



# EU CITIES OF SPORT

ACES Europe's official magazine

2019

## Sports for Everyone

It's all about inclusion

**Promoting health,  
social inclusion and  
common values**

ACES Europe Capitals  
of Sport

**World Capital  
of Sport 2019 Abu Dhabi**  
Grassroots and top  
sports paradise

**Marlou van Rhijn**  
'Let's stop giving labels'

# THE POWER OF SPORT!



# Foreword

## The conquest of the World



20 years have been enough for ACES EUROPE to reach the age of majority. After consolidating its development model in Europe, it goes beyond its borders with the World Capital of Sport. For this, it has launched the first edition of the award with the candidatures of Istanbul, Taipei and Abu Dhabi. At the end the winner was the capital of the United Arab Emirates with a sports policy that borders on excellence and sport infrastructures at the highest level that overcame its rivals with galactic figures as well for a Sport Council with above 500 million euros of budget per year, plus events.

But the financial muscle is not at odds with quality public programmes, highly creative and for free. The Evaluation Committee checked how the circuit of Formula 1 of Yas-marina became several days a week a path to ride a bike or jog with 7,000 people using it regularly. A clear example of how to take advantage of a multi-purpose facility and that nobody has ever given them a similar use before. Another example to illustrate their good practices is how they celebrate popular races inside the shopping centers to avoid the radiant sun and suffocating heat from the outside, combining sports, leisure and recreation in the same venue.

Congratulations to Abu Dhabi and its leaders for a candidacy that will undoubtedly be a world benchmark in 2019 with the title of World Capital of Sport. Many and varied events await in the Emirates from January. But the expansion of ACES EUROPE has also reached the new world with Colombia and Cali, the first American Capital of Sport in 2019. Starting point in the continent with a candidacy that captivated the inspectors thanks to its 14 programmes of social inclusion, with some extraordinary results for them and civil society. Congratulations to Cali and continue to grow closely with those cities that are a reference not only in Europe but also and from now in the rest of the world.

**Hugo Alonso**  
General Secretary  
ACES EUROPE

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FIFA World Player of the Year Luka Modric represents the dream of every child refugee.



### Sport as a cure

The potential of 'lifestyle medicine' which is geared towards the healing power of sleep, more exercise and a healthy diet is enormous and much more research needs to be done in this area.



### Breaking the stigma on psychological problems

In the Netherlands, child psychiatrist Cecil Prins-Aardema has started a campaign to break the stigma's that surround psychological problems. One of the key factors: bicycling together



### It's all about inclusion

Sport for people with disabilities is more important than ever, says Rita van Driel, is a former ski instructor and the current programme manager for disabled sports at the Dutch Olympic Committee. In her work, she tries to improve the possibilities for people with disabilities to participate in sport, nationally and internationally.



### WHO Action Plan

More active people for a healthier world, says the World Health Organisation.

## EUROPEAN UNION & SPORTS



Doubling the budget for sport



Interview with Andrey Kovatchev: 'Sport has so many benefits'

## COLUMN



### Marlou van Rhijn

The Dutch Paralympic legend on her past and present and on her latest ideal: 'I want to make blades as easy to buy as sports shoes'

# Colophon

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# ACES

*UNESCO's 2015 Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport claims all three are a fundamental right for all. This conviction laid the foundation for ACES Europe, a non-profit association based in Brussels and funded by the European Union. Since 2001, the organisation has been working to promote sport and sporting events by presenting annual awards to the deserving capitals, cities, towns and communities of sport.*

BY LEO AQUINA



In 2001 Madrid was the first Capital of Sport and 17 other cities were Capital of Sport with Sofia carrying the honour in 2018.

ACES Europe was founded by Gian Francesco Lupattelli, an Italian former physical education teacher who remains the organisation's president.

It was born out of the *Movimento Sportivo Popolare Italia* (Popular Sport Movement), an alumni association created over 50 years ago by a 24-year-old Lupattelli for the Advanced Physical Education Institute (ISEF).

The Popular Sport Movement – known by the Italian abbreviation MSP – is still thriving to this day. It has 550,000 affiliates and is recognised by the Italian Olympic Committee as a 'Meritorious Association'. The MSP was also active in Spain throughout the 1990s. In a joint effort to promote Madrid's bid to host the Olympic Games in 2012, Lupattelli dreamed up the idea to promote the city as the European Capital of Sport.

## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

With the backing of Madrid's then mayor, José María Álvarez del Manzano, Lupattelli created a promotion committee that spread the idea among the 15 capitals of the European Union at



*ACES Europe founder and president Gian Francesco Lupattelli with Tibor Navracsics, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.*

A photograph of two young girls, one of Asian descent and one of African descent, both wearing bright pink short-sleeved shirts. They are smiling and hugging each other. The girl on the right has her hand on the shoulder of the girl on the left. The background is blurred, showing other people in similar pink shirts, suggesting a group activity or sports event.

# PROMOTION OF SPORTS FOR ALL

that time. After carefully laying the groundwork, the European Capital of Sport Award was born in 2001.

Since then, the initiative has been formally recognised by the European Commission in Article 50 of its 2007 White Paper on Sport, and has been expanded into awards for cities, towns and communities of sport. A total of 17 cities have so far followed Madrid as the capital, with Sofia currently holding the honour before the baton is passed to Budapest in 2019.

The allocations of these awards are made according to the principles of responsibility and ethics, being aware that sport can promote improvements in life quality, psycho-physical wellbeing, and the complete



## The Awards

### European Capital of Sport

*This is a single annual award presented to a capital of a country or a city with more than 500,000 inhabitants.*

### World Capital of Sport

*The World Capital of Sport award is new in 2019. It has the same format as the European Capital of Sport, but outside Europe with the support of the main international organisations.*

### European Cities of Sport

*Multiple annual awards throughout Europe to cities between 25,000 and 500,000 inhabitants.*

### European town of sport

*Multiple awards throughout Europe per year to cities of less than 25,000 inhabitants.*

### European Communities of Sport

*Multiple annual awards throughout Europe for communities within cities and towns.*

### European City or Town of the year

*The cities and towns compete during the year for becoming the best city preparing a summary file of activities which will be evaluated by an independent body.*

“ACES focuses on promoting grassroots sports and physical activity in general”

integration of all social classes within a community.

### FROM MADRID TO ABU DHABI IN TWO DECADES

After the success in Europe, ACES is now exporting the format globally, looking for the best sport policies and practices around the world. This presents communities worldwide with the same opportunity to unite under the same flag of sport and health for all. The first

World Capital of Sport will be Abu Dhabi in 2019.

### SPORT FOR ALL

ACES enjoys the support of every party in the European Parliament because it aims for the wellbeing and health of all European citizens.

This is the main goal of ACES: to promote the idea that sport should be available to everyone. To achieve that goal, ACES focuses on promoting grassroots sports and physical activity in general.

The efforts are clearly reaping dividends, with cities, towns and communities from all over Europe bidding each year for a part in the ACES project. Already 120,000 European municipalities have understood the importance of sport management through public administrations that promote basic sport associations, schools and universities. Local governing bodies are now more aware of the benefits that come from sport and physical activity.

### EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES OF SPORT

Multiple annual awards throughout Europe for small groups of cities.





Gian Francesco Lupattelli, founder of ACES Europe

“Already 120,000 European municipalities have understood the importance of sport management”

#### A WORLD OF BENEFITS

Cities in the ever-expanding ACES network share knowledge. The awards give them an incentive to develop sports programmes, increase local sports participation and improve public health. Apart from these local benefits, the awards also stimulate regional and national investment and create international visibility. During the past few years, over 50 cities have been involved in different EU grants with other cities.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

Award cities are obliged to specific rights and promotion rules. They have to draw up a sport calendar with activities which promote health, wellbeing and integration. They also have to organise an International Congress or an international sports competition and by the end of their award year they should produce a summary of the activities and their concrete results.

#### AWARDS CEREMONY

Once a year (normally in November), ACES Europe invites the award-winning cities to the European Parliament for the Awards Ceremony. President Gian Francesco Lupattelli delivers the flag to the winners, accompanied by European Authorities, MEPs and other policymakers. The achievements of the award winners are highlighted before the symbolic handover from the incumbent to the upcoming Capital of Sport. ★

#### The European Capitals of Sport

- 2001 *Madrid*
- 2002 *Stockholm*
- 2003 *Glasgow*
- 2004 *Alicante*
- 2005 *Rotterdam*
- 2006 *Copenhagen*
- 2007 *Stuttgart*
- 2008 *Warsaw*
- 2009 *Milano*
- 2010 *Dublin*
- 2011 *Valencia*
- 2012 *Istanbul*
- 2013 *Antwerpen*
- 2014 *Cardiff*
- 2015 *Torino*
- 2020 *Málaga*
- 2016 *Prague*
- 2017 *Marseille*
- 2018 *Sofia*
- 2019 *Budapest*
- 2020 *Málaga*
- 2021 *Lisbon*
- 2022 *The Hague*

# SOFIA 2028

*Bringing sport to the people*

*Sofia is preparing to wrap up an extraordinary year as European Capital of Sport in 2018 after engaging over 1.2 million people as participants, spectators and guests in a wealth of organised festivals, competitions and sport holidays.*

BY LEO AQUINA

"We have seen so many positive things in the city", says Dr Andrey Kovatchev MEP, the chair of the Groupe Consultative Européen (GCE) who calls the Bulgarian capital his hometown. "Stakeholders and the Sofia municipality are investing in the sport infrastructure, for example by creating biking lanes and outside gyms for everybody. There's a special association for the promotion of sport in

schools and in other parts of the city, and investments are also being made in winter sport facilities in the neighbouring mountains."

## GRASSROOTS SPORT

Sofia 2018 has been a successful promoter of grassroots sport participation, organising over 100 events throughout the year including activities such as street dancing and a project called 'Sofia breathing',



“Sofia is a very green city with dozens of parks and gardens and numerous opportunities for exercise”

Mila Andreeva

for which roads were closed to traffic on four Sundays. The city has also expanded the European Capital of Sport theme into the surrounding mountains, staging ski events in winter and hiking events in summer, all only a 30-minute drive from the city centre.

“Sofia is a very green city with dozens of parks and gardens and numerous opportunities for exercise”, Mila Andreeva, executive director of Sofia European Capital of Sport 2018, says. “Sport is a way of living for the youth. We think the ACES award hands us a way to



promote sport for both youth and adults.”

Volunteers have been essential to the success of Sofia 2018, with sport academy students able to share their expertise in organising sport events while embracing the opportunity to gain valuable working

experience. “This human capital is as big a legacy as the development of good facilities and infrastructure”, Andreeva says.

Sofia has gone to great lengths to bring sport to the people and communicate the benefits of regular physical activity. Considering information as vital, the Sofia2018 organising committee situated a public information centre at one of the busiest crossroads in the capital and maintained an online events calendar on the [sofia2018.bg](http://sofia2018.bg) platform. Anyone wanting to practise any sport in the city has been able to search by keyword, place and date. ★



#### The aim of Sofia 2018

- Physical activities for every age
- Sport near the home and the office
- Each school and kindergarten with a sport camp
- Each day and each weekend – activities for all
- New opportunities for sport for everybody



AS A RECOGNITION FOR SOFIA'S EFFORTS, CITY MAYOR YORDANKA FANDAKOVA WAS APPOINTED AS THE HONORARY PRESIDENT OF ACES EUROPE FOR 2019



# BUDAPEST 2019

*Perfect fit with the joy of sport, community experience, fair play and a healthy lifestyle*

*Budapest will take over the baton from Sofia to become European Capital of Sport in 2019. When the city applied for the recognition four years ago, the bid supported the Hungarian capital's aspirations to host the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.*

BY LEO AQUINA

"The target of the application (for European Capital of Sport) – the joy of sport, the community experience, fair play and promoting a healthy lifestyle – are in harmony with what we also feel are our tasks with

relation to sport in the capital", Alexandra Szalay-Bobrovniczky, Deputy Mayor of Budapest, says.

Despite missing out on the Olympic prize to Paris, Buda-

pest has established itself as an international sports city and is proud of its role in promoting recreational and youth sports, as well as its proven capacity to host many large-scale sports events.





“The title is a clear acknowledgement that we can be a worthy host of large-scale sports events”

Tünde Szabó



Hungary has increased its sporting profile significantly over the past two decades and has advanced from hosting only six state-sponsored international events in 2006, to 34 in 2010 and 113 in 2017. In addition to the annual show-piece F1 Grand Prix staged at the Hungaroring in Mogyoród, the other major international events coming to Budapest in 2019 include the World Fencing Championships, the World Table Tennis Championships, and the FINA World Junior Swimming Championships.

Perhaps the biggest highlight of the European Capital of Sport year in Budapest, however, will be the city's hosting of the 15th European Maccabi Games. The multisport event will see over 2,500 Jewish athletes from 30 countries competing in 29 competitions, including, for the first time, in two para sports: fencing and tennis. Hungary's successful growth in sport has benefited not only local sports development but society in general, thanks to investments made in high quality sports infrastructure

and tourism services, aided by a strong economy.

