out of four respondents involved or interested in a specific sport reported that commercialisation practices have no effect at all on the European Sport Model (25%), and almost one third of them indicated that commercialisation has a limited impact on the model (31%).

Figure 24: Extent to which commercialisation practices show a movement away from the European Sport Model



Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=164]. Q14: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected above? AND Q15: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model?

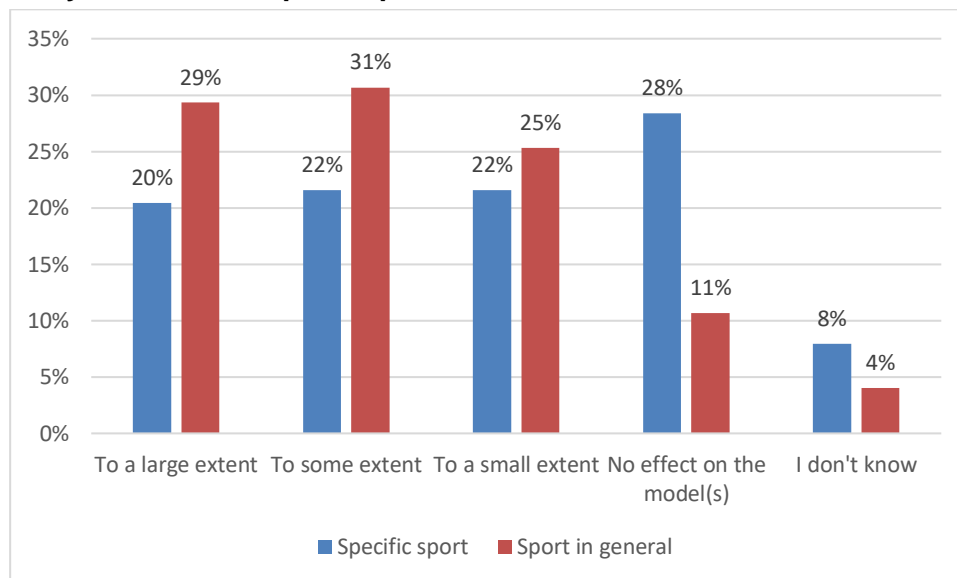
A few respondents indicated that commercialisation practices are constituting a movement away from the European Sport Model because of the increasing inequalities between more and less popular sports. One respondent added that these practices affect a small number of sports and a small share of the athletes practicing these sports, thus provoking increasing differences in level of funding available at elite and grassroots level, and in the level of funding available between more and less popular sports. In this context, one respondent argued that the distribution of sponsorship revenues deriving from the Olympic Games should be considered as a good practice example of redistribution of revenues among different sports.

Practices in organising competitions

The figure below shows that the majority of respondents reporting on the organisation of sport in general (60%) consider that changing practices in organising competitions constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model. However, the results collected among respondents interested or involved in specific sport(s) do not provide a

clear indication on the potential impact of changing practices in organising competitions on the European Sport Model. The figure shows that half of these respondents believe that it does not constitute a movement away from the Model (50%), while around 42% of them believe that changing practices in organising competitions affect to a large or to some extent the European Sport Model.

Figure 25: Extent to which practices in organising competitions show a movement away from the European Sport Model



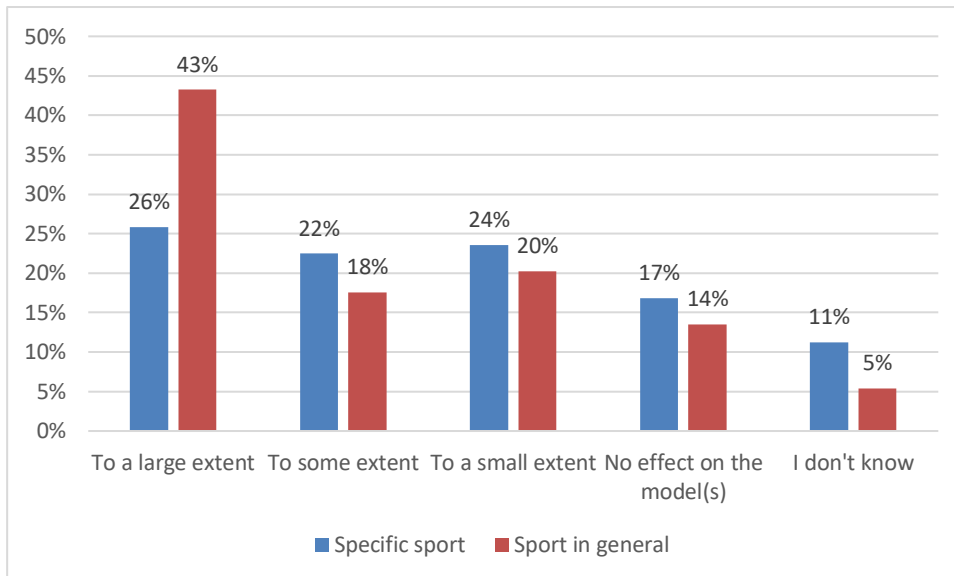
Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=163]. Q14: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model(s) for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected above? AND Q15: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model?

