

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION No. R (95) 17

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPORT FOR SOCIETY

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 12 October 1995
at the 545th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering the importance of sport in fostering good health and well-being in society;

Considering that sport provides girls and boys, and men and women with an environment conducive to education and social development;

Aware of the growing role played by sport in the economies of European countries, to which it makes a substantial contribution;

Convinced that sport contributes to the implementation of the principles set forth in the Vienna Declaration adopted by the heads of state and government of the member states of the Council of Europe on 9 October 1993, notably with regard to tolerance;

Stressing that sport is a fully fledged partner in the social framework and therefore a key factor in public policy-making, particularly in the social, economic and health fields;

Having noted the declaration on the significance of sport for society adopted by the 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Sport (Lisbon, 17-18 May 1995);

Anxious to follow up the principles set out in the above-mentioned declaration,

Recommends that the governments of member states, in conjunction with the competent public authorities and autonomous sports associations, and in accordance with the European Sports Charter, frame national policies and strategies which foster the development of sport, encourage people of all ages to take up a regular physical activity and reinforce sport as a factor in social development, in compliance with the principles set out in the appendix to the present recommendation.

Appendix to Recommendation No. R (95) 17

Principles

1. Health

The widest range of health benefits resulting from regular physical activity by the population are achieved by enhancing motivation and by expanding opportunities for physical activities at any age which can be practised by the largest number of people as part of their daily activities:

- in any case, moderately intensive exercise for at least half an hour every day seems desirable for everyone;
- the order of priority for support of different activities aiming at health benefits should be based on their efficacy, safety, equality of opportunities for participation and cost-effectiveness.

Higher priority should be given to finding and offering opportunities to motivated but sedentary or irregularly active people. They can be found and should be sought, especially among people with limited opportunities or with restricted independence and freedom of choice. A longer term goal should be to motivate those at present lacking the will to exercise.

Measures should be taken to reduce the risk of injuries including, where appropriate, changes in the rules or practices of individual sports, improvements in the environment, education of all parties involved and better dissemination of information on effective prevention programmes and on measures leading to rapid recovery from injuries.

2. Socialisation

Higher priority should be given to providing opportunities for physical activities and sport for children and young people both at school and in leisure-time, in conditions enabling them to enjoy sport, to learn co-operative skills, to create a positive approach towards movement as an appropriate form of recreation and to get involved in decisions concerning their own activities. The European Manifesto on Young People and Sport, adopted at the 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Sport (Lisbon, 17-18 May 1995), is a means to this end.

Due account should be taken of the potential of team games to encourage children to engage in various social roles and thus develop their ethical and social consciousness and their sense of responsibility in social relations.

Girls should have more opportunities to participate in and remain involved in sport.

The level and intensity of training and competition should be appropriate to the age and physical and mental development of the child. Those responsible for guiding children participating in top-level competition at an early age must make a point of ensuring that the stress of achievement and over-specialisation is minimised and ensure that they do not harm their physical, psychological or moral integrity.

Ethical values and respect for fair play as embodied in the Code of Sports Ethics should be included in the development of all activities from the start.

Training of teachers, coaches, trainers, instructors and leaders, should emphasise co-operative skills and spontaneous activity of children and the development of a lifelong interest in sport.

Opportunities for valuable social contact through sports for the adult population at large as well as for groups with special needs should be promoted as emphasised in the Resolution on Tolerance and Sport adopted at the Lisbon Conference. In this context, the irreplaceable role played by voluntary sports organisations should be recognised.

The strengthening of international sporting contacts at grass-roots level is an essential contribution to social co-operation and integration and peace.

3. Economy

Public authorities should ensure that they continue to hold primary responsibility for creating and maintaining the conditions for the development of sport as defined in the European Sports Charter. The economic impact of public investment in sport should be recognised and promoted.

The private sector should be encouraged to participate in creating these conditions.

In order to ensure that there are opportunities for all, a complementarity in public as well as private (including consumer and commercial) financing of sport should be maintained. Sports sponsorship has an important role to play in this.

Help should be available to sports with less media appeal, and thus unable to attract funding, in the interests of solidarity between sports.

Measures (such as tax relief) encouraging the voluntary involvement of individuals or groups have proven to be a cost-effective support for sport and should be promoted.

Whilst taking into due consideration the importance of voluntary work, the creation of new jobs and further development of training for current and future employees in the sports sector should also be encouraged.