“The title is a clear acknowledgement that we can be a worthy host of large-scale sports events, and that we also play an important role in international sports

life within the field of recreational and youth sports”, Tünde Szabó, the Hungarian sports minister and a former Olympic swimmer, told the ‘Budapest European Capital of Sport 2019’ conference in February. ★



F1-driver Jenson Button doing some burnouts for his fans in the streets of Budapest.







“The rest of Europe could benefit from our work in education, leisure, and infrastructure, and in the health targets we pursue”

*Elisa Pérez de Siles*

Professional and amateur sport join forces in Málaga, which has male football and basketball teams and a female handball club all competing at the highest level in Spain. The city has 266 outdoor free sport courts as well as 37 football pitches and nine indoor sports halls. Even then, Málaga is still improving its sports infrastructure, with planned sports facilities including new venues for both basketball and handball, and a Roller Skate City.

“The appointment of European Capital of Sport 2020 is an incentive to keep working on our position among European sport cities, both in terms of facilities and sporting events, but especially when it comes to

grassroots sport”, Elisa Pérez de Siles says.

#### LEAD BY EXAMPLE

In preparing its bid, Málaga took a close look at previous European Capitals of sport in order to learn from their experiences. The city is now

aiming to become a centre of knowledge in its own right.

“We want to lead by example,” Pérez de Siles says. “The rest of Europe could benefit from our work in education, leisure, and infrastructure, and in the health targets we pursue.” ★



# LISBON 2021

## *Sport as the identity of a proud city*

*Sport and physical recreation are essential life components in Lisbon, the European Capital of Sport for 2021. The Portuguese capital has around 900 public and private sport organisations attended on a regular basis by around 223,000 people. It also hosted 309 large sports events between 2012 and 2016, benefiting from around 20 million euro of direct revenue and 100 million euro of indirect revenue.*

BY LEO AQUINA







### GAMES OF THE CITY

Looking ahead to 2021, the Lisbon Municipality has launched a wide range of sports programmes including Olisipiadas (the games of the city), Sport Moves with Me, Lisbon Go to the Park, Race Lisbon, and Circuit of Lisbon Parks. The city has also invested in its sports facilities over

the past decade, renovating municipal swimming pools and sports complexes and expanding the cycling network through its various districts.

In making such improvements, Lisbon hopes to promote physical education in schools and produce better conditions for individuals and families to

practice sport by encouraging the regular use of parks, gardens and sports facilities.

"Lisbon recognises the importance of physical activity and sport as a determining factor in the construction of a more humane, egalitarian, inclusive, modern and sustainable city, from top level sports to simple

informal physical activity", Jorge Máximo, Councilor of Sport for the Lisbon Municipality, says. "Lisbon European Capital of Sport is an important milestone. We deserve the honour of this title for what we have already done, for what we are doing, and for what we want to continue to do." ★



"Lisbon is proud of its sporting tradition, which is part of the identity and history of our city"

*Fernando Medina*

# THE HAGUE 2022

*Sport strengthens the city and its people*

*Although the Hague must wait another three years to become European Capital of Sport in 2022, sport is already an integral part of its policy. With the motto 'Sport versterkt Den Haag' (Sports strengthens The Hague), the municipality wants to see every citizen participating in sport or physical education by 2030.*

BY LEO AQUINA



The current rate of sport participation in The Hague is 70 percent. To achieve this high figure, the city of half a million people works closely together with over 100 sports clubs, NGOs, other Dutch sport cities and private companies to get people of all ages, backgrounds, and physical abilities moving for their health.

#### SHARE KNOWLEDGE

Apart from increasing local sports participation, the municipality wants to use The Hague Capital of Sport 2022 to

“Sport brings people together,” Richard de Mos, alderman of Sport in The Hague, says. “That’s why I care for a sportive city, in which young and old have a chance to stay active their whole lives.”

Richard de Mos, Alderman of Sport in The Hague  
Rabin Baldewsingh, former alderman of Sport in The Hague

share knowledge throughout Europe about best practices for sports policy and participation.

“The success of our sports policy has been noticed internationally,” Rabin Baldewsingh, the former alderman of Sport in The Hague, says. “This title is a major recognition for our efforts in the past, as much as it is an incentive for the future.”



## "Sport brings people together. That's why I care for a sportive city"

*Richard de Mos*

The Hague has maintained its investment in sport even through the recent economic recession, viewing it as essential to improving all sorts of communal issues like unemployment, integration, and healthcare.

New infrastructure developments include the WoW (WorkOutWijs) centre for health and lifestyle opened in one of the city's more deprived neighbourhoods, the 'Schluderswijk'. The centre focuses on people who do not move enough, people who want to move more, and on people who want to improve their lifestyle.

### **SPORTCAMPUS ZUIDERPARK**

The recently opened SportCampus Zuiderpark brings together sport, education, exercise and events. The 31,000m<sup>2</sup> complex has a 3,500-seat multifunctional indoor hall for top sport events, a professional beach hall with six beach volleyball pitches and one beach soccer court, and a



dojo for judo and taekwondo. It also boasts two double-width multifunctional sport halls, one dance hall, four large gymnasiums, a gymnastics hall, a fitness area, sauna, VIP and press lounges, and extensive catering

facilities. Every day, as many as 1,700 intermediate and higher educational students enter the building.

The Hague also cherishes the "Sporttuin Schilderswijk", a multisport complex of 2,000m<sup>2</sup> which offers children the opportunity to participate in organised sport activities.

Before The Hague can call itself the European Capital of Sport, it will host the Special Olympics in 2020, giving the city an additional motivation to improve the accessibility of sports facilities for people with disabilities. ★



## "The success of our sports policy has been noticed internationally"

*Rabin Baldewsingh*

# UNESCO AS A STANDARD SETTER

BY THE SOCIAL AND HUMAN SECTOR UNESCO



PHOTO: UNESCO/JUSSEY PIZARRO CHIZAN



***The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the lead UN agency for sport and physical education. UNESCO primarily serves governments, by informing, orienting and supporting policymakers.***

UNESCO uses a unique set of 'instruments' to guide sport-based actions at the local, national and international levels. These include the International Convention Against Doping in Sport and the International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport. There is also a regular International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS), a forum to facilitate the intellectual and technical exchange of best practice which has met six times since 1976 as the World Conference of Sports Ministers.

#### INTERNATIONAL CHARTER OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT

The Charter was the first international instrument to recognize access to physical education, physical activity and sport as a fundamental right for all. Adopted in 1978 and revised in 2015, the Charter covers issues that have significant bearing on sport policies, including the participation of women, sport for development, and an extensive concept of sport integrity. It also highlights issues such as safeguarding traditional sports and games, the role of media in sport, and the importance of research and information dissemination. The Charter guides every UNESCO action on sport-based initiatives and efficient policies.

#### INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AGAINST DOPING IN SPORT

Adopted in 2005, the International Convention Against Doping in Sport formalises global anti-doping rules, policies and guidelines based on the World Anti-Doping Code, in order to provide an honest and equitable playing environment for all athletes of the States Parties, at every level. The Convention also assists States Parties with anti-doping education and prevention programmes through the Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport, managed by UNESCO.

#### WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPORTS MINISTERS

UNESCO regularly convenes the World Conference of Sports Ministers (MINEPS) to

enable policymakers to share information, identify priorities, and develop recommendations to create global consensus on sport policy and priorities. In this context, the two most recent MINEPS conferences hosted by Germany and Russia are particularly significant, as they led to the adoption of two key documents.

The *Declaration of Berlin in 2013* agreed at MINEPS V focuses on three main areas: access to sport as a fundamental right for all; the promotion of public investments in physical education and sport; and protecting the integrity of sport. The *Kazan Action Plan* adopted at MINEPS VI in 2017 moved from policy declarations to measurable action by establishing the Sport Policy Follow-up Framework in line with the UN's 2030 Agenda



*The Welcome United Nulldreif refugee football team in Potsdam, Germany.*

**"Access to sport is a fundamental right for all"**

and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In addition to these instruments, UNESCO's work is guided by the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS), which comprises public and private stakeholders including the Olympic movement, sports federations, other UN bodies, and academia.

#### SPORT AND EDUCATION

To help governments develop inclusive, child-centered physical education policies which support skills acquisition, UNESCO advocates for Quality Physical Education in school systems and the transmission of values through sports.

UNESCO has accompanied sport, health and education stakeholders in four pilot countries – Fiji, Mexico, South Africa and Zambia – with a view to revising their national physical education policies to improve their inclusive character and make them child-centered and appropriate in terms of development. The 'Values Education Through Sport Toolkit' helps teachers to embed sports values across entire curricula

for 8 to 12-year-old pupils by focusing on three core values: inclusion, equity and respect, and targets.

#### WOMEN AND SPORT

Achieving gender equality is a global priority for UNESCO, in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly.

“Achieving gender equality is a global priority for UNESCO”





The importance of promoting the participation of women and girls in sport is emphasised in UNESCO's guiding documents, such as the *Kazan Action Plan* and the *International Charter*. The MINEPS IV Conference additionally proposed the creation of an 'Observatory of Women, Sport and Physical Education' which could promote the access of women to sport and decision-making positions, and protect women from gender-based violence and discrimination. As part of this, ten prevention measures have been developed by UNESCO and UN Women to address gender-based violence in sport.



PHOTO CREDIT: UNESCO/MOHAMMAD RAMBUL HASAN

### INCLUSIVE CITIES

To help cities better fight racism, discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion, UNESCO launched the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR) in 2004. Through this global platform, UNESCO has been advocating for the creation of safe and more inclusive cities by improving access to sport infrastructure and to safe spaces for the practice of physical activities. This can result in the inclusion of marginalized populations such as refugees, people with disabilities, indigenous people, and vulnerable women and girls.

One shining example of inclusivity is *Welcome United Nulldrei*, a refugee football team established in Potsdam, Germany with the support of ECCAR, the European extension of the international coalition.

The initiative's main objectives are to further the inclusion of new generations of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and to raise the awareness of the public and local authorities of the prejudices faced by these vulnerable groups.

There are many other inspiring projects being implemented across Europe to promote inclusion. In Nancy, France, the *Together, let's team up against discrimination!* campaign aims to use sport to replace misconceptions about inclusion with an ethos where

difference is not denied, but seen as an asset. In the Belgian municipality of Liege, meanwhile, a *Fan Coaching* initiative fosters the social inclusion of marginalised football supporters by accompanying them before, during and after matches to ensure the events are peaceful. The initiative also provides marginalised supporters with social support such as legal aid or help in the fight against drugs, mediation in the case of an incident, and awareness raising information on racism and discrimination in football. ★

“UNESCO has been advocating for the creation of safe and more inclusive cities”

# FOOTBALL TOUCHES EVERYONE

*Luka Modric represents the dream of every child refugee*

*Where there are refugees, there are refugee camps and where there are refugee camps, football is played. No one can resist this magical game with a ball at their feet. During WWI and WWII, the fighting between the Germans and the allied forces was sometimes put to halt so that a football match could be organised and everyone could forget the tragedy of war, if only for a moment. Even in the concentration camps, they played football. There were matches between the prisoners and the Germans, and among the prisoners themselves. The same is now also happening in the refugee camps, all over the world. Football touches everyone!*

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BY FRANS OOSTERWIJK

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*What a year 2018 has been for Luka Modric: silver and best player at the World Cup, Champions League winner with Real Madrid, FIFA Player of the Year.*



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK



To contribute to the integration of newly arrived refugees, Germany's biggest club, Bayern Munich, organised a training camp in 2015. The refugees were provided food, they played football and they received German lessons. The team with such stars as Robben, Ribéry, Lewandowski and keeper Neuer also played a benefit match that raised one 1 million euros. The money went towards housing and relief for refugees.

On the Greek island of Lesbos, Petros Kokkalis, vice-chairman of Olympiakos football club, took the initiative to support the footballers of the Skaramanga refugee camp financially. He arranged a coach for them and compiled a selection of 25 players called: *The Hope Refugee Team*. Their technical manager was Antonis Nikopolidis, the goalkeeper of the Greek national team that became European champions in 2004. The team plays in a competition against all kinds of company teams. And they are raising quite a few eyebrows, because they are winning nearly all their matches. At this point, they have even started a youth training programme in Skaramanga. Some players can only play for the team for a short spell because they are transferred to other European countries. But the boys that stay have a good chance at making it to the Greek professional league. According to the coach, there is a great deal of talent to be found on the Hope Refugee Team.

“Children in refugee camps also have the right to play football, to have fun and to dream”



Awer Mabil.

#### REFUGEES WHO WENT PROFESSIONAL

There are so many people fleeing their home countries across the globe that refugee camps have already produced a number of professional footballers. At last summer's World Cup in Russia, for example, the Danish national team featured the South Sudanese footballer Pione Sisto, who was born in a refugee camp in Kampala, Uganda in 1995. Three months after his birth, his parents seized the opportunity to move to Denmark where Pione, who became a Danish citizen in 2014, developed into a talented youth player for FC Midtjylland and was later chosen for the national team, joining Christian Eriksen at midfield. He currently plays for Celta de Vigo in Spain and dreams of one day playing for the likes of FC Barcelona or Real Madrid.