A few respondents who indicated that changing practices in organising competitions are affecting the European Sport Model highlighted that the creation of closed competition undermines the Model in different ways. For instance, closed competitions are considered as discriminatory and a strong threat to one of the main features of the Model, the principle of promotion and relegation. Moreover, the fact that closed competitions are funded and managed by private entities is also considered a threat to the Model, as these competitions are mainly profit-driven and may then prioritise profits over sporting merits, thus also compromising the integrity of sport. Finally, one respondent argued that the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Sport could provide a space to encourage dialogue aimed at addressing this trend in Europe.

Concentration of revenues in elite level sport / less redistribution to lower-level competitions and grassroots

As outlined in the figure below, more than half of the respondents reporting on the organisation of sport in general consider that the concentration of revenues in elite level sport constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model (61%). The results collected from respondents interested or involved in specific sport(s) also demonstrates that for nearly half of the respondents the concentration of revenues poses a threat to the European Sport Model (48%).

Figure 26: Extent to which the concentration of revenues in elite level sport / less redistribution to lower-level competitions and grassroots shows a movement away from the European Sport Model



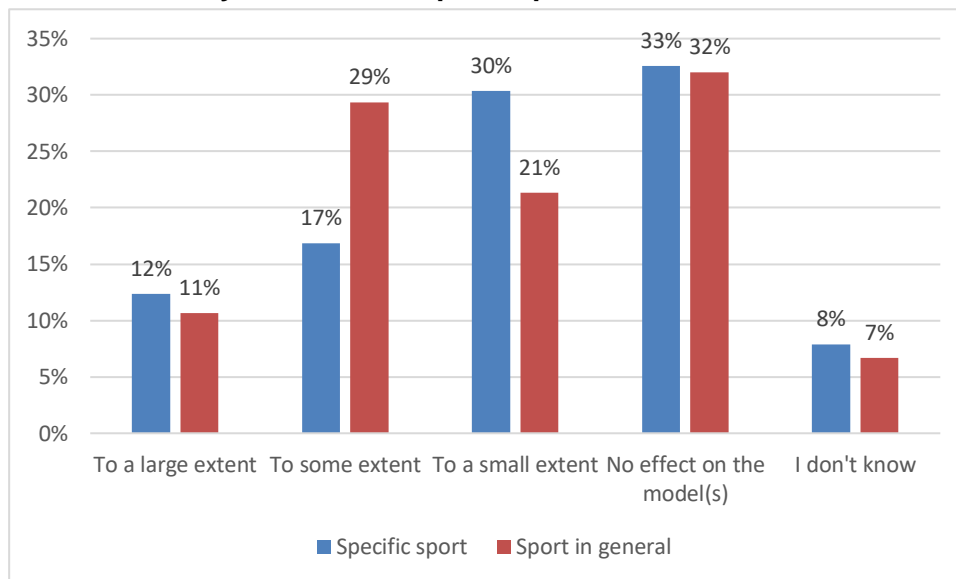
Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model(s). (2021) [N=163]. Q14: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected above? AND Q15: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model?

According to the survey respondents, the concentration of revenues at elite level may constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model due to the inadequacy of solidarity and redistribution mechanisms to effectively sustain the development of sport at grassroots level. One respondent also pointed out that the funding provided through solidarity mechanisms represent a very small part of the total funding of any sport, and it fails to reach the grassroots or recreational sports level. Two respondents proposed two good practices examples from the Netherlands and Slovakia. In order to tackle the concentration of revenues at elite level, the relevant national governments implemented policies aimed at redistributing financial resources from elite level to local and community level organisations through ad-hoc subsidies or rules for the sport sector.

