

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION No. R (88) 8

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

ON SPORT FOR ALL: OLDER PERSONS

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 18 April 1988
at the 416th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

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

Recalling its Resolution (74) 31 on health care and social work for old people living at home, and in particular Section VI on leisure, physical exercise and part-time activities;

Having regard to the Resolution adopted by the European Ministers responsible for Sport at their 3rd Conference at Palma de Majorca in 1981 on priorities for future European sports co-operation;

Recognising the fact that both the number of older persons and, more particularly, their proportion of the total population are growing steadily in many member states of the Council of Europe, and that the implementation of the European Sport for All Charter since 1975 has bypassed many of the present generation of older people, and that they therefore need, in many cases, special measures taken on their behalf;

Anxious to enable people to take part in physical activities throughout their lives, and that the principles of the European Sport for All Charter should apply to every social group regardless of age;

Convinced that sport greatly contributes to the preservation of physical mobility, of the health and fitness of older persons, promotes social contact and independence, and adds a zest and motivation to their lives,

I. Recommends the governments of member states:

1. to take the necessary steps to encourage and support efforts to promote a greater participation by older persons in appropriate sporting and other physical activities;

2. to co-operate with sports organisations, local authorities and other relevant institutions in their task and, in particular, to follow the guidelines set out in the appendix to the present recommendation;

II. Instructs the Secretary General to transmit this recommendation to the governments of non-member states, party to the European Cultural Convention;

III. Instructs the Secretary General to transmit this recommendation to the Directors General of the World Health Organisation and of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

Guidelines for “Sport for all: older persons”

1. To set out, considering the physical, mental and social benefits to be expected, objectives for the promotion of sport of older persons.
2. To analyse existing needs and possibilities in order to determine which gerontological and socio-economic factors and what forms of organisation may encourage or discourage older persons to participate in physical activities in each member state, and to encourage the spread of successful pilot projects which overcome obstacles, difficulties or prejudices.
3. To stimulate the development of a policy on sport for older persons and to encourage a wider knowledge and awareness amongst public bodies, sports organisations, organisations working with older persons and older persons themselves of the beneficial effects, both social and physical, of regular and appropriate exercise, and to overcome prejudices with regard to the scale and range of activities suitable for older persons, including the very old.
4. To encourage, where appropriate, the development of basic and applied research aimed at improving the provision of “Sport for all: older persons”, and the dissemination of such research results; such research should also study the prevention of injuries, the need for special medical care and supervision, and the promotion of the independence, responsibility and autonomy of older people for their own activities, in which sport may play a part.
5. To encourage the development of physical activities based on the physical state of the potential participant, rather than on his or her chronological age, and particularly for those older persons who may not have previous experience of such activities.
6. To develop an adequate range and variety of programmes and facilities designed to improve social communication, to preserve fitness and to improve health through regular sporting activity, paying attention to the social needs, motivation and physical potential of different age groups, to involve older persons in the elaboration of such programmes and to incorporate appropriate medical support and supervision.
7. To encourage the development of sport programmes and structures that will enable the present generation of middle-aged participants to continue to practise sport as they attain a higher age group.
8. To increase, intensify and improve the initial, refresher and further training of leaders of sports and physical activities for older persons, to encourage older people themselves to participate in such training courses and to encourage other potential leaders, such as physiotherapists, to acquire training in the organisation and conduct of appropriate physical activities.
9. To pay particular attention to the development of programmes for those older persons living permanently in institutions or homes, particularly those lacking any form of physical activities.
10. To recognise that older persons may wish to aspire to take part in competitive sports, either in age-based classes of ordinary sports or in specially organised events with adapted disciplines, and to make due provision for this in the overall programmes of “Sport for all: older persons”.
11. To ensure that, when sports policies are being decided, the interests and views of older persons are given due consideration.
12. To encourage the preparation and diffusion of information about opportunities in “Sport for all: older persons”; this information should be designed to reach the various kinds of older persons and use media to which they are likely to respond.
13. To encourage existing frameworks providing “Sport for all: older persons” to develop their policies and programmes in accordance with the recommendation and to use these frameworks as the basis of their own policies as far as possible and appropriate.