Another striking example of the role football has in society is Awer Mabil. Mabil also hails from war-torn South Sudan. He was born in 1995 in an enormous refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya, founded with the aid of the United Nations. At one point, with a population of tens of thousands, the camp counted 592 registered sports teams, including 73 women's teams. Some of the teams even competed in the highest football divisions in Kenya. Awer Mabil lived there for ten years, before he and his family moved to Australia in 2006. Playing for a local football club, Mabil caught the attention

of the Australian football association, who were scouting teenagers who could potentially make it to the national squad one day. And the rest, as they say, is history. Mabil, playing for Adelaide United, debuted the Australian A League in 2013 at the age of 17; he was the second youngest player ever to make his debut. He was quickly chosen as talent of the year, was asked for trial training periods at the Dutch clubs Ajax and FC Twente and was later (again) offered a contract by FC Midtjylland in Denmark. In October 2018, in a friendly match against Kuwait, he made his first appearance for the Australian national squad. And he scored too! During this same match, his childhood friend, Thomas Deng, also from South

Sudan and born in a refugee camp in Nairobi, Kenya in 1997, also debuted for the Australian national team.

#### PARKING LOT

Let's not over-romanticise it. Football cannot solve structural problems. Only a small percentage of the young talents manage to make it as far as Sisto, Mabil and Deng. But that's not the point. The point is that children in refugee camps also have the right to play football, to have fun and to dream. Luka Modric was just such a child. The tiny, creative motor of Real Madrid and the Croatian national team not only had to overcome the limitations of his small stature, but also had to survive the anguish of his war-torn country. During his

“During his young life, Modric had to go through hell time and time again, only to come out stronger each time”

young life, he had to go through hell time and time again, only to come out stronger each time. Modric was born in Modrici (not kidding!), a small village on the Croatian coast, populated by only a handful of people other than the Modric family, at a distance of sixty kilometres from

the city of Zadar. Almost thirty years ago, this was the stage of a bloody war. Even today, it is still a dangerous place due to the mines that are still hidden in the ground. Modric's father was a soldier in the Croatian army and Luka spent a great deal of his childhood with his



Together with the fans in Zagreb, Modric and the Croatian national team celebrate the second place at the World Cup, the biggest achievement in football after the country became independent in 1991.





Young kids playing football in a refugee camp in Juba, South Sudan.

grandfather, after whom he was named.

When Croatia declared independence in 1991, the Serbs in the area took over with the help of the Yugoslav army and bitter fighting broke out between the Serbs and the Croats. On 18 December 1991, while grandfather Modric let his cattle graze on a neighbouring mountainside as he normally would, he was taken captive and killed in cold blood. After this, the Modric family fled to the large hotels that now functioned as refugee camps in Zadar. There, on a parking lot of a hotel, the six-year-old Luka

**“In a refugee camp in Zadar, the six-year-old Luka honed his skills. Day in and day out, he kicked a ball against a wall”**

honed his skills. Day in and day out, he kicked a ball against a wall and played on the street with his friends.

Two years later, he was picked up by local club NK Zadar.

The stadium and the fields of the club were under constant bombardment by the Serbs and more than once the players had to run for their lives when the Serbs launched grenades towards the training fields.

#### **WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

In the absence of his father and grandfather, youth trainer Tomislav Basic devoted all of his time to help the tiny super talent. He brought the fifteen-year-old Luka to his favourite club, Hajduk Split, but they declined. They found him too small, too fragile. So Basic brought the young lad

to Dinamo Zagreb, Hajduk Split's biggest rival, and there, Modric ripened into the star he is today. He was first loaned out to Zrinjski in Bosnia-Herzegovina (where he was named player of the year at age 18), then to Inter Zapresic, a club in the suburb of Zagreb. He then returned to Dinamo Zagreb and was offered a ten-year contract. What did he do with his first pay check? He bought an apartment for his parents and two sisters so that they could finally leave the refugee hotel. What follows is well-known by now: three fantastic years at Dinamo Zagreb (three national titles and three league cups) and his debut for the national team, and finally, a transfer to Tottenham Hotspur in 2008. He then joined Real Madrid in 2012, where the irrepressible Modric (1.72 cm, 66 kilo) was initially brandished as the 'worst purchase in history' and subsequently grew to become a magician at midfield. He reached his ultimate peak (for now) at the World Cup in Russia, where Croatia miraculously reached the final and Luka Modric was crowned as the best player of the tournament. He was later also named best player of 2018 by FIFA. Set against the war conflict experiences he had to overcome in his childhood years, these achievements must have seemed like a walk in the park for Modric! ★



Pione Sisto (Denmark), Awer Mabil (Australia) and Thomas Deng (Australia) made it from war-torn South Sudan to national glory for their new 'home countries'.



# #BEACTIVE: EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT

*Since its inauguration in 2015, the European Week of Sport has had a profound impact on health and wellbeing in Europe. The scale of the week has already more than doubled, from 7,000 events in 2015 to over 15,000 events in 2017, when 10 million participants in 33 participating countries joined the movement to encourage a healthy, happy and inclusive #BeActive society.*

BY LEO AQUINA





ACES Europe founder and president Gian Francesco Lupattelli together with General Secretary Hugo Alonso (left).

"The European Week of Sport is about inspiring people to be active throughout the year, regardless of age, background or fitness level", says Tibor Navracsics, the European Commissioner for education, culture, youth and sport. Among the elite sports personalities celebrating the opening ceremony of the 2018 week in Vienna on 22 September – Austria's annual Day of Sport – were heptathletes Ivona Dadić and Sarah Lagger, and Dominik Distelberger, who competes in decathlon. The week ran until 30 September

"A key part of the European Week of Sport is the #BeActive Awards, which celebrate inspiring contributions made to promoting active lifestyles"



#### #BEACTIVE AWARDS

A key part of the European Week of Sport is the #BeActive Awards, which celebrate inspiring contributions made to promoting active lifestyles in the workplaces, educational institutions and local communities of Europe.

The 2018 Workplace Award (photo previous page) was won by Davo, a healthy-minded IT company in Belgium which has made simple changes to encourage a more active lifestyle at work, such as placing water fountains and printing machines away from desks, organising active team building days, and banning any employee for sitting for more than 30 minutes at a time.

Jyränkö School in Heinola, Finland won the Education Award (photo above) in recognition of its innovative move to modify the school teaching schedule to incorporate breaks of 30 and 40 minutes in the middle of the day, when pupils are encouraged to participate in physical activities.

The Local Hero Award winner was Corinna Saric (photo left) from Germany, who organises a charity run called 'Race for Survival' to raise funds to fight breast cancer. She also organises awareness raising campaigns in companies and health days promoting the benefits of a healthy diet and lifestyle.

All three winners were presented with the awards and a cheque for €5,000 at a gala evening held on 17 October in Sofia, the European Capital of Sport for 2018. ★

# LED LIGHTING FOR INDOOR SPORTS

*The lighting market is changing rapidly, both in terms of technology and applications. Solutions are being improved continuously and many new possibilities are being explored. LED has been the standard for several years now and, besides becoming financially more attractive, it is now used for more and more applications.*

## FROM UNDERWATER LIGHTING ONLY TO A TOTAL SOLUTION

Regular lighting is insufficiently resistant to the swimming pool environment. Heat, moisture and chlorine have a big impact on the products in a swimming pool. Developing high-quality LED lighting for the harsh pool environment requires knowledge, expertise and experience. This is EVA's area of expertise. In addition to being market leader in underwater lighting, EVA LED underwater lights are internationally known for high light output and rock-solid quality, EVA has developed a complete product

range for illuminating all areas of the pool facilities: the Aqua HE product line.

## ATHLETES ARE VERY CRITICAL OF LIGHT QUALITY

EVA specializes in LED lighting with high quality requirements for swimming pools and indoor sports facilities. The light quality has a major influence on visibility during a game, especially in ball sports. EVA uses high quality LEDs in the sports lighting products which, due to the high color fastness (CRI of >84), ensure that colours are experienced almost as in natural light.

# EVA



The swimming pool at the Hof van Saksen resort in Nooitgedacht, The Netherlands.



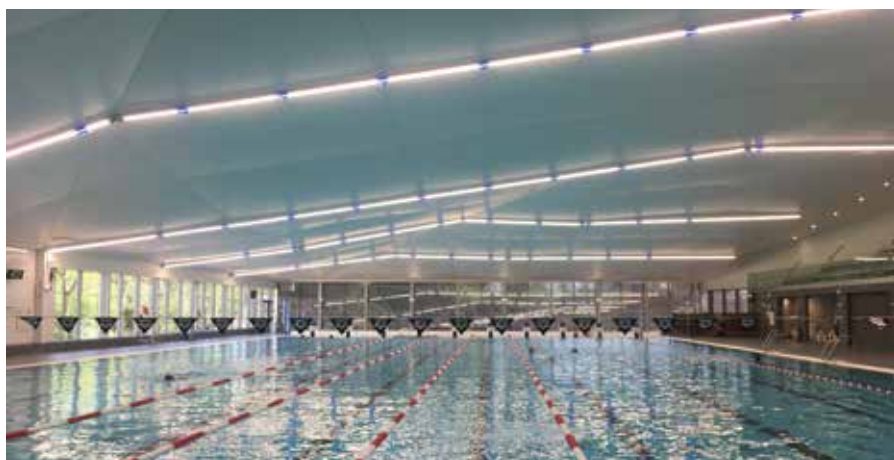
“With EVA’s LED lighting we have the possibility to create any desired ambiances in De Mirandabad for various audiences and events”

*Herman van Eykelenburg (Municipality of Amsterdam)*

The low glare factor (UGR <19) and very low flicker index (flicker-free illumination) ensure a perfect sports experience, an absolute must in indoor sports applications.

#### MULTIFUNCTIONAL FACILITIES

With a wide range of specialized lighting products, EVA provides solutions for illuminating every area of the accommodation, all in accordance with (inter)national standards and guidelines. EVA LED lighting works together. Multi-coloured RGBW lighting allows you to create an attractive light show. By adding EVA’s audio link, all RGBW luminaires can synchronize to the beat of the music. This completely new experience opens up a world of possibilities for themed events, making the pool/sports facilities even more versatile.



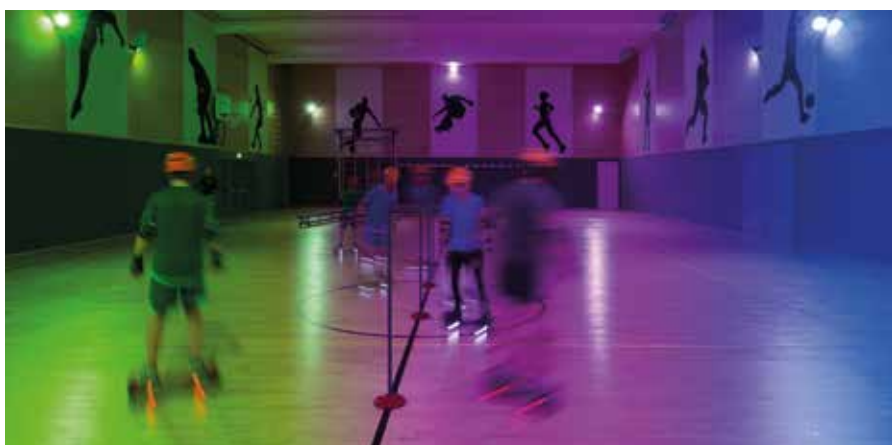
*The Amerena sports complex in Amersfoort, The Netherlands.*

#### RECENT PROJECTS

EVA LED lighting is already used in more than 1,500 indoor sports facilities throughout Europe. Recent projects include Coral Reef Bracknell’s Water World (UK), Swimming pool Den Bessem Mortsel (BE), Center Parcs Park Allgäu (DE) and Sportcomplex Amerena (NL). ★

“EVA LED lighting is beautiful, energy-saving, practical and provides the best light output for tennis courts”

*Paul van Latum (Manager sports hall Sprokkelenburg)*



*Sports hall Rozengarde in Doetinchem, The Netherlands.*

EVA’S ADVISORS ARE HAPPY TO USE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE TO PROVIDE YOU WITH CREATIVE IDEAS AND WELL THOUGHT-OUT ADVICE. PLEASE CONTACT EVA VIA [WWW.EVAOPTIC.COM](http://WWW.EVAOPTIC.COM) OR +31 (0) 38 - 337 5067.

