



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 24 March 2010

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LIMITE

SPORT 3

NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Working Party on Sport
Subject: Priorities for EU sport policy
- Policy debate at Council

Delegations will find attached a Presidency questionnaire intended to serve as the basis for a policy debate between Ministers responsible for Sport during the Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting on 10-11 May 2010.

ANNEX

1. The Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force on 1 December 2009, has created a specific European Union competence for sport. Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that "the Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function." Prior to this, EU activities in the area of sport were not based on an explicit competence but rather on sport-related aspects of other competences, *inter alia* competition, the Internal Market and employment and social affairs.
2. The Commission adopted on 11 July 2007 a White Paper on Sport¹ containing a number of actions to be implemented or supported by the Commission known as the "Pierre de Coubertin" Action Plan. These actions were based on the possibilities offered by the Treaties as they stood at the time. Considerable informal coordination and cooperation on sports-related issues between EU Member States has also developed over recent years, with regular informal meetings at Ministerial and expert level. The Commission has facilitated this informal co-operation and the White Paper has been an important reference point for this work.
3. Now that there is a specific EU competence for sport, the co-operation and co-ordination between Member States will be formalised, and the Commission has indicated its intention to adopt a new Communication setting out its suggested plans and priorities for European Union action to promote European sporting issues, as well as a proposal for a spending programme in the field of Sports to cover the 2012-13 period.

¹ COM(2007) 391 final

4. The first formal Council meeting addressing sports issues will take place in Brussels on 10 and 11 May 2010 (at the Education Youth and Culture Council). The centrepiece of the Sports section of the agenda will be a policy debate among Ministers. The objective of this debate is to allow Member States to give their assessment of the principle issues and challenges that EU sports policy should address now that the Lisbon Treaty has entered into force. It is intended that the debate would provide valuable input to the Commission as it prepares its new Communication.
5. To structure the debate at Council, the Presidency would suggest that Ministers focus their interventions on the following two questions:
 - In which specific areas of sports policy can action at European Union level be of most added-value?
 - Among the areas where EU action might be envisaged, what are the two or three most urgent priorities?