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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Sports media and its role in strengthening social inclusion - <i>Policy debate</i> (<i>Public debate in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Council's Rules of Procedure</i>) [<i>proposed by the Presidency</i>]

Following consultation of the Working Party on Sport, the Presidency has prepared the attached discussion paper, which is submitted as the basis for the policy debate to take place at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 22-23 May 2017.

Sports media and its role in strengthening social inclusion

Presidency discussion paper

The power of the media is a known phenomenon. Sports media has over the years been popularised and reflects the worldwide interest in sport. From traditional media communications in the form of televised and printed material, the internet has now opened up a myriad of opportunities. This paper is intended to give examples of how sports media could be exploited to bring about greater awareness on social inclusion, a concept framing the Council conclusions¹ to be adopted at the Council meeting.

Areas to be taken into consideration:

- Promotion of good practices in social inclusion in sport;
- The role of media and media rights for an inclusive society;
- Sports social media as a platform for social integration;
- Offering multi-cultural groups experiences in sport media;
- Sports media in partnerships with schools;
- The young journalist and sports media.

1. Promotion of good practices in social inclusion in sport

Sports media can interact with the sport movement to visualize good practices related to social inclusion can be highlighted and transmitted. Sports clubs and associations are encouraged to bring forward good practices, which have at their heart social inclusivity and are carried out with individuals or with groups. These practices could feature as part of sport programmes. This can be carried over into the print media where a section could be dedicated to the celebration of good practices. This helps in raising awareness and pushing this inclusive target further.

¹ Doc. 8232/17

2. The role of media and media rights for an inclusive society

Sport is itself a major media content while the media are a major partner for sport. Together in one way or another, they effect the society at large. An excellent example is The English Premier League. The Premier League is undoubtedly one of the biggest sports economies in the world. It uses part of the money that it raises through the sale of media rights and invests it back into society. The various community programmes that were developed along the years proved to be a win-win situation both for the Premier league, since it is a method of interest generation, and for the communities, which are benefitting from many programmes varying from education, entrepreneurship, and employability through a wide spectrum of society, from school children to young people to adults.

3. Sports Social media as a platform for social integration

Since social media are gaining strength and popularity, this can be exploited by sport media sites. The introduction of social sites, which could advertise these good practices as well as include other resources related to social inclusion and other educational concepts would help raise awareness and encourage similar practices. Including these social inclusion snippets or clips in sports media sites would, due to the sites popularity, enhance interaction and debate on good practices. This would help generate debate and discussion thereby raising awareness.

4. Offering multi-cultural groups experiences in sport media

Primary schools are nowadays inclusive of mixed cultures. Although inclusion is a curricular target within schools, it is a fact that this may vary in methods of applicability. Media agencies, specifically sport media departments, are encouraged to offer experiences and hands on practices to multi-cultural groups within schools, which would include visiting the media work places as well as carrying out tasks and projects related to sport, and media, which vary in the types of media used. The multi-cultural perspectives of students related to sports practiced in their countries of origin are celebrated and shared. This portrays sport media as a vehicle for enhancing social inclusion, integration as well as collegiality.

5. Sports media in partnerships with schools

Media agencies are encouraged to build a partnership with schools within their communities. Through this partnership, they can provide opportunities for young pupils to express their abilities in, for examples, print media (as well as other forms). These opportunities could provide an inclusive environment for all pupils with a passion towards sports media and sport in general.

6. The young journalist and sports media

Another way in which media agencies can work in partnership with schools is through the provision of specific television or radio programmes, which are presented and led by young pupils. These programmes should target multiple nationalities, as well as multi-cultural practices, which are celebrated through the programme. Within these programmes pupils are not only empowered by responsibility but are also encouraged to work collaboratively, thus challenging the cultural barriers, which can be an obstacle to inclusivity.

Questions for discussion:

1. How can the sports media within the Member States, play a role to enhance social inclusion and social integration?
 2. How can sports media companies be encouraged to be more socially responsible in order for media to be a force for good in sports development?
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