## EUROPEAN RESORT OF SPORT

# ALBENA

*Sport by nature on the Black Sea coast*

*Perfectly positioned on the Black Sea coast, the Bulgarian resort town of Albena has been offering a peaceful refuge from the stresses of daily life for nearly five decades. A commitment to combining nature, sport and tourism has earned Albena the inaugural European Resort of Sport Award for 2019.*

BY LEO AQUINA

Albena is making the most of its prime location, only 28km north of the Bulgarian 'Sea Capital' of Varna and 9km southwest

of the beautiful Balchik palace and gardens, and close to many other tourist, cultural, and commercial centres.



*A woman washes off the mud from a relaxing therapy in Albena's Medi Spa.*



Purpose built in the 1960s, the resort boasts a 3.5km golden sand beach, picturesque hills, renowned hospitality and exceptional services. "It's a great honour to be named European Resort of Sport, especially as 2019 is the celebration of Albena's 50th anniversary", Margita Todorova, Operations and Marketing Director at Albena, says.

Nature and tranquillity are combined with top level

sports facilities in Albena. At the heart of the resort lies the biggest Medi SPA complex on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, which serves as a training base for over 40 different sports and as a regular host facility for international tournaments and championships.

The resort is supporting green values such as biodiversity protection, CO2 emissions reduction, renewable energy use and efficient waste man-

agement. This dedication to protecting the environment was recognised by the sustainability certification of Travelife.

With the slogan *Sporty by Nature*, Albena was the first candidate for the new European Resort of Sport Award from ACES. The Evaluation Committee decided to grant the prestigious award to the Bulgarian resort after a thorough inspection in July 2018. ★

"Nature and tranquillity are combined with top level sports facilities in Albena"



#### Events planned for Albena in 2019

- *European Championship for Deaf Table Tennis*
- *European Football Championship for girls under 17*
- *World Salsa Festival*
- *BDZ International Tennis Tournament*
- *Sports Festivals – Transport Workers, Power Engineers, Metals Light Industry, Lukoil*
- *International Bridge Tournament 2019*
- *16th International Workers' Sports Festival*
- *'Young Olympic Hopes' festival*
- *International Children's Festival 'Morning Start'*
- *International Children's Football Tournament UHL Sport Cup 2019*
- *International Cheerleading Festival 2019*
- *Children's Football Tournament West Football Arena*
- *Summer Student University 2019*
- *International Festival Table Tennis 2019*
- *European Petanque Championship*
- *International Volleyball Tournament BDZ*



# 'DOING IS IN OUR NATURE'

*Dutch province of Drenthe aiming for European Community of Sport title*

*"Drenthe proudly presents its nomination for the title Community of Sport 2019. There is a lot going on in our province, but modesty is our second nature. This is the moment we have to shine", says Mayor of De Wolden, Roger de Groot, who is spokesman for all mayors. "This is the moment we can tell the world what makes Drenthe an example for other communities. What is special about our program when it comes to sport and the difference that sport and exercise can make for people. In recent years, Drenthe has been the province with the highest sports participation in the Netherlands. The most important thing is to make people happier and healthier through sports rather than the amount of gold medals."*

Henk Jumelet (Province of Drenthe): "I find it remarkable that we do not only focus on the top athletes in Drenthe. On those for whom moving is easy. We are looking for ways to help the person for who it is not an automatism to move. Throughout the province as a group or as an individual. Walking through the woods, moving in the halls. The World Championship Para-Cycling is a good example of this. A signboard that can be a stimulant for everyone. The title *European Community of Sport* would be an appropriate title. We want the title, because all those people who are so committed to the sport in Drenthe deserve it. The sport stands strong in Drenthe. But, I also like to see the title as a beginning. The beginning of the next phase. To make it even better."

"We are known for cooperation on healthy lifestyles, sports and physical activity. Every municipality has a successful sports and exercise program. We will use the title Community of Sport to get all the people to embrace this program."

## COOPERATION

In Drenthe, cooperation is particularly striking. Governments, institutions, companies as well as associations and organizers work together to make people healthier, more people participate in society, Drenthe to become attractive to tourists and much more. Together with the sports officials, the neighbourhood sports coaches and the

"In recent years Drenthe has been the province with the highest sports participation in the Netherlands"

Roger de Groot  
(Mayor of De Wolden)



JOGG teams, almost 200 people use sports every day to make Drenthe better.

Jumelet: "Doing is in our nature! What a development Drenthe has experienced in recent years. Of course, many good things are already happening. Beautiful events, good programs, Drenthe has something to do with sports. What strikes me most is the cohesion between all those organizations. This gives a lot of energy! This is also of great importance in sport. And that makes the use of sports also meaningful for the province. We connect with what residents

and municipalities like to do. And on what non-sports organizations find important. Sport moves Drenthe."

The mayors of the municipalities of Drenthe, together with the Commissioner of the King Mrs. Jetta Klijnsma and deputy Henk Jumelet have decided together to take up the challenge. ★

Drenthe  beweegt



"I like to see the title *European Community of Sport* as a beginning. The beginning of the next phase. To make it even better"

Henk Jumelet (Province of Drenthe)

# SPORT DRENTHE 50 YEARS

*'Making Drenthe even better with sports' is our guiding principle*

*"Since 1968 SportDrenthe has been an organization that independently represents the interests of sport in the broadest sense of the word in the province of Drenthe", managing director Hans de Lang explains. "On 16 November 2018, we will celebrate our 50th anniversary. I have been director of SportDrenthe for twenty years and I want to celebrate this party by doing something for Drenthe. Our mission, 'Making Drenthe even better with sports', is our guiding principle here.*

## SPORTDRENTHE IN MOTION

"In a vibrant society, everyone can participate. Sport and exercise are essential when it comes to participating. It is sports that literally gets people from our province moving. SportDrenthe is the linchpin between the municipalities, the province, associations and other organizations. We have the knowledge and experience; if there are new trends in the field of sports we bring them to the residents. When there are new courses, we bring them to the associations. When there are new opportunities to use sport for social themes, we support municipalities. And we know the best ways to apply for subsidies."







"We are committed to the wellbeing of our residents and contribute to social goals such as poverty, participation and health. Sport and physical activity help make society even better; where young people develop their talents to the maximum, where healthy living occupies a prominent place in the lives of the inhabitants, where their own vitality and that of the environment are increasingly called upon. A society with a strong social

commitment, healthy citizens with a high level of labour morale, low absenteeism due to illness and flourishing, involved organizations and institutions with professionals and volunteers who are committed to this, participating in all its facets."

#### **SPORTDRENTHÉ 50 YEARS**

"On the day of our 'birthday', 16 November 2018, we organize the Jubilee Festival,

"Drenthe as the community of sport will showcase itself in all its facets"

15.000 square meters with inspirational sessions and a big variety of sport activities. This day is the start for the rest of the anniversary year, that is dedicated to 50. With at least 50 activities from 16 November 2018 till 16 November 2019. For example, 50 clinics for elderly on trampolines, 50 clinics class on wheels (awareness of moving in a wheelchair), a book for all the schools with games to play on the schoolyard and healthy treats, special biking routes and dance challenges. Drenthe as the community of sport will showcase itself in all its facets. we are going to put sports on the map in Drenthe." ★

"SportDrenthe is the linchpin between the municipalities, the province, associations and other organizations"



# WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO IN OUR SPORTS YEAR?

*First of all, we want to do what we always do. It is a lot and it results in an attractive program. But we want more. The program of our Sports Year is made by more than 100 people from different backgrounds from all over the province. They all have a passion for sport. Together we decide what we want to achieve in 2019. The activities will lead us to the goals.*

## FOCUS ON THE MUNICIPALITIES

Each month, one municipality is at the centre of the annual program. During this month an event will also be highlighted in this municipality. These are sometimes very big events such as the TT in Assen (the largest one-day event in the Benelux), but it can also be focused on a special population group such as the seniors' movement day.

## ACTIVITY PROGRAM 50 YEARS SPORTDRENTHÉ

This article contains the story of SportDrenthe. In their anniversary year, they'll treat Drenthe to 50 activities in several domains. Almost one activity every day. This is how all of Drenthe can be set in motion.

## REMARKABLE COMBINATIONS

Especially for this Year of Sports, several social institutions have been asked to organize one of their activities in the framework of sport. This is where fantastic and innovative examples come from. And think of all the Football World Cup for population groups living in Drenthe, there are around 150 of them; or sports lessons in the showrooms of the Drents Museum; the first ancient Olympics; or new hiking trails that tell the story of the cultural history of villages.



#### EYECATCHERS

Most of the activities are structural, but 2019 is the year in which we organise both the World Championships Para-Cycling and Motocross and the European Equestrian games for Young riders. Top events. We also co-organise three distinctive congresses; namely the VSG-national congress and two global congresses as Sport connection and World Forum for Bike Cities and Regions.

#### THIS IS GOOD; HOW CAN WE BE BETTER?

Next to all activities for inhabitants, we start to work on Sport in the next future. We use this focus on sport for making the local and regional translation of the national Sports Accord and we make a plan for the next 50 years Sport in Drenthe.

#### CAMPAIGN

All the residents of Drenthe are part of this new community. Everybody receives the

program newspaper in the first week of January. It obviously includes the program, tells you how to be involved, but it also includes invitations and vouchers to become active yourself. The newspaper is supported by an app, which consists of the calendar of activities, but also brings news and keeps track of developments. Residents, but also associations, can join in and create – together with the local authorities – the *Community of Sport*. ★



*“All the residents of Drenthe are part of this new Community of Sport”*



Dhabi

# WORLD CAPITAL OF SPORT 2019

*Antonio Silva Mendes, the Honorary President of the European Consultatif Groupe for ACES EUROPE, speaks passionately about the inaugural World Capital of Sport Award, which will be presented to Abu Dhabi for 2019.*

BY LEO AQUINA



“ACES has been very successful in getting more people more active, more often”, says Silva Mendes, a former director for youth and sport at the Directorate General for Education and Culture in the European Commission. “Over the past two decades, European Capitals, Cities and Towns of Sport have invested millions more euros in sport, recreation and healthcare projects than they had done before the award. We are always aiming at grassroots sport.”

With the new award, ACES Europe is looking to repeat the winning formula on a worldwide scale. “Facing all the benefits in Europe we said, ‘Why not extrapolate the idea to allow cities around the world to share this experience?’ We can extend our European network and share best practices.”

Silva Mendes says the benefit to winning cities of the new World Capital of Sport Award is two-fold. “Firstly, it provides international recognition, similar to being a host city for major international sports events. Secondly, and more importantly to ACES, it’s a leverage to enforce and improve the way these cities develop and promote sport for the benefit of their populations.” The honorary president is now looking forward to welcoming Abu Dhabi as the inaugural

#### The Abu Dhabi Mission

*“Our mission is to offer an environment highlighting the importance of sport in all our communities and to implement the best systems to promote competition at local, regional and international levels. Our focus is to uphold Abu Dhabi’s position as a global capital for sport, teams, federations and governing bodies, and to showcase our thrilling destination to the watching world.*

*We would like to showcase our efforts and achievements as well as continue to develop what we have succeeded in. As we share ACES values in regard to promoting sport among all citizens – particularly disadvantaged groups, children, the elderly and the disabled – we especially strive to hold this title. For a number of years, we have encouraged private and public initiatives in order to support sport as a channel for social cohesion and to improve the health and quality of life of all our citizens.”*



“The new World Capital of Sport Award is leverage to enforce and improve the way cities develop and promote sport for the benefit of their populations”

Antonio Silva Mendes

World Capital of Sport and Chinese Taipei as the first Intercontinental Capital of Sport in 2019. “Abu Dhabi and Chinese Taipei have done an excellent job with their bids for the 2019 awards (and) will now become part of the vast ACES network”, says Silva Mendes, who began his career with the European Commission in 1990. “The level of sport participation will rise in both cities. They will share good practices with the European Capitals of Sport and with future European, Continental and World Capitals of Sport.”

#### GRASSROOTS BENEFIT

Abu Dhabi already hosts several major international events annually, including a Formula 1 Grand Prix and the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship

#### Major sporting events hosted in Abu Dhabi

- *Golf: annual Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship, Gary Player Invitational and the Fatima Bint Mubarak Ladies Open on the Ladies European Tour*
- *Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix*
- *ITU World Triathlon Series*
- *Red Bull Air Race*
- *Mubadala World Tennis Championship*
- *2017 and 2018 FIFA Club World Cups*
- *2019 AFC Asian Cup UAE*
- *Abu Dhabi Tour on the UCI WorldTour cycling*
- *Special Olympics World Games 2019*

presented by the European Golf Association. Although primarily aimed at grassroots sport, Silva Mendes sees the World Capital of Sport Award as complementary. He says: “Top sport events

are about high-performance competition; however, grassroots sport can also benefit because international competitions need facilities and infrastructure.”







