

European Project Meter Matters in Sports: Fostering Criteria for Inclusion through Sport

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Abstract : The Meter Matters Erasmus Sport European Project (ID: 101050372) explores the field of social inclusion in and through sports with the aim of a) proposing appropriate criteria for co-funding sports programs involving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other more vulnerable people, primarily in mainstream sports organizations and b) proposing a model for co-funding social inclusion in and through sports at the national level. This European project (2022-2024) involves 6 partners from 3 countries: Univerza V Ljubljani - coordinator and Drustvo Specialna Olimpiada Slovenije (Slovenia); Magyar Specialis Olimpia Szovetseg and Magyar Testnevelési Es Sporttudományi Egyesület (Hungary) and APPDA Coimbra - Associação Portuguesa para as Perturbações do Desenvolvimento e Autismo and Universidade De Coimbra, Faculty of Sport Sciences and Physical Education (Portugal). Equal involvement of all people in sports activities is, in terms of national and international guidelines, enshrined in some conventions and strategies in the field of sports, as well as human rights, social security, physical and mental health, architecture, environment and public administration. However, there is a gap between the practice and EU guidelines in terms of sustainable support for socially inclusive sports programs in the form of co-funding by state and local (municipal) resources. We observe considerable opacity in the regulation of the field. Given that there are both relevant programs and inclusive legislation and policies, we believe that the reason for the missing article is reflected in the undeveloped criteria for measuring social inclusion in sports. Major sports programs are usually co-funded based on crowds (number of involved athletes) and performance (sports score). In the field of social inclusion in sports, the criteria cannot be the same, as it is a smaller population. Therefore, the goals of inclusion in sports should not be the focused on competitive results but on opening equal opportunities for all, regardless of their psychophysical abilities. In the Meter Matters program, we are searching for criteria for co-funding social inclusion in sports through focus groups with coaches, social workers, psychologists and others professionals involved in inclusive sports programs in regular sports clubs and with athletes and their parents or guardians. Moreover, experts in the field of social inclusion in sports were also interviewed. Based on the proposals for measuring social inclusion in sports, we developed a model for co-funding socially inclusive sports programs.

Keywords : European project, meter matters, inclusion, sport

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