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Subject: Economic, social and environmental sustainability of major sport events  
- *Policy debate*  
(Public debate pursuant to Article 8(2) CRP [proposed by the Presidency])

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Following consultation of the Working Party on Sport, the Presidency has drawn up the attached discussion paper as the basis for the policy debate on the above subject at the EYCS Council meeting on 20-21 May 2014.

# **Economic, social and environmental sustainability of major sport events**

## **Presidency discussion paper**

Leverage and legacy have become increasingly important considerations in planning major sporting events. The concept of the legacy of major sporting events appeared within sport during the 1990s, when questions about the costs and benefits of organizing such events were raised.

The taxpayers of Quebec paid off the huge deficit from the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games over thirty years. It resulted in a dwindling of the number of candidatures to host the Games to the point that only a single city (Los Angeles) was prepared to organize the 1984 Games. However, the 1984 Games provided a new impetus for Olympic candidatures thanks to the considerable financial profit.

The 1992 Games in Barcelona left an extremely long term urban legacy as the Games transformed the entire Barcelona sea front. The 1964 and 1976 Olympic Winter Games organized in Innsbruck left a significant tangible legacy in the form of sport facilities which were maintained and developed after both Games to host many other sporting events. Certain facilities relating to major events have nevertheless become expensive to maintain e.g bobsleigh runs for the Winter Games and the artificial white water canoeing parks for the Summer Games. It should be noted that most of the sport facilities for the 1968 Winter Games in Grenoble were demolished after the games, to avoid ongoing maintenance costs.

Although part of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games' sport facilities seem ill maintained or even abandoned, the Greek capital - like all the "Olympic cities" i.e. Thessaloniki, Patras, Herakleion and Volos - changed radically and acquired major permanent city infrastructure such as the Eleftherios Venizelos International Airport of Athens, the state of the art Metro extension, and the Olympic ring road of Athens etc.

Some host cities have created "legacy funds" to ensure that the sport venues built for the Games can continue to be used. This has been the case for the Winter Olympics in Calgary, Salt Lake City and Turin.

Broadly speaking legacy means lasting, long term benefits on a regional or national scale, that result either from the event itself or from the leverage activities surrounding it. Experience seems to have shown that to ensure that a long lasting legacy and leverage benefits from major one-off sporting events are achieved, several conditions have to be met. Spending on infrastructure should be intelligent, realistic and proportionate. In addition infrastructure must have a long term use, both sporting and non-sporting (e.g. culture). Major events must involve local communities in their planning and preparation. The events should also look forward and should foresee an on-going programme which continues after the event itself. The legacy debate has focused mainly on cost and financial aspects. However, sociocultural and environmental impacts need also to be considered. Social legacies are more and more important because communities which host major sporting events are searching for a greater sense of belonging and well-being as well as the "feel good factor" resulting from a well organized event.

The on-going economic and financial crisis has had a substantial effect on organising and hosting major sporting events in Europe. Many major events and world championships taking place this year and in the coming years are to be hosted outside Europe, in emerging economies. UEFA has taken the initiative to organise the future European Football Championships - Euro 2020 - in 13 different countries and cities in 2020. This will help to reduce the costs of hosting this important event.

Against this background, the Greek Presidency wishes to organise a Ministerial policy debate on the economic, social and environmental sustainability of major sporting events. EU Member States have significant recent experience in hosting such events, and it is important that we take the opportunity to benefit from each other's experiences, both positive and negative.

**The central questions for the debate will be:**

- 1. Is it feasible in a period where there are major constraints on public expenditure for your country to envisage the hosting, either alone or in combination with others, of a major sport event (Olympics, World Cup, World/European Championships)?**
- 2. In order to make the case for hosting such an event, which elements of legacy are the most important? Which recent examples of major events do you consider have particular lessons for the future, either positive or negative, regarding legacy planning?**

In order to ensure an interactive, free-flowing debate, the Presidency has invited a prominent external speaker, Mr David Grevenberg (CEO of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games) who will provide his unique insights and perspectives on this issue.

**In their interventions, Ministers should be guided both by the questions set above, and by the presentations of the external speaker.** Ministers will be encouraged to **intervene freely** in response to the speaker, **without scripted interventions**, by asking questions or commenting. The Presidency will also invite the external speaker to respond to the debate as it unfolds, and reflect on points made by the Ministers.

In order to give all Ministers an opportunity to contribute, interventions will be restricted to **two minutes** maximum.

The Presidency's aim is that Ministers leave the discussion with one or two practical ideas which they can take back to their capitals for discussion.

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