**“The award spreads ACES legacy on a global scale, we can extend our European network and share best practices”**

*Antonio Silva Mendes*

Abu Dhabi, the capital city of the United Arab Emirates, is considered well prepared to emulate the success of the past winners of the annual European award, which was first presented to Madrid in 2001. “These facilities in Abu Dhabi are built in a sustainable way”, Silva Mendes says. “A good example is the Abu Dhabi

Formula 1 track, which is used by common people to walk, run and cycle three days a week.” Silva Mendes knows the value to society of raising the participation levels of sport in a such an innovative way. “Sport can work as an instrument in various sectors of society ranging from safety and integration to education and public health”,

he says. “Research shows, for example, that people who exercise regularly are better at creative thinking, that sport stimulates good memory, that sport helps to fight addictions like smoking and that sport helps with productivity. Employees who exercise regularly are more productive and energetic during their working days in comparison with their colleagues who do not exercise regularly.”

Facilitating sport for the people is one of the main criteria by which candidates for the Capital of Sport Awards are valued. “The way cities provide opportunities for sport and physical activity for their people is key”, Silva Mendes says. “It starts with infrastructure, but another important aspect is organising events for the people as well. We are particularly looking at the way cities use sports to the service of society in general.” ★



**Antonio Silva Mendes**

*In 2016 Antonio Silva Mendes retired from his job as director for Youth and Sport at the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture after a large professional career of more than 30 years in public administration at national and European level, associated to a university career. A Portuguese national, he has always been passionate about sport. “I’d like to see sport and physical activity as a fundamental right. I feel blessed to finish my career in a job that allowed me to practice what I preach. I was responsible for implementing sport policy at European level and I was able to launch a number of things like the European Week of Sport to stimulate member states to make their sports policy visible.” After his retirement, Silva Mendes became Honorary President of the European Consultatif Groupe for ACES EUROPE.*

# EU: DOUBLING THE BUDGET FOR SPORT

*Next year the European Commission will double its annual budget for sport to EUR 48.6 million, as it aims to focus further on grassroots sport and on introducing new international actions. To succeed in these endeavours, the EC needs the strong support and active contributions of various stakeholders including policymakers and grassroots sport organisations.*

BY FRANS OOSTERWIJK

The European Commission's relationship with ACES is one example of a fruitful collaboration with a sports organisation based on the shared goals of making citizens more physically active and promoting European values through sport.

ACES has been an engaged supporter of the European Week of Sport initiative, with the official launch of the 2016 event taking place in the Slovakian city of Kosice, which was celebrating its status as



CREDIT: PHOTO DIOGO FERREIRA

a European City of Sport. This was followed in 2017 and 2018 by two #BeActive Awards Galas respectively organised in Marseille and Sofia, the European Capitals of Sport for those years.

With the European Commission's sport budget set to double and the EU Work Plan for Sport (2017-2020) prioritising the integrity of sport, the economic dimension of sport, and sport in society, organisations like ACES are set to play a major role in delivering on the future agenda and making it a success.

#### ERASMUS +

Cooperation with stakeholders like ACES is supported by one of the European Union's most iconic programmes, Erasmus+.

The Sport Chapter in the Erasmus+ Programme supports European partnerships on grassroots sport to tackle cross-border threats to the integrity of sport. It promotes good governance and voluntary activities in sport, champions social inclusion and equal opportunities, and raises awareness of the importance of health-enhancing physical activity.

Looking ahead, the Commission's ambition is to increase activities in the field of sport in the future Erasmus programme, as well as possibilities for cooperation with and among sport organisations and stakeholders. The European Commission proposal for the next Erasmus programme (2021-2027) is an ambitious



*Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva, the Director for Innovation, International Cooperation and Sport at the European Commission.*

one, with a total budget of 30 billion euro.

#### #BEINCLUSIVE EU SPORT AWARDS

In a rapidly changing world, sport can unite people from different backgrounds and provide them with a sense of belonging and mutual understanding. More than ever, local sport projects are facilitating the integration of people from disadvantaged groups including migrants and refugees into their new communities.

To recognise organisations that use sport for social inclusion, the European Commission launched the #BeInclusive EU Sport Awards in 2017.

The first winners were MitternachtsSport, a social club in Germany that guides disadvantaged youths away from

the streets and into the gym through a special midnight sport programme; De Rode Antraciet in Belgium, which sets up sports and activity programmes for prisoners; and MeetShareDance in Spain, a group which connects people through dance (photo previous page).

"The #BeInclusive Awards is a fantastic tool to identify and support some innovative initiatives aimed at promoting social inclusion through sport," Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva, the Director for Innovation, International Cooperation and Sport at the European Commission, says. "It is a special way to reach local organisations doing fantastic work at grassroots level. We are particularly proud about it."

#### EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT

The European Week of Sport has been particularly successful in reaching out to millions of people across Europe. This year the flagship campaign expanded to over 15,000 events and went beyond EU borders, including the Eastern Partnership neighbours for the first time. Linked to the European Week, the #BeActive Awards recognise the most innovative practices to promote physical activity in education, the workplace and local communities. ★

**"The #BeInclusive Awards is a fantastic tool to support innovative initiatives aimed at promoting social inclusion through sport"**

*Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva*



# SPORTS AS A CURE

## *The enormous potential of 'lifestyle medicine'*

*In Holland, national and local authorities, sport organisations, schools and other stakeholders reached broad agreement in how to use sport as instrument for public health and how to help people making healthier choices in lifestyle and nutrition.*

BY FRANS OOSTERWIJK



In October of this year, the Dutch Minister for Medical Care Bruno Bruins received a *Manifest for Lifestyle Medicine* which was signed by 2,000 physicians and scientists. The manifest calls for a fundamental change in the Dutch health care system. According to the authors, the potential of 'lifestyle medicine' (which is geared towards the healing power of sleep, more exercise and a healthy diet) is enormous and much more research needs to be done in this area.

They based their findings on, among others, research into the use of medicines by diabetes type 2 patients. This revealed that more than half of them would need no or very few pills if they changed their lifestyle. Those who get more exercise and eat healthy can heal (faster) in many cases. This is a remedy that also seems to apply to all the so-called 'Western degenerative diseases' such as burn-out, obesity, stress and cardiovascular diseases.

#### ALARM BELLS

We do not move enough and we eat too much. These alarm bells have been going off for years. Not only in the Netherlands, but all over the world. The majority of the population is overweight, children are getting too little exercise, obesity is on the rise and governments are in a quandry over what to do about rising health costs.

The tide is slowly turning. Doctors, health insurers, politicians – they are all taking a stance against the cigarette, alcohol and fast food industries with their addictive products. We have come to know that you cannot judge individual people on their incapacity to resist the temptations that are so dominant and are praised so loudly (through commercials et cetera). Ellen Blaak, professor of human biology at the the University of Maastricht, formulates it as follows: "We are seduced from all sides to eat more and move less. That's the real problem."

"We are seduced from all sides to eat more and move less"

Ellen Blaak

#### HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

This past summer, 200 parties in the Netherlands (municipalities, towns, sports clubs, insurers, universities, schools, etc.) joined hands in signing a *National Sports Agreement*. In this agreement, they promised each other to make sports more accessible and to make more arrangements and facilities available to stimulate all members and target groups of the population to participate in sport and exercise. These same parties have also concluded a *National Prevention Agreement*. This agreement aims to make smoking (even more) expensive, sugar-free soda less expensive and alcohol less readily available. This is

how the government wants to stimulate a healthy lifestyle.

#### EXTRA TAX

With the *Sports Agreement* on one hand and the *Prevention Agreement* on the other, the initiators not only want to change the mentality and awareness of individuals, but also to stimulate the food industry in producing more healthy products. As witnessed in France and Britain, government actions, both towards consumers and the producers, can help and are vital. The sugar content in soft drinks immediately declined in these countries after an extra tax was added on beverages with too much sugar. ★



# BREAKING THE **STIGMA** ON PSYCHICAL PROBLEMS BY BICYCLING TOGETHER

*When someone breaks their arm or a leg, there is no secrecy about it. But with depressions, burn-outs, psychosis or a disease like anorexia, it's very different. In the Netherlands, child psychiatrist Cecil Prins-Aardema has started a campaign to break the stigma's that surround psychical problems.*

BY FRANS OOSTERWIJK

When her husband became seriously depressed in 2017, Cecil Prins-Aardema, psychiatrist and manager at the Dutch Mental Health Service (GGZ) in the province of Drenthe, also had trouble being open about

it. It felt as if she had failed. Inspired by the American child psychiatrist Andrés Martin, Director of the Yale Child Study Center, she founded the international campaign *Break the Stigma* one year later.



Cecil Prins-Aardema (red dress) with her GGZ-cycling group promoting the campaign.

PHOTO: YOLANDA VISSER



“People prefer to stay clear of those with psychological problems. We want to break that”

Cecil Prins-Aardema

Prins-Aardema: “Because I experienced the impact of depression up close, I became more aware of the fact that there is an enormous difference between how people respond to serious physical injury and to psychological illness. People prefer to stay clear of those with psychological problems. We want to break that stigma. For the benefit of the patients themselves, but also for the rest of the family, because they too, are often treated differently due to the psychological problems of someone in their family.”

#### NOT ALONE

The campaign aims to make psychical illness open for discussion and let these people and families know that they are not alone. Prins-Aardema: “Psychical disorders are very common. Yet, people often feel as though they are the only ones that have to go through it. We want to communicate that they do not need to feel guilty or ashamed. Being open about psychological problems and providing support to their families are important conditions for the right treatment.”



To create awareness for the campaign among a large audience, Prins-Aardema and GGZ Drenthe chose to hold a bicycling tour as a ‘medium’. Prins-Aardema: “Drenthe is the number one cycling province in Holland thanks to its serene landscape. The campaign kicked off in Assen, the capital of Drenthe, during a bicycling event last summer. In the weeks that followed, the campaign was also linked to other regular cycling events throughout the Netherlands.”

patients and families to participate. Prins-Aardema: “Bicycling as a means of exercise already has a healing effect. But it’s also a way to bring people together, so patients and families feel no longer isolated.”

#### SUPPORT FROM UCI

In July, Cecil Prins-Aardema and Andrés Martin created awareness for the campaign at the world congress of the international association of child psychiatrists in Prague by sharing her vision with colleagues.

*Break the Stigma* was given another boost with the support of the UCI international cycling federation through its own Cycling for All platform. This platform stimulates bicycling and the participation in bicycling events around the world.

“Thanks to their messages on social media, *Break the Stigma* now also is known in less traditional bicycling countries as Uganda and Singapore”, Prins-Aardema says. “The project has reached far beyond anything I could have dreamt of when I started it with my colleagues at the GGZ in Drenthe.” ★

By now, bicycling groups have been formed all over the Netherlands with patients and families who come together on bicycling events found on the local or regional calendar. Health care institutions and practitioners have also learned of the campaign and are increasingly stimulating their

IN NOVEMBER THE (DIGITAL) BULLETIN OF THE WORLD ASSOCIATION OF CHILD AND YOUTH PSYCHIATRISTS (IACAPAP) PUBLISHED THE ‘BREAK THE STIGMA FOR FAMILIES’ ARTICLE BY CECIL PRINS-AARDEMA. SEE: [HTTP://IACAPAP.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/BULLETIN-NOVEMBER-2018.PDF](http://iacapap.org/wp-content/uploads/bulletin-november-2018.pdf).

*Interview: Andrey Kovatchev (MEP)*

# 'SPORT HAS SO MANY BENEFITS'

*Dr Andrey Kovatchev MEP is the chair of the Groupe Consultative Européen (GCE), an informal grouping of MEPs which provides advice and network support to ACES, the Brussels-based association which awards annually the European capital, city, community and towns of sport.*

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BY LEO AQUINA

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For many people, sport is just a fun way to spend their leisure time. For European politician Dr Andrey Kovatchev, however, it is an instrument to enrich society. "Sport has so many benefits", he says. "It's a prevention tool in health care which can significantly decrease the costs of medical treatments, it stimulates social engagement, and it helps in the battle against discrimination. In many cities, sport clubs engage people from different backgrounds which helps against the radicalisation of young people."

The 50-year-old MEP praises the initiative of the European Week of Sport, which was held for the first time in 2015 and this year brought together 32 countries and 41 European partners to encourage a healthy, happy and inclusive #BeActive society. "The aim is to motivate the local authorities in member states to make sport more accessible to all groups in society", he says. "This includes

kids in schools, young people in universities, elderly people, and people from minority groups."

#### ADDED VALUE EVERYWHERE

Dr Kovatchev believes the European Union provides added value to member states in almost every social field, including sport. "We share best practices in Europe and the EU provides member states with additional tools through financial support", he says. "The best way to promote sport for all is to make it visible in towns and cities throughout all the regions of our continent, and that's exactly what ACES does."

Dr Kovatchev is particularly proud that his home town of Sofia in Bulgaria was awarded the European Capital of Sport for 2018. "We have seen so many positive things in the city", he says. "Stakeholders and the Sofia municipality are investing in the sport infrastructure, for example by creating biking lanes and outside gyms for everybody. There's a special association for the promotion of sport in schools and in other parts of the city, and investments are also being made in winter sport facilities in the neighbouring mountains."