Development of good governance practices

There were mixed views on the extent to which the development of governance practices addressing organisational, management, democratic, accountability, integrity and diversity concerns in sport constitutes a movement away from the European Sport Model. According to approximately one third of the survey respondents, the development of good governance practices does not have any effect on the European Sport Model. However, around 40% of respondents providing their feedback on the organisation of sport in general reported that good governance practices constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model to a large or to some extent. Finally, around 75% of respondents working in national sport federations believe that the development of good governance practices has a limited or no impact at all on the Model.

Figure 27: Extent to which the development of good governance practices shows a movement away from the European Sport Model



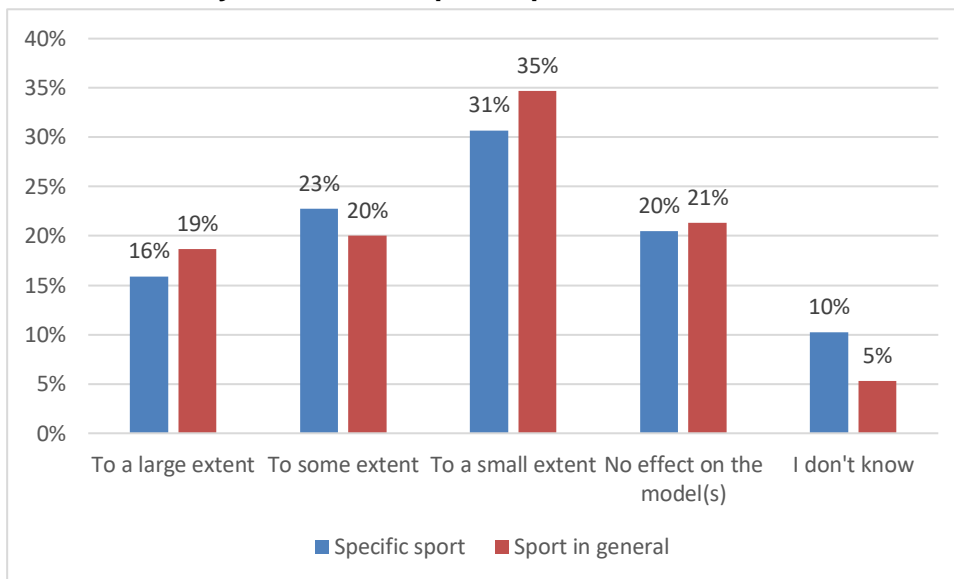
Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=164]. Q14: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected above? AND Q15: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model?

Only two respondents indicated how the development of good governance practices might constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model. One of them argued that these practices do not contribute to achieve a more inclusive governance in sport organisations, as demonstrated by the lack of representation of athletes in several sport governing bodies. Another respondent reported that the focus on developing good governance practices hindered the development of sport at grassroots level, due to the large share of funds allocated to the governance area by sport governing bodies.

Number of volunteers

Approximately one third of respondents believe that trends in the number of people volunteering in sport are constituting a movement away from the European Sport Model only to a small extent. However, around 40% of respondents providing their feedback either on a specific sport or on sport in general reported that trends in volunteering in sport is affecting the European Sport Model to some or to a large extent.

Figure 28: Extent to which the number of people volunteering in sport shows a movement away from the European Sport Model



Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=163]. Q14: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected above? AND Q15: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model?

