

# The 2021-2024 EU Work Plan for Sport

Sport is an area where the EU can support, coordinate and supplement the actions of Member States. Recognizing the role that sport can play in achieving several political priorities of the EU, such as health, education, economy, inclusion, gender-equality, and sustainability, the European Union Work Plan for Sport is established by the Council of the European Union to outline priorities and objectives in the field of sport policies at European level. The Council, presided by a different Member State every six months, then establishes a program with specific actions to implement the Work Plan, based on the Annex at the end of the Work Plan.

This fourth [Work Plan for Sport for 2021-2024](#), running from 1 January 2021 till 30 June 2024, was published in December 2020 and will focus on antidoping and innovation, while also stressing the **importance of physical activity for citizens' health and wellbeing**. Its objectives are to increase participation in health-enhancing physical activity with the ambition to promote an active and environment-friendly lifestyle and active citizenship, strengthen integrity and values in sport, support a sustainable sports policy, as well as to ensure a cross-sectoral cooperation to raise awareness on the contribution that sport can make to Europe's growth but also to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the new Work Plan will also support the recovery of the sport sector

which was strongly impacted by the various governmental measures. In addition, it intends to promote the role sport and physical activity can play in the recovery.

To achieve these objectives, the Work Plan focuses on **three priorities** to protect integrity and values in sport; the socio-economic and environmental dimensions of sport; and the promotion of participation in sport and health-enhancing physical activity. For each priority, specific themes and goals were established.

## 1. The protection of integrity and values in sport

The first priority focuses on specific topics such as gender equality, sport diplomacy, the European Model of Sport and Anti-Doping. Overall, it aims at providing a safe environment in sport and preventing abuse, discrimination and violence. The overarching goals for these topics are to raise awareness and to build knowledge in order to develop healthier societies.

The Work Plan includes specific goals for **gender equality in sport**. It wants to increase the share of women in sport and physical activity, as well as in leadership positions in sports organisations. It also addresses the issues of equal conditions, such as equal payment of female and male athletes as well as officials, staff, coaches. Lastly, it aims at increasing the media coverage of women's sport

competitions and fight against stereotypes.

## 2. The socio-economic and environmental dimensions in sport

Green Sport, innovation and digitalization are the major themes of this priority. In line with the EU's green transition goals, the Work Plan focusses on promoting education for sustainable sport and enabling environmentally friendly sports practice, facilities, and events to decrease the environmental footprint of the sector. The role that sport and physical activity can play in other socio-economic areas, such as regional development, will be assessed as well as the funding possibilities.

**Another key element of this priority is the crisis resilience and the strengthening of the recovery of the sport sector.** More specifically, it will be centred around the impact of the pandemic on the sector as well as funding opportunities and possible structural modifications in the sport system. Together with the assessment of the role of public authorities this will lead to new strategy developments and a follow-up of the [Council Conclusions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery of the sport sector](#), which made recommendation on how to support and promote the sector through initiatives and funding. These Council Conclusions also highlighted the importance of physical activity for citizens' physical and mental health, while the possibilities to be active were challenged by lockdown measures

## 3. The promotion of participation in sport and health-enhancing physical activity

The third and final priority focusses on developing physical activity opportunities for all generations and the **promotion of physical activity** in general. For this area, stakeholders will work on the strategic development of physical activity at local level and on new ways to monitor lifelong physical activity by sharing best practices and raising awareness. The role of the media in the promotion of physical activity will also be studied, with the goal to increase the media coverage of the topic.

The pandemic has further highlighted the importance of physical activity for health and the essential role it can play in society. Therefore, the new Work Plan does not only aim to promote an active and environment-friendly lifestyle, but it also wants to lead to more social cohesion and active citizenship. A follow-up of the [Council conclusions on the promotion of motor skills and physical activities for children](#) is planned.

To achieve these objectives, cross-sectoral cooperation among various stakeholders will be encouraged. Member States, Council Presidencies and the European Commission will thus collaborate with relevant stakeholders to implement the Plan and promote the mainstreaming of sport and physical activity in several EU policy areas. Two new **expert groups** were created on Green Sport and the recovery of the sport sector during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.