

# MONTHLY REPORT

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January 2025



EUROPEAN  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEES



EU  
Office

### FIGURES OF THE MONTH

Activities of sport clubs accounted for the highest share of the total value added among enterprises in the sports sector

## Impact and Contributions of the Sports Sector in 2022

Enterprises in EU (2022)



Activities of sport clubs provided 42% of the value added in 2022



#### Top Performing Countries

|           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| Lithuania | 58.8% |
| Italy     | 56.3% |
| Spain     | 55.3% |

Countries in which sport clubs generated most value added

#### Other Leading Categories



Note: 5 EU countries recorded negative figures for value added by activities of sport clubs

Refer to the complete data set: [Enterprises\\_in\\_sports\\_sector\\_2024.xlsx](#)

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### EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

After the year 2024 shone with exceptional major sporting events such as the Summer Olympics and Paralympics in Paris and the European Football Championships in Germany, 2025 will see more sport policy decisions on the agenda.



First of all, the elections to the European Olympic Committees (EOC) at the end of February 2025 in Frankfurt/Main cast their shadows ahead. Raffaele Pagnozzi, the long-standing Secretary General of the EOC, who has been active in Olympic sport for more than 50 years and has led the Italian team as Chef de Mission at 10 Olympic Games, will bid farewell. The EOC EU Office wishes 'Lello' all the best for his certainly active retirement and, above all, good health!

Picture: EOC

The upcoming elections in March for the successor to IOC President Dr Thomas Bach will point the way forward for the entire Olympic Movement. In politically and economically challenging times, it will be important to maintain the Olympic Movement as a stabilising element in international sport.

The EOC will also be focussing on two editions of the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF). The largest European youth sports competitions will take place in Bakuriani (Georgia) in February and in Skopje (North Macedonia) in July.

The European institutions are already starting to prepare for the negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework and the revision of all funding programmes, which will begin this year. However, the European Commission's proposal expected for the summer 2025 could still be delayed by a few months, as the trade policy challenges posed by the new US administration and the ongoing war in Ukraine will necessitate discussions on a reorganisation of the EU budget. In this respect, the first European Council dedicated exclusively to the topic of defence can also be seen as a turning point. It remains to be seen to what extent these discussions will also affect the future financial resources of the EU funding programmes accessible to sport, particularly the Erasmus+ Sport programme.

There have been good news regarding the participation of sports organisations based in Switzerland in the Erasmus+ programme. From 2027, they will be fully eligible to apply to the programme. At least this is what the recent agreement between the Swiss government and the European Union envisages.

Kind regards,



Folker Hellmund

Director EOC EU Office



### EU SPORT POLICY AND FUNDING NEWS

#### Advocate General issues opinion in RFC Seraing vs. FIFA Case

In 2015, Royal Football Club (RFC) Seraing, a Belgian football club, entered into agreements with Doyen Sports, a Maltese company, to obtain financial support in exchange for sharing a portion of its players' economic rights. These agreements violated FIFA regulations that prohibit third-party ownership (TPO) of players' rights to safeguard the integrity of the sport. Consequently, FIFA imposed sanctions on RFC Seraing, including fines and transfer bans.

Consequently, RFC Seraing challenged FIFA's sanctions through multiple legal avenues. The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) upheld FIFA's penalties and confirmed the legality of the TPO ban under EU and Swiss laws. The Swiss Federal Supreme Court rejected the club's claims of CAS's lack of independence and invalidity of the TPO ban. In Belgian courts, RFC Seraing argued that FIFA's arbitration system was overly broad and legally invalid. The Brussels Court of Appeal sided with the club, ruling FIFA's arbitration clause invalid under Belgian law and referring a question to the European Court of Justice (CJEU).

#### European Court of Justice Advocate General Capeta's Opinion

On 16 January, 2025, Advocate General Tamara Čapeta shared her opinion in the CJEU case regarding RFC Seraing. While her opinion is not binding, it provides guidance for the Court. Čapeta argued that FIFA's arbitration system conflicts with EU law because it limits people's access to national courts.

The key points of the opinion are:

#### Difference between sports and commercial arbitration

- Commercial arbitration is voluntary, meaning both parties freely agree to resolve disputes this way. Therefore, courts only review arbitration awards for public policy issues.

- FIFA's arbitration system is mandatory. Clubs and players have no choice but to follow FIFA's rules, which require disputes to go through FIFA's internal committees and CAS. Additionally, FIFA can enforce its decisions independently, such as banning players or clubs, without needing court involvement. Because FIFA's arbitration is not voluntary, it should allow full judicial review by national courts. This ensures decisions align with EU laws and do not unfairly limit legal protections.

#### Access to national Courts

- Advocate General Capeta emphasized that clubs and players in the EU must have the right to challenge FIFA's rules in their own national courts. These courts must review not just public policy issues, but all relevant EU law provisions.
- CAS and the Swiss Federal Supreme Court, which often confirm FIFA's decisions, do not qualify as EU courts under Article 267 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). This means their decisions cannot replace proper legal review by EU courts.