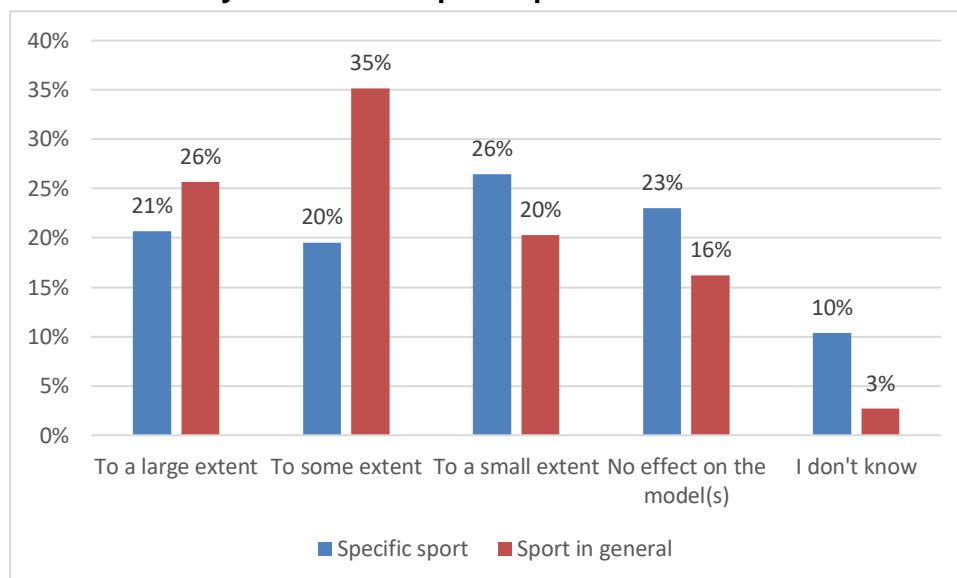
The respondents who indicated that trends in volunteering are constituting a movement away from the European Sport Model mainly highlighted that this relates to the decreasing number of volunteers in sport and the difficulties in recruiting them. In particular, it was argued that this issue is linked to various aspects, such as changing socio-economic trends, the impact of the pandemic, the greater professionalism required and lack of flexibility by sporting organisations in addressing the needs of volunteers (organisation of volunteers' working time, roles assigned to volunteers, etc.).

A few respondents also suggested some good practice initiatives to address this trend and increase the participation of volunteers. For instance, the Slovakian Act on Sport offers to the people volunteering in sport a tax-free compensation for the time spent at sport events, while other respondents suggested good practices developed at European or Olympic Games level (i.e., Sport for Good Governance, SIGGS Points, RINGS project) that might serve as inspiration for sport federations recruiting and managing volunteers.

Sport and physical activity participation habits

As illustrated in the figure below, there are diverging views on the extent to which sport and physical activity participation habits are affecting the European Sport Model among respondents providing their feedback on a specific sport or on sport in general. In fact, around 60% of respondents answering in relation to the organisation of sport in general reported that sport and physical activity participation habits affect the European Sport Model to a large extent or to some extent, while the same feedback was provided by only 41% of respondents reporting on a specific sport.

Figure 29: Extent to which sport and physical activity participation habits show a movement away from the European Sport Model



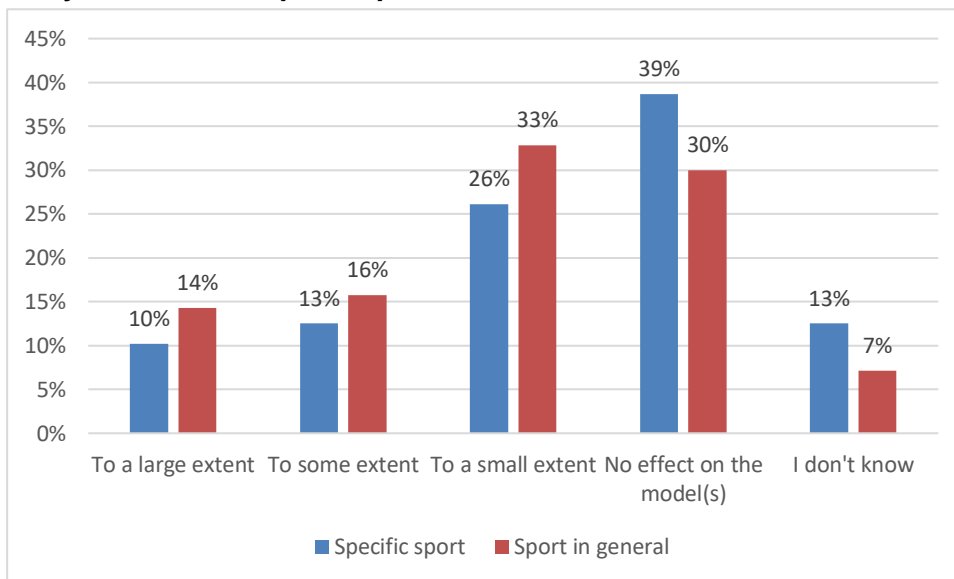
Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=161]. Q14: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected above? AND Q15: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model?

Among the respondents who indicated that changing physical activity and participation habits are constituting a movement away from the European Sport Model, a couple of them reported that the impact of the pandemic has been quite significant and has brought changes to the way people participate in sporting activities. In this context, changing trends and habits relate to an increasing orientation towards individual or outdoor sports. Another respondent argued that an increasing number of people are now more interested in sports that can be practiced at any time and at any moment and have less of an interest in sporting activities organised at community or grassroots level.

