

## **ENGSO Forum asks for EU-actions to promote health and volunteering in Europe**

The Swedish Sports Confederation, Riksidrottsförbundet, invited the European sports movement – national sports confederations and Olympic committees – to meet under the umbrella of ENGSO from the 24 to the 25 October 2008 in Stockholm, Sweden, to discuss European sport matters and exchange views on topics such as health and volunteering in Europe.

The programme of the Forum offered keynote speakers of highest calibre. Birgitta Kervinen, ENGSO President, opened the Forum and stated: “We are very happy with the constructive cooperation we have with European institutions such as the European Union, in particular with the Sports Unit headed by Mr. Michael Krejza and the Citizenship Unit headed by Mr. Risto Raivio as well as with the Council of Europe. Many questions have to be answered for sport at European level in the coming years; a good cooperation with all stakeholders involved is therefore necessary for the benefit of sport.”

Tomas Johansson, Sport Director in the Swedish Ministry of Culture, presented the Swedish EU presidency priorities in the field of sport, which will focus – amongst other issues – on health and volunteering. He underlined the important role ENGSO plays in the European sports political dialogue. Susanne Hollmann, Administrator of the European Commission’s Sport Unit, reported on the implementation process of the EU White Paper on Sport, whereas Mr Stanislas Frossard, Council of Europe, informed the Forum participants of the state of play with regards to the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport. Michael Trinker, chairman of the ENGSO EU working group, reported on the activities of the group in 2008 and gave an outlook of the work programme for 2009 which will focus on the elections to the European Parliament in June 2009 and the future EU competence in the field of sport.

After the EU seminar the Forum discussed in detail the issue of health and sport. Dr. Winfried Banzer, ENGSO representative in the EU platform on diet, physical activity and health, presented the latest development regarding the EU health policy and the increasing importance of physical activity for health prevention. Romana Caput Jogunica, ExCom member, reported on ENGSO’s health activities, and Sophie Christ, EU working group member, collected examples of best practices in the field of health and sport and presented them.

The ensuing workshop after the presentations identified concrete actions which should be implemented at European level to promote health and sport like to declare a European Year of Active Lifestyle or set up an internet database with best practices in the field of health promotion.

Susanne Hollmann introduced the second workshop on volunteering and informed about the launch of the European Commission’s study on volunteering. Bengt Sevelius, Honorary President of ENGSO and expert in the field of volunteering, underlined in his presentation the importance of voluntary work for sport organisations which was proven with concrete figures by James MacDougall, EU working group member.

Based on the presentations, the workshop on volunteering formulated recommendations to EU institutions such as providing tax advantages for not for profit sport organisations or better recognising voluntary work in order to promote volunteering in sport.

The full report of the 11<sup>th</sup> ENGSO Forum on the EU Seminar and volunteering and health in the field of sport can be found at the ENGSO homepage [www.engso.eu](http://www.engso.eu).