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SPORT FOR ALL AN NGO PERSPECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF EDUCATION THROUGH SPORT

• Coyote theme

Since 2004, European Year of Education through Sport (EYES), the situation in Europe has been increasingly favourable for the creation of a legal basis for sport. Indeed, the constitutional treaty includes an article on sport; sport has been made part of the new generation of the “Youth IN Action” programme (2007/2012) and the United Nations has declared 2005 “International Year of Sport”.

A good opportunity therefore exists for those organisations which are fighting for greater acknowledgment of the benefits these ideas can bring. ENGSO Youth, a European sports organisation for under-35s, is working for greater recognition of sport for all and of sport as a vehicle for social values. Sport is a wonderful tool, performance not being an end in itself but providing a means of self-fulfilment, of participating in the formulation of a club’s education and sports policy, and of socialising and learning the rules of democracy within an association. The aim is to promote balanced sporting activity, in which every individual can play a part, catering for different groups of people (minorities, isolated or marginalised groups) regardless of age or sex, provided that they play by the rules and respect opponents.

One of the guidelines much discussed during the last term of office was on the “co-determination of young people”. Nowadays, young people do not automatically belong to traditional associations and clubs. They demand more responsibility, but ask for help to fulfil their commitments. So it seems necessary to give them means, tools and suitable conditions to enable them to climb the ranks and defend their projects and voluntary commitments. The voluntary sector in the world of sport, ENGSO Youth in particular, is working to help the young people who wish to become involved in sports bodies to express their views and obtain training and assistance, so that they can be real players, aware of their options.

► *A few examples of projects in the context of EYES 2004:*

In this spirit, ENGSO Youth makes a contribution to European policy on young people and sport and defends the interests of young sportsmen and women within the European institutions. It co-operates with other youth organisations in respect of youth activities in which sport can be a useful tool for improving society and helping young people to flourish; and it is constructing – by democratic means - a network of young club officials from the European sports movement. It also encourages the application of ENGSO Youth guidelines concerning children and young people in the following areas: women and sport, sport and health, sport and integration, sport and work...

ENGSO Youth participated in the running of a European project called “European Crossroads: Sport - Front Door to Democracy” organised by the Council of Europe and the City of Strasbourg, together with the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture, as part of EYES 2004. This event took place in Strasbourg from 13 to 16 May 2004.



For the “Crossroads” conference, the ENGSO Youth Committee was asked to:

- explain the origins of the ENGSO guidelines on children and young people and how these deal with this issue.
 - gather and study documents on sport and young people in Europe.
 - lead and contribute to the workshops which took place during the event:
- How to motivate and recruit young people into sport leadership?
 - How to include young people in the decision-making process in sports organisations?
 - How to prevent young people from dropping out of sports clubs?

The event was held for governmental and non-governmental representatives working in the fields of youth and sport in CDDS member states. The idea was to demonstrate the value of sport as a tool for education in democratic citizenship by providing examples of good practice and to promote the role of youth sports organisations involved in democracy and human rights education and in teaching youngsters new skills and helping them to integrate.

► **The youth committee of the Hungarian Sports Confederation, a member of ENGSO Youth, organised a project as part of EYES 2004.**

Some of our members’ projects were accepted by the European Commission, such as that of the youth committee of the Hungarian Sports Confederation. Its project took place during our study visit in mid-September to Budapest, where we took part in an open day organised by young people for their peers and parents. During the event there were opportunities to meet representatives of local public authorities and sports clubs, as well as Athens medallists, in order to debate, try out new activities and have fun, at the same time as finding out about the advantages of locally backed neighbourhood sports activities. There were many

stands offering all sorts of information for the children, and some fun activities were laid on to show them what sports were available and easily accessible in their local areas. They were helped and encouraged by experienced athletes, who gave them advice and signed autographs. Mini basketball and chess tournaments were organised, and some young gymnasts put on a beautiful demonstration. There was also a climbing wall for those wishing to scale its heights and discover qualities such as patience, suppleness, selflessness and accuracy... The day ended with a grand draw with some original prizes, such as invitations to try out and discover a new sport.

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To exchange ideas and experiences on our platform: conference, website, “Book of Good Ideas”...



www.engso.com



Documents available :

Flyers
Information circulars
European documents on sports policy
Study on youth and sport in Europe

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