

EU SPORT POLICY



Mid-December 2010, Sports Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou is planning to set out the EU's plans over the next few years for implementing the new powers offered by the Lisbon Treaty in the field of sport. The upcoming communication on sport intends to identify targeted actions providing by the EU high added value in the field of sport. According to the European Commission, the current budgetary context is not 'conducive' to new spending initiatives and real expenditure will only be implemented in 2012 and 2013. The first real EU-funded sports programmes outlined in the forthcoming action plan should only appear under the next financial perspectives, from 2014. The European Commission also promises to evaluate the implementation of the new EU agenda for sport by mid-2015. In the coming years the EU is planning to propose recommendations on health-enhancing physical activity in view of the establishment of national guidelines, including a review and coordination process. The European Commission is also planning to support transnational projects and networks in the area of health-enhancing physical activity with a focus on projects targeting children, young people and senior citizens. In its communication, the European Commission intends to propose a draft mandate for negotiations on EU accession to the Anti-Doping Convention of the Council of Europe. The European Commission will also carry out an impact assessment in view of a criminal justice harmonisation proposal on establishing offences and minimum sanctions at EU level regarding the trade in doping substances and related activities. The upcoming action plan intends also to support innovative initiatives under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) developing EU guidelines on combined sports training and general education ('dual careers') as well as supporting transnational projects and networks. On sustainable financing of sport, the European Commission talks of ensuring that sport-related intellectual property rights are taken into account in the implementation of the Digital Agenda initiative. It will also launch a study to analyse sport organisers' rights and image rights in sport under the EU legal framework. As for application of EU state aid rules to sport, the European Commission promises to monitor the area and explore possibilities and limits for public aid in the sector. If the number of sport-related state aid cases increases, it will consider guidance on the application of state aid law in the field of sport. The European Commission also promises to exploit the possibilities of the European Regional Development Fund to support sport and outdoor activities as a tool for regional and rural development. The European Social Fund is expected to be used to strengthen the skills and employability of workers in the sport sector.

UPCOMING EU HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY

On 17 November 2010, Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, presented some of the priorities of the EU Hungarian Presidency starting on 1 January 2011. According to Orbán, the first priority of the EU Hungarian Presidency will be to halt spiralling debt and carry out a programme in the EU enabling it to keep debt down and to progress. Hungary aims to give top billing to relations with Russia and the Eastern countries in general. Budapest is aware that it will have to cope with the budgetary and monetary crises prevailing in European countries, the absence of an EU budget for 2011 and revision of the Lisbon Treaty in response to German demands for the creation of a permanent European financial stability mechanism. Orbán also addressed energy security, the Danube strategy and EU enlargement. Hungary, a country of ten million inhabitants that is not a member of the eurozone, will be holding its first EU Presidency since joining the EU in May 2004.

CAP REFORM

On 18 November 2010 the European Commission proposed the broad outlines of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform. The European Commission is planning to rebalance subsidies in favour of small farm owners and Eastern European states, while at the same time making them more ecological. Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Dacian Cioloș proposes the following three options: 1) radical reform, which would result in an end to earnings-related aid and the suppression of most market intervention measures; 2) maintaining the status quo with limited improvements, such as a more equitable redistribution of subsidies; 3) an intermediate solution offering more balanced, targeted and sustainable assistance. France, Germany and Italy have already firmly rejected radical reform proposals that were supported by the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The European Commission has also proposed that CAP subsidies (€59.8bn in 2009, which represents 40 per cent of the EU budget) should be more evenly distributed. Formal legislative proposals are expected by July 2011.

OPEN FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

CALL FOR PROPOSALS – EUROPEAN REFUGEE FUND

The European Commission has published the 2010 call for proposals under the European Refugee Fund (ERF) for Community Actions. The ERF aims to support and improve the efforts of EU Member States to grant reception conditions of refugees, displaced persons and beneficiaries of subsidiarity protection to apply fair and effective asylum procedures and to promote good practice in the field. The main priority for the 2010 call are: improving the quality of asylum decision-making and the development of the capacity stakeholder; improving efficiency of the Dublin system (development of best practices on the implementation of the family unity criteria and on improvement of transfer procedures); enhancing solidarity mechanisms between Member States, particularly those who face pressures on their national asylum systems; promoting good practices in the field of resettlement in Member States; promoting measures to address specific needs of vulnerable groups among asylum seekers and people benefiting from international protection. The call has a budget of €3.6m (maximum €1m per project if the applicant is a national authority, €500 000 for other applicants and the minimum amount is €200 000 for all applicants). Deadline: 14 December 2010.

CALLS FOR PROPOSALS – NER300

The European Commission has launched the first call for proposals in the framework of its NER300 programme for investment in innovative technologies focused on renewable energy and carbon capture and storage –CCS. Eight projects involving CCS technologies (pre-combustion, post-combustion, oxy-fuel and industrial applications; use of saline aquifers for CO2 storage; and use of depleted hydrocarbon reservoirs) and 34 projects involving innovative renewable energy technologies - RES (bioenergy, concentrated solar power, solar photovoltaic, wind, geothermal, ocean, hydroelectric and distributed renewables management or smart grids) will benefit from EU funding. Deadline: 9 February 2011.

CALLS FOR PROPOSALS – MEDIA 2007

The European Commission has launched a new call for proposals under the MEDIA 2007 programme – i2i Audiovisual scheme. The objective of this call is to facilitate independent European production companies' access to funding from banks and financial institutions, by co-financing part of the costs of the following three modules: 1) Insurance for audiovisual productions, 2) Completion guarantee for the production of audiovisual works, 3) Bank financing for the production of a work. Deadlines: 10 January 2011 and 6 June 2011.

CALLS FOR PROPOSALS – LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME

On 27 October 2010 the OJ of the EU published the general call for proposals under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) for 2011. According to the European Commission, for the first time the following five common priorities have been defined for more coherent cooperation within LLP: 1) Develop strategies for lifelong learning and mobility; 2) Encourage cooperation between the worlds of education, training and work; 3) Support initial and continuous training of teachers, trainers and education and training institutions' managers; 4) Promote the acquisition of key competences throughout the education and training system; 5) Promote social inclusion and gender equality in education and training, including the integration of migrants. Budget: €1 065m. The LLP comprises four sectoral programmes on school education (Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci) and adult education (Grundtvig), and is complemented by a transversal programme focussing on policy cooperation, languages, information and communication technology and dissemination and exploitation of results. Finally, the Jean Monnet programme focuses on European integration and support for certain key institutions and associations active in the field. Deadlines vary depending on the particular sectoral programme.

Greater Manchester Brussels Office
North West House
21 Rue du Marteau
B-1000 Belgium
Phone: 0161 408 7147
Phone: 0032 2 2295 375
E-mail: info@greater-manchester.eu,
Web : <http://www.greater-manchester.eu>