Focus on social development goals

The focus on social development goals does not seem to be considered by the survey respondents as a trend having a strong impact on the European Sport Model. This is demonstrated by the fact that around two thirds of respondents providing their feedback on specific sports (65%) or on the organisation of sport in general (63%) believe that the focus on social development goals affects the European Sport Model to a small extent or has no effect at all. Moreover, around 80% of respondents working in national sport federations consider that the focus on social development goals has limited or no effect at all on the European Sport Model.

Figure 30: Extent to which the focus on social development goals shows a movement away from the European Sport Model.



Source: Ecorys survey: Study on the European Sport Model. (2021) [N=158]. Q14: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model(s) for the organisation of the sport(s) you selected above? AND Q15: In your opinion, to what extent do the following trends show a movement away from the European Sport Model?

A few respondents highlighted a few good practices that can be implemented by sport governing bodies to achieve social development goals. A few respondents argued that more efforts are needed to achieve gender equality in sport organisations and to foster participation of women in sport. A couple of respondents highlighted the important role that sport can play to facilitate the integration of refugees in Europe as well as fostering social inclusion of marginalised groups.

Other trends affecting the European Model of Sport

The respondents were then asked to specify whether there are other trends that are affecting the European Sport Model. The respondents generally reported that developments relating to digitalisation, sustainability and equality do not have a direct impact on the European Sport Model and therefore do not necessarily show a movement away from the Model.

However, a few respondents noted that recent technological developments and digitalisation trends might affect the European Sport Model, due to their increasing role in sport performance enhancement, communication and administration practices. In particular, it was mentioned that sport organisations at elite level may be able to allocate more resources to technological developments, thus increasing the digital gap between elite and grassroots levels. Another respondent also argued that differences in the availability of digital resources and technologies between elite and grassroots level sport organisations might also undermine principles of equality in competitions.

Nevertheless, digitalisation is generally seen by the respondents answering to this question as an inevitable process that can actually benefit the sport sector. A few respondents highlighted that digitalisation processes should be promoted and embraced by sport organisations at all levels, as it may also contribute to foster participation of young people in sporting activities.

Moreover, a small number of respondents highlighted that sustainability issues may also constitute a movement away from the European Sport Model. A few respondents

explained how these topics are progressively becoming more important for European public opinion, and thus becoming increasingly relevant in the European political agenda. In this context, one respondent suggested that the sport organisations that will not take relevant actions to tackle sustainability issues in their organisational model will be marginalised over time. Another respondent argued that there are still too many sport organisations that are not making enough effort to ensure the sustainability of their activities. The respondent also suggested that the promotion of sustainability and greening actions should be recognised as an important trait of the good governance practices enshrined in the Model.

Annex Five: Seminar Report

Introduction

An online seminar was organised by Ecorys and KEA on the Study on the European Sport Model on 10 March 2022 from 09.30 to 12.00 CET via Microsoft Teams. The seminar served as an opportunity to present the study, including its main findings, survey results and case studies, and receive detailed feedback from high-level experts in the field. A total of 25 participants attended the seminar. The full list of participants is provided below.

- DG EAC, European Commission
- Ecorys
- Edge Hill University
- ENGSO
- EOC
- EU Athletes
- European Clubs Association
- FIFPRO
- Finnish Ice Hockey Association
- Finnish Ice Hockey Players' Association
- German Shooting and Archery Federation
- International Sport and Culture Association
- IOC
- KEA
- Loughborough University
- Sport and Citizenship
- UEFA

Presentation of the study

The study team gave a presentation of the study including the following:

- The objectives of the study;
- Methodology and outputs;
- Main findings;
- Survey results; and
- Six case studies.

The slides of the presentation were disseminated to the participants after the seminar and are also attached below.



EU Sport Model(s)
Validation Worksho

Feedback provided by participants

Participants thereafter gave their feedback on the presentation given. Other participants also provided their feedback in writing after the seminar. The feedback provided is summarised below.

