

ENGSO Forum, Stockholm 24 October 2008

Mrs President,
Mr Sport Director,
Mr Honorary President,
My fellow Guests,
And ENGSO Members,

On behalf of ENGSO I have the great pleasure to wish you **a warm welcome to the 11th ENGSO Forum**. I would like to take this opportunity **to thank the Swedish organisers**, Swedish Sports Confederation, Riksidrottsförbundet, for their excellent organisation and hosting of this Forum. It is nice to see so many people here today which underlines the importance of what we will be discussing.

As you know, the ENGSO Forum has the following theme: **The Sports Movement in relation to Civil Society and Health** — and it consists of an EU Seminar and two main topics. So, in my speech today, I would like to concentrate on the following issues. The first one is ENGSO's sports political co-operation in the European Union and in the Council of Europe and the second issue is Sport and health and Sport and volunteering.

Why have we chosen these two themes? Sport's role in the development of society and health has not realised its full potential. I think that at this stage of development we need to get more information and clearer definitions for these important topics. So that we can meet long-term and short-term challenges and policies such as the legal framework of the European Union and how it relates to ENGSO activities. Another challenge is the economic difficulties that Europe and the world will be facing for the next few years and how this affects citizen's participation and public support for sport.

The future of Europe is in its young people. **ENGSO Youth** has recently concentrated on activating member organisations and encouraging young people, both experienced and newcomers, to join the youth sports activities and becoming young leaders. And we encourage this because these are the leaders of tomorrow.

Moving on now to the topic of European sport policy,

Now regarding **ENGSOs sport political co-operation**. — There are two highly important processes going on in the European Union concerning sport: one is the implementation of the White Paper on Sport and the Pierre de Coubertin Action Plan —, the other is the article on sport in the Lisbon Treaty.

The **ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty** is still fairly unpredictable — currently it remains the responsibility of the French Presidency. Even so, the **specificity of sport** which is mentioned in the article on Sport in the treaty and which is also partly covered in the White Paper on Sport is still being very actively discussed by various sport organisations and in many EU Member States. As I see it, —the sporting rules, —the specificity of sport structure, —autonomy and diversity of sport organisations, —a pyramid structure from grassroots to elite level and organised solidarity mechanisms are the special features of sport. Currently the issues of specificity being most discussed are **UEFA's Home-Grown Players Rule and FIFA's 6+5 rule**, the role of sport agents and licensing systems.

ENGSO emphasises that **the specific characteristics of sport should be defined in yet more detail**. I would like to underline **the necessity to deal with this concept —not only that which concentrates on professional sports and certain sport disciplines —but also to have a closer look at the detailed features of the non-profit voluntary sports movement**. — ENGSO is willing to contribute to the discussions and processes of specificity currently under review by the Olympic movement and the European institutions.

Dear Colleagues,

I have the great pleasure and honour **of thanking the European Commission** for an excellent dialogue and collaboration during this year. After the General Assembly ENGSO had bilateral negotiations, with Mr Mairesse, the Director, and also with the Sports Unit of the European Commission.

One of the ENGSO initiatives in the past years has been to promote a dialogue between European sport organisations, the EU institutes and the EU Member States. I am most pleased that the European Commission under the Structured Dialogue policy with the comprehensive co-operation under the French Presidency will organise **the EU Sport Forum** in Biarritz in late November. ENGSO has been invited to give its perspectives on the item of Support for grassroots sport in Europe.

Among other sources of funding ENGSO received an operational grant for the year 2008 to support grassroots sport through **Europe for Citizens Programme**. ENGSO participated in the Active Citizenship Group of the European Commission in September. I am pleased to inform you that the 2009 priorities of this programme are in the line with ENGSO's objectives.

In the area of health policy ENGSO is a member of the **EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health**, in addition to being a member at the Sports and Health Working Group of the EU

Member States and the Commission. With regard to **the Physical Activity Guidelines** prepared by this Group, ENGSO finds the inter-sectoral character significant. We also would like to encourage the sport organisations involvement along with public authorities in the implementation of the guidelines on a national basis. In addition, ENGSO will include the Physical Activity Guidelines in its future health programmes.

Furthermore, the Trim and Fitness International Sport for All Association (**TAFISA**) and the European Sport for All Network (**ESFAN**) have offered co-operation with ENGSO in the area of developing health-enhancing physical activity for sports clubs. There is clearly a need to develop sports club on an organizational level to support a healthy way of living through health-related sports activities.

I am most pleased that the European Commission will launch a **new Study on Volunteering** which we feel is of crucial importance to ENGSO and its members.

EU Presidencies

The current French Presidency has been very inclusive regarding ENGSO's participation in the deliberations regarding sport. Earlier this year ENGSO participated in the Slovenian Informal Sports Ministers meeting. The French Presidency is focusing on three objectives: the societal role of sport, economic development and good governance in sport.

The French Presidency organised **an Expert Seminar on information exchange in the sport sector** in Paris in September. The aim of the seminar was to evaluate the creation of a network for information. ENGSO supported the future collaboration and proposed that the EU Sport Ministers would be invited into this network. Moreover, ENGSO was the only NGO invited to the Paris meeting.

Sweden has always been a strong member of ENGSO. One of the advantages of **organising the ENGSO Forum in Sweden** this autumn is that Sweden will host the EU Presidency in the second part of 2009. EU Presidencies are now taking a longer term, an 18 months agenda. This allows ENGSO to take longer term planning. We are happy to see both sport and health and also support for volunteering on the agenda. And we will give our full support to see that these important topics are developed further.

Lottery and gambling

Last May —the European Parliament adopted the report on the **White Paper on Sport**. In a nutshell the measures in that White Paper were to use lottery profits for purposes that are in the

public interest—and also to keep supporting the organisation of lottery and gambling on a national basis in the future.

Since then the European Parliaments Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection has started drafting a report **Integrity of Online Gambling. And a Council Working Group** has been established on the subject of gambling.

I would also like to underline strongly the crucial importance of public funding for sport. This is generated to a very large extent by the national lotteries both within and outwith the European Union. ENGSO will continue the excellent partnership with the European Lotteries.

Furthermore, it would be politically important for sport that the European Parliament will provide a budget line for sport in 2009. This has yet to be agreed with the other institutions.

ENGSO will promote close relations with the newly elected Parliament after the elections in June 2009.

Let me now turn to the Council of Europe,

The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport of the Council of Europe, currently covers 26 European Member States. The EPAS priorities are sports ethics and the study on autonomy of the sports movement in Europe, combating racism and discrimination in sport and organising the 11th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Sport in Greece in December. ENGSO is a partner with EPAS, a Bureau and a Governing Board Member and a member of the Consultative Committee. This Committee will be a new partner body for sport NGO's in the Council of Europe and will start its activity in 2009.

ENGSO shares the concern of the EPAS's Governing Body on how to increase the membership of EPAS not only within the member countries of the Council of Europe but also within sports organisations themselves. ENGSO is willing to assist EPAS in preparing future criteria for its organisational membership. Furthermore, ENGSO Youth is a member of an Advisory Council of Youth.

Finally, ENGSO considers it important that national sports federations and Olympic Committees are included in the national delegations at the Ministerial Conference in Greece. ENGSO will also be contributing Ministerial Conference under the topic of Ethics in Sport. I wish all the best luck for the organising of this important Conference. And just before I finish, I would like to take this

opportunity to thank the Secretary General of ENGSO for his active participation in the work of EPAS.

Dear Colleagues, thank you for your kind attention.