#### Full judicial review

- National courts must be able to check if FIFA's rules comply with EU laws, even if CAS and Swiss courts have upheld those rules. This review should include all EU legal principles, not just public policy concerns.

#### What this could mean for sport organisations

If the CJEU agrees with the Advocate General's opinion, it could lead to significant changes, such as:

- CAS decisions would no longer be the final say on EU legal matters. National courts in the EU would be able to review FIFA-related cases fully.

- EU-based players, clubs, and other sports actors could challenge FIFA rules in national courts.

The Advocate General's opinion highlights the need to protect individuals' legal rights under EU law. It argues that FIFA's mandatory arbitration system does not give enough room for national courts to check if decisions align with EU laws. This could lead to broader changes in how sports arbitration systems operate within the EU.

### Next steps

The CJEU is now deliberating the case. If it follows the Advocate General's opinion, the decision could impact other sports organisations with similar arbitration systems.

## Poland takes over the Presidency of the Council of the EU



In January, Poland took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, as the first in the Trio Presidency, before Denmark and Cyprus. This partnership, under the Trio Programme, commits to addressing contemporary challenges such as geopolitical instability, economic resilience, and fostering unity in Europe. Together, their objectives emphasise strengthening cooperation with global partners and fostering sustainable growth. Poland, leading the Presidency until June, has introduced a programme reflecting these priorities.

The Polish Presidency, under the motto "Security Europe!" focuses on reinforcing multidimensional security – encompassing external, internal, information, energy, economic, food and health security. While the Polish Presidency prioritises security and economic stability, it also acknowledges the importance of education and health, with sport and physical activity playing a complementary role.

### Polish Presidency's priorities for sport

Recognising the value of sport in fostering physical, mental, and social well-being, the Presidency is preparing Council Conclusions on "a new approach to the role of sport and physical activity in the education process." These conclusions aim to highlight the role of sport in promoting healthy habits, intergenerational cohesion, and resilience, particularly among children and adolescents.

The draft document stresses the cross-sectoral benefits of sport. By leveraging education as a foundation, it seeks to increase levels of physical activity while enhancing the educational experience. This approach promotes data-driven strategies to ensure children and young people engage in regular physical activity and benefit from its integration into lifelong learning. The initiative also aims to build synergies between education, health, and youth development policies, equipping young people with tools for healthier and more active lifestyles. The EOC EU Office is liaising with several Member States to ensure that the benefits brought by the prevalence of physical activity in children's education process, and the role of sport clubs therein, is recognised to its due value in the text.

In addition to sport and education, Poland's Presidency focuses on research and statistics to inform policymaking and investments in sport. In this regard, a conference on "Research as the foundation of sports policy" is foreseen in March.

### Programme of sport-related events under the Polish Presidency

- 10-11 March 2025 (Warsaw, Poland): [Expert conference, “Research as the foundation of sports policy – challenges and perspectives”](#)
- 8-9 April 2025 (Zakopane / Kraków, Poland): [Informal Sports Attachés Meeting](#), focusing on sport in the education process
- 12-13 May 2025 (Brussels, Belgium): [Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council](#) – including the adoption of the Council Conclusions
- 27-28 May 2025 (Wrocław, Poland): [Meeting of the NFIP football safety expert group](#)

- 4-5 June 2025 (Wrocław, Poland): [EU Directors General for Sport meeting](#) the Presidency throughout the term to make sure that the Olympic movement is represented during the various events.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

[18-month Programme of the Council \(1 January 2025 - 30 June 2026\)](#).

[Programme of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#)

## SHARE 2.0 activities continue with capacity-building events on funding for sport organisations

The SHARE 2.0 initiative, brought by the European Commission, is entering its next phase centred on capacity building. In that vein, each of the Communities of Practice (CoPs) is holding an online capacity-building event pivoting around one of the four thematic areas of SHARE 2.0: innovation, health, green and sustainable sport, and EU funding.

### EU Funding Capacity-Building Webinar: Funding for Sustainability in Sport

The capacity-building webinar organised by the CoP on EU Funding was held on 28 January, focusing on funding for sustainability in sport, through the EU LIFE Programme.

The webinar started by an introduction to the [LIFE Programme](#) by Géraldine Nee from the European Climate, Infrastructure, and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). The different types of grants of the LIFE Programme were presented, with a focus on Standard Action Projects (SAPs), which were cited as the most relevant to sport organisations.

While the LIFE Programme is not the most easily accessible funding programme for sport organisations, Ms. Nee mentioned a few examples of funded projects in the sport sector, on e.g. the environmental management of

football events, sports equipment upcycling, or sustainable management of turf pitches. Participants were encouraged to consult the [LIFE project database](#) to get inspiration from existing projects.

The presentation of two projects exemplified the potential of the LIFE Programme in advancing sustainability in sport:

- ["Recycle Your Boots"](#) (Tecnica Group)

Marco Meggiolaro, from Tecnica Group (a sports-equipment brand producing ski boots, hiking shoes or rollerblades) shared how the LIFE Programme supported the development of a recycling scheme for ski boots, achieving 85% of recycled material usage in newly produced boots and preventing 412 tons of CO2 emissions over three years. More than 400 collection points in 12 countries have been established.