Dr Kovatchev says the European Capital of Sport Award is also good for marketing the city: "The logo and the promotion campaign give Sofia a positive image and it's visible everywhere." ★

"The best way to promote sport for all is to make it visible in towns and cities throughout all the regions of our continent"



#### Dr Andrey Kovatchev

*Representing the Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria, Andrey Kovatchev is a member of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) in the European Parliament since 2009. From 2014 onwards he is member of the Presidency of the European Parliament (Quaestor), member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Subcommittee on Human Rights; member of the Delegation for relations with the United States of America; substitute of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and substitute to the EU-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee.*



# IT'S ALL ABOUT INCLUSION

*Sport for people with disabilities, more important than ever*

*Rita van Driel is a former ski instructor and the current programme manager for disabled sports at the Dutch Olympic Committee. In her work, she tries to improve the possibilities for people with disabilities to participate in sport, nationally and internationally.*

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BY LEO AQUINA

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Rita van Driel is no stranger to helping elite and aspiring athletes achieve seemingly impossible goals. She was, incongruously enough, working as the coach of the Dutch cross-country skiing team when she was first introduced to the world of disabled sports, around three decades ago. "It was a bit of a coincidence", she recalls. "I was the national ski coach when all of a sudden two blind skiers appeared."

Van Driel was surprised when the skiers asked about participating in the next edition of the Paralympic Winter Games, which were to be hosted in 1992 by Albertville in France. "I didn't know anything about it, so I hesitated", she says. "Eventually we went to Albertville and what I saw was so overwhelming, it motivated me to continue working in Paralympic sports."

**"The 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Beijing have been instrumental for the position of people with disabilities in China"**

*Rita van Driel*



Van Driel's commitment to the Paralympic movement led to her election in 2009 to the board of governors for the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). Since then, the former gym teacher has become involved in the preparations for the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games, first as an evaluating member and then as a coordinator.

"Sport is just as important for people with disabilities as it is for everyone else, and maybe even more important," she says. "Yet, if caregivers never present people with disabilities the possibilities to practice sport, it will definitely not happen. It's often a state of mind."

**"Sport is just as important for people with disabilities as it is for everyone else, and maybe even more important"**

*Rita van Driel*

Van Driel believes one of the main barriers preventing people with disabilities from participating in sports is their social environment. "We often think of practical problems, but

most of the times those are not insurmountable", she says. "If people with disabilities always think that there are too many burdens, they will never go to a sport club. The most important thing is that everyone just gives it a try, and then most practical problems appear to be easily overcome. There's a wheelchair solution for every threshold."

#### INCLUSIVE SUCCESS

It is perhaps no coincidence that Van Driel comes from the Netherlands, a country which leads the way in promoting disabled sports at the grassroots level. In 2000, the Dutch government made the bold move of folding the Dutch Disabled Sports Federation into the framework of the country's regular sport federations, as part of a drive towards greater inclusion.

"This approach leads to a focus on sport, instead of a focus on the disability", Van Driel says. "Together with Norway, the Netherlands is the only country in which Paralympic Sport is integrated into the national



*Bibian Mentel, the legendary Dutch triple Paralympic gold winner on snowboard. "Yes, our structure pays off. As a flat country, we even win medals in Alpine Skiing", Rita van Driel says.*

PHOTO: ANP PHOTO



## Big stage performers

*The broad-based approach to inclusion has served the Netherlands well over the past two decades, enabling the country to produce a string of talent such as sprinter Marlou van Rhijn, a triple Paralympic champion and the world record holder for the 100, 200 and 400 metres in the t43.*

*Rita van Driel: "People see our results in the Paralympic Games and yes, our structure pays off. As a flat country, we even win medals in Alpine Skiing - a result of the policy we chose back in 2000. Many countries come to visit us, but bear in mind, what works in the Netherlands doesn't necessarily work someplace else, too. I always ask people to take their own specific conditions into account."*

*Another country successfully promoting access to sport for people with disabilities is China. The country topped the medal table at the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and is aiming for the same level of dominance when it hosts the next edition of the winter Games in 2022. "China is a bid country of course, but they win a lot of Paralympic medals because they have good programmes", Van Driel says. "The 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Beijing have been instrumental for the position of people with disabilities in China. They built a lot of new facilities so that people with disabilities became more accepted in society."*

umbrella organisation for sports federations."

In the Netherlands, that umbrella organisation is recognisable as the Dutch Olympic Committee\* Dutch Sports Federation, abbreviated to NOC\*NSF. Among its many initiatives to promote inclusion, the NOC\*NSF organises a programme called *Ready to*

*Sport*, which focusses on the 13,000 young people of the country with motor disabilities.

Van Driel: "This group falls behind in sport participation because the parents and the children themselves are often scared. For these people sports means to crash a lot, which has enormous impact. Therefore, it's all the more important to guide them with their

choice of sport and with the mental aspects. We try to help them within the structures we have built in sport for people with disabilities over the past decades."

Van Driel, however, is against viewing the incorporation of disabled sport into regular sport organisations as a 'holy grail' solution for boosting participation. "When we started this policy in 2000, we almost made it mandatory to include disabled sport into regular sport organisations, but we have become less strict", the 57-year-old says. "I think it's good to respect everyone's choice. People with disabilities should be free to practice sport at a club or a team of their choice. If that happens to be a specific club for people with disabilities, why not? They might feel more comfortable to

practice sport together with fellow para-athletes, without other people around. But in many cases, there is no such choice and inclusion could be the only option, so we must facilitate it. Moreover, inclusive sport clubs can provide para-athletes with a broad social network, which is invaluable."

## THE GAME CHANGER

Van Driel says the Netherlands is keen to share its own experiences. As part of the build-up to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, the NOC\*NSF has joined forces with its counterpart body in Japan in a new initiative called 'The Game Changer'.

The project aims to improve access to sport for people with disabilities in Japan by 'using sport to change society'. To help achieve this goal, Dutch experts and Paralympic athletes have been touring Japan to share their knowledge and expertise, with Japanese officials making return visits to view the sports facilities on offer in the Netherlands.

In addition, the Dutch Leiden University is conducting scientific research to learn more about the factors which influence change towards social integration for people with disabilities in Japan. "We have

**"We often think of practical problems, but most of the times those are not insurmountable"**

*Rita van Driel*

an agreement with three major districts in Tokyo and with the Japanese Sport Council to share knowledge in mutual visits", Van Driel says. "It's all about inclusion."

The two countries have organised 52 activities per year in the run-up to Tokyo 2020. Van Driel recalls how on one recent exchange visit, a Japanese official was taken aback by the way swimming lessons were organised in the Netherlands. "He saw that although it may take a little longer for children with disabilities to learn how to swim, all children are eventually prepared to feel safe in the water", she says. "He told me that in Japan there would be a big fence around the pool, to protect the disabled children from danger. It's all done with



the best of intentions, but that's not the way to teach children to take the initiative themselves."

As a result of The Game Changer initiative, the Japanese Sport Council, local municipalities and several other organisations are now looking to restructure their

institutions along Dutch lines. Van Driel: "They already have the caregivers, but they don't know how to reach out to people with disabilities. It's nice to have the infrastructure and the facilities, but without the people it means nothing. For me it's a bit of a déjà vu to the problems

we encountered ourselves with the inclusion of disabled sport in the Netherlands. Awareness of the possibilities is important, but it's not enough. We can create facilities and build websites, but eventually it's up to the people themselves to take a first step."★

**"Together with Norway, the Netherlands is the only country in which Paralympic Sport is integrated into the national umbrella organisation for sports federations"**

*Rita van Driel*

## AMERICAN CAPITAL OF SPORT 2019

## CALI

*Social inclusion in a top-level sports organization*

***ACES Europe has started its adventure in the New World thanks to Corporación Calidad, partner in the continent, with the election of the first American Capital of Sport. For this, Santiago de Cali in Colombia has been the first city awarded and will go down in history within the association as it did in its day Madrid, the first European Capital of Sport.***

Last November, five members of Evaluation Commission of ACES Europe travelled to the capital of Valle del Cauca to judge the sports benefits of the city. And after two intense days of work confirmed that Cali has not only a top-level sports organization, with facilities according to demand but also its mayor, Maurice Armitage, is a person who focuses on physical activity as a tool for social inclusion. In this sense, Cali currently has 14 social programs in the country achieving a social integration work never seen before and which are a clear example of good sports practices around the world.

**MASTER PLAN**

Special mention deserves that one out of every two citizens practices sports on a regular basis. Likewise, 6% of the total

annual budget of the City Council is devoted to sports, twice the average in Europe. Data that speaks for itself of the strength of a city that works on the preparation of a 10-year Master Plan in harmony with national policies making Cali a reference in the country and even in the continent, guaranteeing the right to sport and recreation as a state duty.

The American Capital of Sport 2019 is a point and followed in the growth of the city of Cali, a confirmation of why it was named Capital of Sport after hosting the Pan American Games in 1971. Now is the time to launch a year of 365 days of physical activity with the aim of continuing to work on a legacy with Armitage's stamp and with a distinction that only Cali can boast on the entire planet, the American Capital of Sport. ★



*The proud Cali-team celebrating the title of first American Capital of Sport.*



MARLOU VAN RHIJN

# 'I want to make blades as easy to buy as sports shoes'

*Sprinter Marlou van Rhijn is a triple Paralympic and five-time world champion in the t44 and the world record holder for the 100, 200 and 400 metres in the t43. The 27-year-old Dutch sensation says she now has a new goal – to make her prosthetic running legs available to every child who needs them.*

"I was raised just like any other child in my neighbourhood. I always felt like I could do everything I wanted to do and if not, I just found a way around it.

When I was a little girl, I wanted to attend ballet classes, just like my older sister. Because there were no ballet shoes available that fitted the feet of my prosthesis, my mother bought me a pair of beautiful Nikes with pink laces. And there I was,

dancing with my friends, just like my sister.

I liked sports, being in competition and getting better at something every single day. When I was 12, I chose to become a swimmer. I trained 12 times a week and went

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue zip-up jacket and black leggings, is captured in a dynamic running pose. She is wearing black prosthetic running blades. Her right leg is extended forward, and her left leg is pushing off the ground. Her arms are in a running motion, with her right hand slightly raised. She is running on a grey cobblestone path in front of a dark, textured brick wall. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows.

"I really hope my ideal can be realised in the years to come, and that buying blades will be as normal as buying running shoes"



to world championships. I've always enjoyed swimming and everything it brought me. At the age of 18 I became a student and stopped swimming, but I missed the challenges of sport so I tried out for the track and field team and loved it immediately. I loved the speed which running brought me, and I worked really hard to get faster every day. In the years to come, I became three-time Paralympic champion and the world's fastest female para-athlete. I enjoyed seeing the Paralympic sports grow, with more and more people getting involved.

One day, when I was doing a talk about everything that sport has brought me, a man came up to me and asked where I had got my blades -- my prosthetic legs for running. He had a son that wanted to try out for athletics, but they had trouble finding these blades. They are expensive and even when people do have the funding, they don't seem to know where they can buy them and get them fitted. For most kids, the sporting experience starts when they go to a shop to buy their gear. What a thrill it is to get new running shoes that will make you super-fast! I realised, however, that this procedure was a significant barrier to obstacle for children with disabilities who need blades to pursue their sporting dreams. I wanted to give them that same exciting

**"We should all aim for an inclusive society where we don't put children in boxes. Let's stop giving labels"**

experience, so I teamed up with my partners Nike and Ottobock, a manufacturer of blades.

#### PROJECT BLADE

For a whole week, any child who needed blades to play sports could walk in to the Nike store in Amsterdam, meet up with a special Ottobock expert, and enjoy the experience of shopping for their gear. We made sure everything was

taken care of -- from the costs of the blade, to the fitting with their prosthetists. This way neither the child, nor their parents, experienced any hassle whatsoever. After a couple of weeks -- around the same amount of time it would take to get a personalised running shoe -- they would get their blade or blades and were able to play. To make sure the children knew how to actually run on the blades, some cool coaches and I gave them a special master class, while there were also Ottobock experts on hand to make adjustments and answer questions.

The whole project, from the store to the master class, was open to the friends and family of the participants. This way, we could encourage inclusion and make it easier for them to actually play sports together. Project Blade made it possible for every child to get the same experience when starting sports; it was fun and inclusive.

#### BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Active lifestyles and participation in sport have physical, mental and social benefits for



Marlou van Rhijn celebrates with the Dutch flag after winning the 100m in Rio 2016.

PHOTO: ANP PHOTO



everyone, especially children. However, statistics show that children with disabilities are a lot less likely to participate in sport than able-bodied youngsters. I'm convinced this can change if the barriers to participation are removed and the perception of disability sports is challenged.

The joy of running is the same, whether you need a pair of shoes or bionic legs. If we can educate the wider community about disability sport and give children and young adults the tools they need to participate, then we will see the numbers of sports participants rise. It's about changing perceptions and making sport an attractive lifestyle choice for young kids.