General considerations:

- It is unclear to what extent the EOC Athletes' Commission and National Olympic Committees (NOCs) Athletes' Commissions have been included in the stakeholders' survey. Democratically and peer-elected representatives of athletes provide additional and critical insights to the research and ensure it has a strong representation. Supporters (fans) are also an important stakeholder that should be consulted.
- It is appreciated that minority views have been highlighted through the survey results.
- When looking through a pyramid lens, the results and answers will naturally have a competitive sport focus. When making a comprehensive description of sport in Europe, we should label it precisely. The smaller part of competitively focused club/'company' based sport fits very well into a pyramid description. However, two thirds of all Europeans practising sport do so in informal and recreational settings and are thus not described by a pyramid model. It would therefore be useful to reflect the reality- either by describing competitive sport in one separate model and describing recreational sport in another model; or alternatively by establishing and using an inclusive model which indicates levels of participation in each segment at its correct size. The challenge is that this pyramid model should not be recognised as the model of all sport as it is quite challenging for the development of sport participation.
- The initial results of the study show that there is a broad consensus on what the model represents and on its key principles. This confirms that the DNA of the model applies to all, although it might be implemented in different ways according to the sports and according to national specificities. For this reason, we would recommend that the study refers to 'the European Sport Model' and not 'the European Sport Model'.
- The report should have more of a focus on general European values: rule of law, democracy and human rights and how they translate into sport as it is a very important and fundamental question through which the European Sport Model should be evaluated. It is thus important to distinguish between the organisation of sport and the values part of sport. The organisation of sport is covered well, but there seems to be less information on the values from the presentations (i.e., to what extent the trends of the model are a threat to the values of sport rather than the organisational structure).
- The debate about the European Sport Model has taken on a political dimension that should be mentioned. The question of values, and especially the ideological credibility that sustains the notion of the European Sport Model must be highlighted. The political tensions resulting from the war in the Ukraine give additional reasons not to avoid this point.
- The presentation listed some of the key features and principles of the European Sport Model. However, of course, and as highlighted in the presentation, in some cases there are historical and cultural reasons as to why some sports have evolved the way they

have and why some principles that apply to sports in Europe are separating us from the American model.

- It is good to see from the athletics case study that this broader view of the societal role of sports is taken into account in the study.
- A clearer distinction needs to be made between threats and trends.
- The researchers should be careful when talking about conflict of interest. There is a long body of EU case law and European Commission decision-making practice that has given backing to and reasoning for the specificity of sport and how sport is organised in Europe. It is for very good and well-known reasons that it is not treated just like any other market and that is why we have the European Sport Model. There should be a stronger reference to this reasoning and backing for the Model.

Organisational structure:

- In terms of the pyramidal model of organisation, it is not only the relationship between elite and grassroots level which is important, but also the pyramidal organisation, the base of which is composed by grassroots clubs, and the peak by the leading federation. It is also important to underline that there is a hierarchical relationship between the top and the base. The reverse (bottom-up relationship) is quite rare, and that creates a problem in terms of democracy, transparency, and good governance in general. The lack of a bottom-up relationship contributes in some way to undermining the Model.

Organisation of competitions:

- There is potential that new ways and formats of organising competitions have a positive impact for sports in Europe. Innovation and digitalisation can modernise the organisation of sport in Europe.

Solidarity mechanisms:

- It would also be useful to see the redistribution of funds to different actors who are contributing to the revenues that are being generated, particularly athletes. Solidarity also means that athletes must be properly paid for their contribution.
- Generalisations need to be avoided. We are in a very sensitive time for the European Sport Model in European football. Therefore, it is important to add more nuances regarding solidarity and redistribution which are complex and fundamentally important themes so must not be misleadingly represented in generalisations and/or brevity. Statements linked to ongoing legal proceedings such as on conflicts of interests should be avoided.
- At UEFA, they have many competitions only a few of which are profitable and where money is directed to non-profitable competitions. Therefore, redistribution is not just one level to another in the elite to grassroots pyramid, but also from competitions to competitions (e.g., from men's to women's and youth competitions).
- There are club competitions and national team competitions. These two competitions have to co-exist and be part of the same ecosystem. It is therefore important to make this distinction (e.g., redistribution and solidarity mechanisms in club competitions are different to national team competitions).