Early experiences play a big part in defining your attitude towards sport. By making it



seamless, easy and fun, we hope to encourage youngsters to make sport a part of their

lives. The Project Blade event in 2017 was a great first exercise which we hope to repeat again and again in the future. My ultimate goal, however, is to have blades readily available in sport shops. I really hope this ideal can be realised in the years to come, and that buying blades will be as normal as buying running shoes. Getting and reimbursing sport prostheses is an often complicated and challenging process, so we are excited with the possibility to lower this barrier and provide Ottobock technologies to children.

In the meantime, an intermediate step can be taken, with local administrations playing a major role. Municipalities can help by acquiring the right equipment for children to participate in sport using the existing locally-run facilities. By investing in equipment rather than separate facilities, you allow children to play sports like any other child, with the right equipment at their local clubs. This way you can create a more inclusive environment where all children can have fun and play sports together. We should all aim for an inclusive society where we don't put children in boxes. All children are equal regardless of gender, background or disability. Let's stop giving labels, and let's start making it possible for everyone to have the same joy and experience when playing sport. ★

“All children are equal regardless of gender, background or disability. Let's start making it possible for everyone to have the same joy and experience when playing sport”

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT 'PROJECT BLADE' CAN BE FOUND ON [WWW.MARLOUVANRHIJN.NL](http://WWW.MARLOUVANRHIJN.NL) TO SUPPORT THE MARLOUVAN RHIJN FOUNDATION AND ITS PROJECTS, DONATE VIA NL20 INGB 0008 3339 00.

# SPORT PARTICIPATION AND RESEARCH

*Data and in-depth research are key for evidence-based sport policy*

*In most European countries, sport is considered as a social right and is valued for its contribution to society and for the benefits it brings to the individual. One of the basic concerns underlying sport policy-making in Europe, however, is the level of participation, especially by groups that appear to have fallen behind.*

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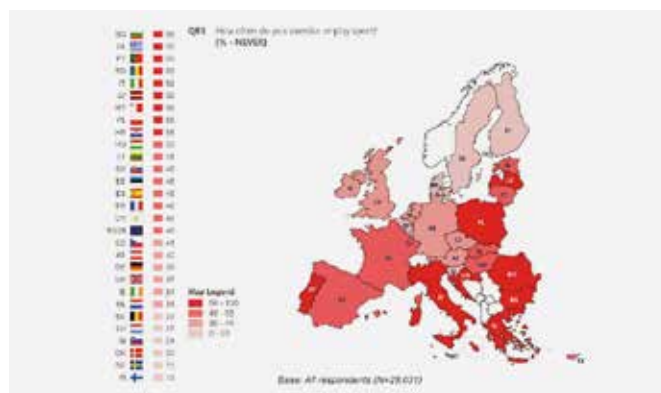
BY REMCO HOEKMAN

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At the European level, issues around sport participation that have traditionally been framed within policies for wellbeing are increasingly being debated in terms of economics, health and education — domains which are all distinguished in the *White Paper on Sport* published in 2007 by the European Commission.

As such, there is a growing emphasis on the instrumental value of sport and the extent to which a broadened focus on the topic can contribute to other policy domains, such as increasing the health of the population, promoting social cohesion, and contributing to a country's economic output.

This increasing social and political significance has placed more importance on quality research to underpin the sport policy choices that need to be made. This research can take the form of data to be gathered, mechanisms to be detected, and interventions to be proven effective.





This will enable them to better evaluate the impact of sport policy and to grasp the sport policy implications of the outcomes.

#### MADE TO MEASURE

Responding to this need, the MEASURE network of international researchers was initiated in 2010 by the Mulier Institute and the Catholic University Leuven and functioning under the umbrella of the European Association for Sociology of Sport (EASS).

The network aims to develop the understanding of trends in sport participation across countries over time in order to improve the quality of, and access to, sport participation data including the Eurobarometer. It also helps researchers to exchange information and

develop their understandings, and to raise interest in sport participation research among policymakers.

The MEASURE network has been proven valuable in providing an overview of the available data on sport participation in EU member countries, and in providing more sophisticated analyses to enhance the understanding of differences among the various countries and social groups. The network has also illustrated how differences in the outcomes of sport participation research can partly be linked to differences in the research methods used – such as sampling and questionnaires – and in the contrasting definitions and interpretations of the concept of sport. As such, one should be careful when comparing sport participation studies.



Remco Hoekman

As the president of EASS and an initiator of the MEASURE network, I cannot stress enough the importance of more in-depth research into sport participation. It is key to better informed discussions on sport policy as well as an evidence-based understanding of social inequality in sport participation.

Increasing sport participation rates is still central in sport policy and is considered an essential first step if people are to profit

from the assumed benefits of sport.

Given the continuing inequalities in sport participation, there still lies a great challenge for the policy and research communities to work together to increase the effectivity and effectiveness of local, national and European sport policies.

On behalf of the research community, I am looking forward to taking up this challenge! ★

“There still lies a great challenge for the policy and research communities to work together to increase the effectivity and effectiveness of sport policies”

**eass**  
European Association for  
Sociology of Sport

DR. REMCO HOEKMAN (MULIER INSTITUTE AND RADBOUD UNIVERSITY, THE NETHERLANDS) IS PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT (EASS).

## EUROPEAN CITY OF SPORT

# IGUALADA AND BUFF® COMBINE LOVE FOR SPORTS AND NATURE

*Igualada in northeast Spain is recognised as one of the European Cities of Sport in 2019. Situated around 60 kilometres northwest of Barcelona, the small city is home to BUFF®, a local headwear company that became an international sports brand but never forgot its roots.*

BY LEO AQUINA

BUFF® was founded by Joan Rojas, a businessman with a passion for sports, innovation and nature who called the famous textile industry region around Igualada home for over 70 years. Rojas realised the potential of those passions while riding his motorcycle on the roads of Igualada in 1991, when his army neck warmer was unable to keep the cold away while still being comfortable to wear.

He came up with a better design and worked day and night at his family's textile factory in Igualada to perfect a seamless tubular garment made of microfibre - the original BUFF® neckwarmer.

When relatives and friends began raving about using his tubulars, Joan Rojas decided to launch his first collection. Within three years, his products were already being distributed around Germany, France and Switzerland and before long, BUFF® had established itself as an international brand operating out of an 8,000m<sup>2</sup> headquarters in Igualada.

Joan Rojas passed away in January 2018 at the age of 71 after fighting a courageous battle with cancer. His passion for Igualada and the great outdoors lives on in the DNA of the company he founded, which remains firmly rooted in the local community.



*"We are proud of our past and present sports and we worked together to achieve this seal of the European City of Sport, which will surely be the basis for a future full of success", Mayor of Igualada Marc Castells Berzosa says.*

## EUROPEAN CITY OF SPORT

"Igualada is a city with a strong heart for sports", Marc Castells Berzosa, Mayor of Igualada, says. "We celebrate countless competitions throughout the year. Historically, our clubs and sportsmen have represented us very prominently around the world and our citizens enjoy many sport events in an excellent natural environment."

ACES recognises how the local sports policies in Igualada are helping to improve the general level of health of its 40,000 inhabitants through exercise and physical activity, fair play, and a strong sense of community.

"We are proud of our past and present sports achievements and we work together to achieve this seal of the European City of Sport, which will surely be the basis for a future full of success", Castells Berzosa says. ★



# SPORT & INNOVATION

*EPSI: striving for more innovation in sport, leisure and health*

*The European Platform for Sports Innovation (EPSI) is a membership-based networking organisation focused on a variety of areas related to sport, leisure and health, and many other crossover sectors such as transport, education, environment, and tourism.*

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BY FRANS OOSTERWIJK, RENE WIJLENS AND ALBERTO BICHI

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Innovation has always played a key part in sport. The industry is continuously looking to incorporate new technologies, materials and equipment, and to develop new infrastructure, services, and business models.

Harnessing this drive, EPSI was established as a non-profit association in 2010 to stimulate creativity and develop businesses with a focus on promoting sporting innovation and healthy lifestyles.

From its base in Brussels, the platform lobbies the political authorities in all regions and at all levels about the societal and economic importance of sport. EPSI also aims to help its members raise funding in the context of the many European sports programmes such as the relevant elements of Erasmus +, Cosme, and Horizon 2020, which will soon become Horizon Europe.

EPSI members can be found across the EU and include sport clubs and federations, universities and research institutes, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

#### BOTTOM UP APPROACH

EPSI strives to work as a bottom up organisation, relying on the strategic research and innovation agendas of its members.

The platform has been the driver behind ClusSport, a new regional partnership of public authorities, consumers, industry professionals and knowledge organisations which

“EPSI was established to stimulate creativity and develop businesses with a focus on promoting sporting innovation and healthy lifestyles”





is intended to help strengthen the sport sector at the EU level. The consortium aims to boost economic development and investment in 10 European regions:

Lapland and Kainuu in Finland, Valencia and Catalonia in Spain, Flanders in Belgium, Auvergne-Rhône Alpes in France, Dalarna in Sweden, Trentino in Italy, South Netherlands, and Upper Austria. These ten will soon be joined by Emilia Romagna in Italy, which is in the final stages

of the integration process. These regions work together in three aligning areas of specialisation (see text box).

#### **ECONOMIC BOON**

The importance of sports in driving innovation and growing economies is often understated. Sport represents, as the European Commission formulated in 2014, “a share in national economies that is comparable to the ones of agriculture, forestry and fisheries combined”. This share

is only expected to rise in the future.

The sport sector currently accounts for over 2% of EU growth (GDP) as well as for 7.3 million jobs – equivalent to 3.5% of the total EU workforce. More broadly, the sector has a strategic positive influence and can boost the growth of other sectors and industries of the European economy, such as manufacturing, construction and tourism.

#### **IMPORTANT TRENDS**

Important innovation trends in the sports sector are being driven in part by technology: new products and services – and even new sports – are being created according to consumer/market needs. On the other hand, sports can also play an important role in accompanying general trends, such as sustainability, use of big data and new media sports.

“Challenges of inactivity, sedentary lifestyles and an ageing population are a strong driver”

# "ClusSport aims to boost economic development and investment in 10 European regions"

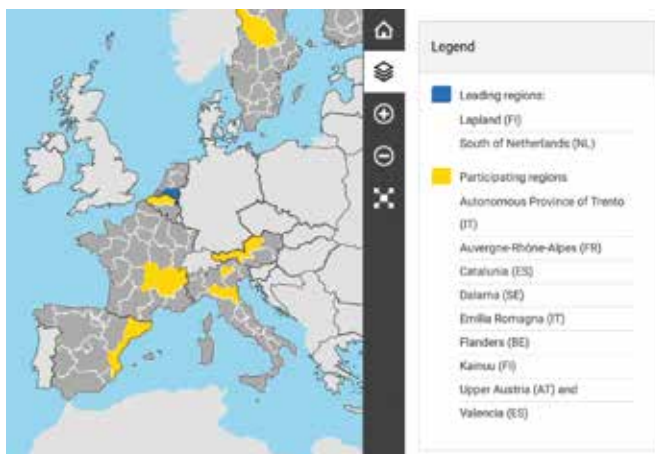
## AGENDA

The EPSI Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2016-2021 identifies key development tracks for the sports market and supports research, technology development, and innovation capabilities.

A strong driver for the sector is coming from the societal challenges of inactivity, sedentary lifestyles and an ageing popu-

lation, but also from the need for a more competitive, greener and more inclusive economy. These key challenges provide the work foundation for the partners gathered in the EPSI network.

Among them is ACES Europe, which is presently finalising a Memorandum of Understanding with EPSI to bind together the long term strategic activities of the two organisations. ★



## The three specialisations of ClusSport

### Area 1: Smart Sport Wearables (quantified self) - ICT4Self

Cross-regional collaboration in this area can be justified by the need to test modern ICT embedded sporting goods in regional environments with different cultural experiences. A LivingLab in this area would allow for the deployment of ICT-embedded sport wearables in order to create feedback loops from product to service improvement.

Three examples of potential business cases were referred to as: Locational goods such as GPS tracking wearables for track-related sports;

Sport performance monitoring goods;

The use of ICT such as embedded cameras for product testing.

### Area 2: Smart Sport environment and IoT (quantified environment)- ICT4Env

Smart sport environment -- including the deployment of the Internet of Things (IoT) to sport environments -- would help monitor sport performances and provide feedback to sport service providers. Cross-regional collaboration in this area can be motivated by geographical (telluric) differences across sport environments. A connected LivingLab for testing sport products and services would also allow for the testing of new approaches to training, fitness, etc.

Possible test-beds could cover:

- Marathon running tracks where flashlights direct runners and where monitoring technologies can support the analysis of the race;
- Smart Gym and Virtual Training products and services;
- The opening and sharing of sport facilities according to regional specialisation profiles to companies, customers and sport teams such as observed in the case of the Eindhoven 'smart swimming pool'.

### Area 3: Healthy Active Lifestyle – Sport4Vitality

Monitoring of healthy sport practices makes it possible to mobilise sport goods and services to bring vitality through business development. An example in that respect are tailor-made, sport-based 'prescription' packages. Another example is the use of a running event to get a city's population into a training/running experience, with support services to keep participants active even after the event reached a formal end.



# MORE ACTIVE PEOPLE FOR A HEALTHIER WORLD

*The World Health Organisation's action plan*

*Levels of physical inactivity tend to increase as countries develop economically. In announcing its new Global Action Plan to tackle the problem, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is not leaving any room for doubt: immediate and coordinated action is needed.*

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BY LEO AQUINA

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The WHO warns that a failure to act to increase levels of physical activity among the populations of the world will see related costs continue to rise, with negative impacts on health systems, the environment, economic development, community wellbeing and quality of life. The global health body calculates that in some countries, these levels can be as high as 70 percent due to changing transport patterns, increased use of technology, inherent cultural values, and urbanisation.



#### GOALS AND ACTIONS

In its *Global Action Plan on physical activity 2018-2030*, the WHO sets out four universal objectives concerning the

promotion of active societies, environments, people and systems, and recommends 20 policy actions to promote physical activity at all levels.

The WHO wants to create a paradigm shift in societies by enhancing the knowledge of, and appreciation for, the multiple benefits of regular



SOURCE: WHO

Whole of government solutions for physical inactivity



physical activity, according to ability and at all ages. At society level, the organisation believes it is important to set up social marketing campaigns to promote the benefits of sport and physical activity, while employers should be encouraged to build workforce capacity and provide mass participation events.

When it comes to environments, WHO wants to ensure access to open public spaces in which people can safely engage in regular physical activity. The action plan points to the integration of transport and urban planning policies, the improvement of road safety, and the creation of walking and cycling networks.

To engage people as individuals, families and communities, WHO believes it is essential to enhance physical education and school-based

SOURCE: WHO

programmes, to incorporate physical activity into health and social services, and to provide programmes across multiple settings. Programmes should

be prioritised for older adults and the least active through community-wide initiatives.

In order to create active systems, governments and policymakers should create and strengthen leadership and governance across sectors, integrating data systems, commissioning specific research and development, and advocating for innovative finance mechanisms. This can help achieve excellence in resource mobilisation and facilitate the implementation of coordinated international, national and subnational action to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour.

### REDUCE PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

The ultimate goal of the *Global Action Plan* is to reduce physical inactivity by 10 percent by 2025 and by 15 percent by 2030. This demands bold leadership and cross-government and multisectoral partnerships at all levels, and requires relevant stakeholders to coordinate their responses across the settings where people live, work and play. To help countries scale up and strengthen their response to physical inactivity, the WHO pledges to share evidence-based policy solutions, guidelines and implementation tools, while committing to monitor global progress and impact. ★



Policy action on physical activity is interconnected with 13 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)

**“A failure to act to increase levels of physical activity among the populations of the world will see related costs continue to rise”**

# THE GRASS IS NOT ALWAYS GREENER: IMPROVING ARTIFICIAL TURF PITCHES

*The TELETURF project aims to improve the safety and quality of artificial turf sports pitches all around Europe. The project forms part of the ERASMUS+ Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport and is due to end in December.*

BY ENRIQUE ORTS

*Together with his colleague Rafael Alexandre, Enrique Orts was the project leader of Project Teleturf.*

More than three years ago, seven European organizations began working together to develop the TELETURF project. Now we are nearing the end of the road and if we look back, we can see that all the effort has been worthwhile. Many things have happened and changed since artificial turf pitches were first introduced. The biggest change has seen artificial turf progressively substitute natural turf pitches, mainly because they deliver more hours of use and provide lower maintenance costs. This combination makes artificial turf a good partner to improve the management of many sport facilities.

## CONSTANT RESEARCH

Nevertheless, the users of the first generation of artificial turf pitches have experienced problems related to the hardness of the surface, such as more injuries and adapting to the higher bounce of the ball. The constant research to make the properties of artificial turf similar to those of natural turf has peaked in recent years, such that nowadays a good artificial pitch, when properly maintained, is able to safely host high-quality sport events. Indeed, many international sports federations have adopted this as the official surface for their high-level championships. Any continuing problems with artificial turf pitches are usually the result of a failure to properly maintain them. Because artificial turf



developed exponentially, the skills of designers, prescribers, managers and maintenance professionals did not advance at the same speed. The problems of the first generation of artificial pitches are most sharply evident on those sports fields not designed for high-level championships, where children play and where a lack

of knowledge and awareness have turned the issue of maintenance from something essential into something which can be cut from an annual budget. With the TELETURF project set to complete its work by the end of 2018, it was important for us to put a programme in place which can reverse this situation

of a lack of safety and quality, and thereby improve the maintenance conditions.

#### ONLINE GUIDE

The main result will be an online training course which professionals involved in managing this kind of sport surface will be able to access for free in any one of four languages: Dutch, French, English and Spanish. In developing the project contents, the opinions and technical assistance of at least 100 professionals of 12 European countries were considered through a series of personal interviews, discussion groups, surveys and multiplier events.

We strongly believe that such training will not only improve the knowledge of maintenance, but also raise the awareness of its key role in ensuring safety, quality and better management of artificial turf sports facilities.

#### OTHER GOALS

The project expects to achieve some other goals aligned with European policies. Firstly, because proper maintenance can extend the lifecycle of artificial turf from two to five years, sports organisations will be able to save around €5.000 annually for big fields such as those used for football, rugby, hockey and baseball. Secondly, if we can extend the life expectancy of artificial turf fields, we will be able to reduce



“The TELETURF project will improve the knowledge of maintenance and raise the awareness of its key role in ensuring safety, quality and better management of artificial turf sports facilities”



#### The seven partners in TELETURF

- *Municipal Sports Foundation of València, Spain*
- *European Capital of Cities of Sport Federation (ACES), Belgium*
- *Biomechanical Institute of València (IBV), Spain*
- *Marseille City Council, France*
- *Valencia Sports Managers Association (GEPACV), Spain*
- *KIWA-ISASport (Research Institute), The Netherlands*
- *Cespeval (Maintenance Company), Spain*

all the energy and greenhouse gas emissions related to the manufacturing, transporting and installing of the surface. Finally, the project also aims to improve the professionalisation of the people who work in the maintenance sector, providing them with the perfect tool to do their jobs.

#### LAUNCH

We hope to launch the online course by February 2019 on the official project webpage [www.teleturf.eu](http://www.teleturf.eu) and on the official Erasmus+ programme results webpage. ★



# FRISIANS FEELING THE FORCE OF EUROPEAN SPORT FOR ALL

*Friesland, the perfect choice of host for the inaugural European Sport for All Games*

*In Friesland, a province of over 600,000 people located in the north of the Netherlands, sport and exercise flow through our blood. This passion, especially for traditional sports, extends far beyond our region and made Friesland the perfect choice of host for the inaugural European Sports for All Games.*





That smile, that little jump for joy; sport can give you that delightful kick. Having fun is the biggest reason to practice sports and to exercise. For one person that may mean winning a medal at the Olympic or Paralympic Games, while for another, something as simple as walking up a flight

of stairs or just going for a walk is no less of a victory.

Despite our love of sport and exercise, we still face a challenge, however. Every year, 350 Frisians die due to lack of exercise.

We know that all those people who do not move enough, are at an increased risk of such ailments as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

That is why we organised various exercise activities in the province in the run-up to 2018, to help the 240,000 Frisians, who, for a whole host of reasons, do not get enough exercise.

#### **Teams which competed at the inaugural European Sports for All Games**

*Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Spain, Slovenia, Greece, Portugal, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Ireland, Romania, Russia, Scotland, France, the Netherlands, Japan and Friesland.*





“Despite our love of sport and exercise, we still face a challenge, however. Every year, 350 Frisians die due to lack of exercise”

As part of the *Preparation Programme* for the first European Sport for All Games, we began mobilising Frisians in November 2017 through various traditional sports, as well as adaptations of ‘regular’ sports such as walking football and shuffleboard.

People of all ages and capabilities participated, precisely because these activities were aimed at people whom, for

one reason or another, could not regularly practise sports or exercise activities. The expectation was that everyone joins in, every day, at their own level.

#### CARNIVAL OF SPORT

And then came the main event: From 3-7 August this year, Friesland was the proud host of the inaugural European Sports for All Games.

#### Thanks to the European Sports for All Games:

##### Dojo:

*The Frisians made acquaintance with karate, jiu-jitsu and aikido at 16 Frisian sports clubs*

*14 people became members of dojos  
Introductory lessons in 2019 were offered  
and open days were organised*



#### G-class sailing (Disabled sports)

*16 people with a mental disability joined sailing clinics in Sneek/Heeg and Burgum and Gou*

*50 participants took their first class on the new G-class sailing at the Sneek Week (event, since 1934)*

*G-class sailing has become a permanent part of the competition during the next editions of the Sneek Week*



### Shuffleboard

*1,000 people (seniors and disabled) started exercising at 43 clinics  
a shuffleboard association was founded in the Netherlands  
clinics are and will be offered in, among others, nursing homes and living cooperatives*

**“Traditional sports that are part of the identity of every country, both now and in the future”**

Our province welcomed 1,000 participants in 50 traditional sports from 20 international teams, and thousands of visitors.

We connected European traditional sports with our ‘own’ Frisian cultural sports in Frisian villages and towns. Traditional sports that are part of the identity of every country, both now and in the future.

Friesland was the playing field where we made people aware of a sustainable

change: adapting their lifestyles. This all contributed to a healthy and vibrant Friesland: a vibrant population and vibrant villages. We had a lot of fun together, and formed many new friendships.

### NOT ALONE

But we could not do all of this by ourselves, of course. The European Sports for All Games are organised by Sport Fryslân, NOC\*NSF and The Association For International Sports for All and is made possible by





the province of Fryslân, the European Union (Erasmus+), the Foundation The Friesland and The Friesland Insurance company. The Games were part of the main programme of the Friesland provincial capital Leeuwarden being the 2018 European Capital of Culture.

Together with volunteers, sports associations and companies throughout the entire province, we made it possible for all participants and visitors from Friesland, the Netherlands and Europe to see, feel and taste the passion for sports and exercise that connects our cultures. Everyone could participate on his or her own level and experience the fun sport can offer.

### Highland games

*8 clinics at elementary schools were organised*

*500 children at elementary schools were introduced to Scottish culture sports*

*250 children were introduced to the Highland Games during the school holidays*

We sincerely hope that in 2020, we will hand over the baton to Portugal for the next edition of the World Sports for All Games. At

the same time we truly believe that, thanks to the successes of 2018, there will be a European sequel. #sportsforall. ★





# EUROPEAN COMPANY OF SPORT

# SEAT

*Daily commitment for a healthy, safe and active life for all the employees and society in general*

***ACES Europe and DCH (Organización Internacional de Directivos de Capital Humano) have chosen SEAT as the European Company of Sport in 2019 for its proactive and caring approach towards the health, safety and welfare of its employees. The Spanish car giant follows in the tracks of Grupo Cofares (2017) and El Pozo (2018).***

BY LEO AQUINA

At SEAT, a large team of professionals is working daily to live up to the commitment for a healthy, safe and active life for all the employees and society in general.

Headquartered in Martorell near Barcelona, the team is led by Xavier Ros, the executive vice-president of human resources, and Dr Patricia Such, the director of health, safety, emergencies and corporate wellbeing of the SEAT Group and the Volkswagen Group in Spain.

As part of its commitment to the health and wellbeing of its employees, the company has built its own Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center (CARS) as the centrepiece of a €3.5 million investment in health. This free service centre for all SEAT

workers and other companies of the Volkswagen Group Spain, provides medical care in the areas of traumatology, cardiology, gynaecology, mental health, diagnostic imaging, physiotherapy, fitness and rehabilitation.

## PIONEERING

Since its inauguration in April 2017, more than 60,000 intervention activities have been carried out at the CARS facility, which also has the largest and most advanced biomechanics laboratory within a company in Spain. In addition, at a recent press conference at the Hospital Clínic de Barcelona, the SEAT Scientific Committee presented a pioneering analysis of medical data of the past 20 years from a sample of 30,000 workers.

SEAT commissioned the MedCARS study with Hospital Clínic, IrsiCaixa, ITAE and scientists from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, US. The study aimed to demonstrate that following a Mediterranean diet for six months, accompanied by the regular practice of physical exercise and psychological support, improves health indicators.

In 2015 SEAT became the first company in the automotive sector to be certified as a Healthy Company by the Spanish Association for Standardization and Certification (AENOR).

Now SEAT is proud to also be recognised by DCH and ACES Europe for its commitment to a healthy lifestyle. The company will continue to pursue initiatives and projects while trying to engage other companies to promote an active and healthy lifestyle. ★







Our dream<sup>is</sup>  
to make the whole world move, no  
matter your ability or age.

Mass Participation & Spectator Events •  
Personal & Corporate Well-Being • Hospitality •  
Consulting & Activation • Digital Sports Media •  
Data Capturing & Consumer Profiling •  
Ambassador & Personality Representation