Autonomy and good governance:

- One of the main current threats for the European Sport Model is how in some sports, the role of federations to govern their own sport has been questioned or ignored. This is the case, for instance with not releasing the players for national teams, not following the rules of the game or not respecting the calendar. These are all crucial for the essence of sport: to ensure the level playing field. The study should make this threat clear and recognise the role of federations to govern their sport. It is important to note that Commissioner Vestager, who is responsible for EU competition policy, also underlined this important role of the federations after the ISU case and made it clear that the Commission does not want to question this role. Furthermore, internationalisation of sport, which is mentioned as one of the trends in the study, demonstrates even more the need for setting globally applicable rules of the game. Hence, internationalisation highlights even more the importance of maintaining the role of federations as regulators of their respective disciplines as well as their autonomy.
- Whilst it may be true that good governance actions are monitored by government and linked to government funding, this is contradicting the autonomy recognised by the sport movement. As declared by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in January 2018, the sporting movement, especially international federations, deserve their own autonomy. There is here a gap in terms of lack of accountability and transparency, in addition to a threat which may lead to a loss of confidence in public opinion. This point should also be emphasised in the report.
- Gender Equality is mentioned quickly in the presentation. We would also suggest to look at the diversity and inclusion agenda as part of the European Sport Model.

Commercialisation:

- It is important to make the distinction between commercialisation of certain sports and purely “for profit” business models: we do not agree with the statement that the “growth in broadcast right revenues (...) largely concentrated on a few sports and large events” is a threat to the European Sport Model (slide 8 of the PowerPoint presentation) and that the “principle of solidarity [is] potentially undermined by the forces of internationalisation and commercialisation” (slide 9). Revenues from broadcasting and sponsorship rights can help strengthen solidarity funding mechanisms (horizontal and vertical) that are necessary to support worldwide development of sport and ensure that participants in global competitions can compete against the best athletes irrespectively of their personal earnings or the financial strength of their local sport federations or NOC’s. The situation is quite different for purely profit-driven models which emerge in a limited number of disciplines that are the most commercially attractive. Incentives to develop “closed leagues” are largely present in those disciplines and conclusions drawn from these cases should not be applied to all disciplines. That is why we feel that the focus of the study should rather be on purely profit-driven business models being the threat to the model rather than commercialisation per se.
- Moreover, reference to multinational corporations is a bit misleading and needs to be made clearer as it is not just corporate sponsors and broadcasters that are driving that internationalisation and commercialisation, but increasingly also private equity, hedge funds and venture capitalists that are buying up sports rights and “assets”. They see only the pure profit model and have a duty to shareholders, whereas governing bodies and stakeholders have a duty to the European Sport Model.
- The public sector has delegated some public policy objectives to sport in exchange for autonomy. However, through commercialisation, federations are occupied by further commercial objectives. Greater attention should therefore be brought to the role and engagement of public authorities that may step in to protect some public policy objectives.

Participation habits:

- There is empirical evidence (Eurobarometer, Active People's Survey) that the majority of Europeans practice sport outside the pyramidal model which is worth reflecting in the report. Non-organised sport is not a threat or trend to the European Sport Model- it is a reality that it is there, and thus it needs to be acknowledged as it has political and policy-making consequences.
- It is well recognised that increasing individual or informal participation modes creates a situation where a minority of participants are affiliated to a formal club. This weakens very much the representativity and legitimacy of the organised sport movement and contributes also to undermine the European Sport Model. The report should highlight this weakness and suggest corrective measures.

Annex Six: Acknowledgements

Ecorys is grateful to all those who kindly agreed to give up their valuable time to participate in interviews, discussions and the online seminar conducted by the study team and to provide additional information and data for the sport fiches and the case studies, namely:

- Alexander Bielefeld, FIFPRO
- Alfonso Reyes, Spanish Players Basketball Association
- Alicia Garcia, Spanish Triathlon Federation (FETRI)
- Anders Wahlström, Swedish Ice Hockey Association
- Andrea Cattaneo, Edgehill University
- Annamarie Phelps, European Rowing
- Antonio Arimany, World Triathlon
- Ben Broster, Rugby Players Association
- Borja Garcia, Loughborough University
- Colin Mieke, Sport and Citizenship
- Conny Sorenson, Danish Rowing
- David Frommer, European Club Association (ECA)
- Enrico Della Casa, European Cycling Federation
- Eva Szanto, European Rowing and Hungarian Rowing
- Florent Marty, Rugby Europe
- Folker Hellmund, European Olympic Committee
- Geert De Dobbeleer, Volleyball-Flanders
- Gilbert Celli, Rugby Europe
- Heidi Pekkola, European Olympic Committees EU Office
- Jaime McKeown, World Rugby
- James Ogilvie, UEFA
- Jari Lämsä, KIHU – Research Institute for Olympic Sports
- Jason Lewis, World Rugby
- Jörg Brokamp, German Shooting Federation
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