- ["LIFE GREEN PITCHES"](#) (Municipality of Amsterdam)

Emily Even presented the City of Amsterdam's project, aiming at improving the sustainability of artificial turf pitches management. The project was designed and is implemented with the support of all involved actors, including the sport sector.

While tackling the environmental sustainability aspect of artificial sport pitches, project coordinators also hope to foster participation in physical activity and address global urban challenges such as potential floodings. This initiative underscores the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration and its broader impact on sustainable urban development.

### Key takeaways

Interested sport organisations were encouraged to consult the following resources:

- [LIFE project database](#)
- [LIFE Programme Main Page](#)
- [LIFE Call Documents and FAQs](#)

In addition, [National Contact Points](#) can be contacted for further support.

### Next steps

The next capacity-building event, titled “Local/Urban Planning and Health”, is planned for 6 February. Organised by the CoP on Health, it will focus on building participants’ knowledge and encouraging dialogue on the nexus of promoting local and urban planning and health. Those interested in participating can register for the event using this [link](#).

The event organised by CoP on Innovation will follow on the 11 February under the title: “Sport Sector Innovations Driving Social Change”. This webinar will focus on the innovation and investment as means to building a positive societal change in and through sport. The registration for the event can be accessed [here](#).

Finally, the CoP on Green Sport’s webinar will take place in March, with an agenda still to be announced.

### About SHARE 2.0

SHARE 2.0 builds on the foundation of the original SHARE initiative (2018–2023), which supported local and regional sport stakeholders in accessing EU funding. This new phase aims to strengthen collaboration and knowledge sharing on key sport-related topics. Currently, SHARE 2.0 counts more than 400 members across four CoPs, a significant increase compared to the previous SHARE. The EOC EU Office is part of all CoPs and in the Steering Group of the CoPs on EU Funding and Green Sport.

Interested parties can express their interest in joining [here](#).

### FURTHER INFORMATION

More information on the SHARE 2.0 initiative is available [here](#).

## Eurostat showcasing the sport sector’s economic role

On 27 January, Eurostat released updated statistics on enterprises in the sports sector for the year 2022. The sports sector in the European Union (EU) is an economic driver encompassing sporting activities, sports education, and the manufacturing of sports goods. In 2022, around 190,000 enterprises operated in this sector, making up 0.6% of all businesses in industry, construction, and market services. These businesses contributed €29 billion in value added and generated an impressive €60 billion in turnover, with growth rates outpacing other industries.

### Key insights from the EU sports economy

#### Booming growth in value added and turnover

Between 2021 and 2022, the sector’s value added grew by 16.7%, surpassing the overall business growth in industry, construction, and market services. The total turnover stood at €60 billion, reinforcing the sector’s increasing economic influence.



### A sector driven by SMEs

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) dominate the industry, accounting for 99.9% of all sports-related enterprises. The majority are micro-businesses with fewer than 10 employees, yet they contribute 62.1% of the sector's total value added. SMEs also play a significant role in sports manufacturing, generating 65.1% of the sector's value added.

### Diverse business landscape

The largest share of enterprises operated in 'other sports activities' (46.9%), followed by 'fitness facilities' (24.3%) and 'activities of sports clubs' (12.5%). However, sports clubs were the biggest economic players, generating 42% of the total sector value added.

### The role of sports education and manufacturing

Beyond sports activities, the sector includes sports education, with 180,000 enterprises – almost one-fifth of all education businesses in the EU. Meanwhile, sporting goods manufacturers numbered 5,400 enterprises, contributing €2.5 billion in value added and €8.3 billion in turnover.

### Geographic hotspots

Four countries – Spain, France, Germany, and Italy – accounted for 45% of all EU sports enterprises. Germany and Spain led in total turnover, while Finland, Slovenia, Latvia, and Belgium had the highest share of sports enterprises relative to their overall business sectors.

### Data sources and economic impact

Eurostat gathers data on sport-related enterprises through the Structural Business Statistics (SBS), covering the number of businesses, employees, turnover, and value added. The sports sector plays a vital role in the EU economy, with SMEs driving growth.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

[Enterprises in the sports sector - Statistics Explained](#)



## PARTNERS' CORNER

### SAFE HARBOUR project begins with a successful Kick-off Meeting



#### Project Overview

The SAFE HARBOUR Project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, officially started its journey in January 2025.

Running until June 2027, this initiative brings together 27 organisations, including the International Olympic Committee (IOC), two International Federations (IFs), 20 National Olympic Committees (NOCs), and expert institutions such as Thomas More University and the Asser Institute. As the project coordinator, the EOC EU Office leads collaborative efforts to enhance safeguarding measures across European sport, fostering a safer environment for athletes, coaches, and stakeholders. The project will map existing safeguarding practices, identify service gaps, and develop a European Response Framework to guide safeguarding initiatives continent-wide. Additionally, tailored National Strategies will be created to address country-specific challenges, supported by specialised training programmes to build expertise.

A key milestone will be the establishment of the European Network for Safeguarding in Sport (ENSS), an online platform dedicated to collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and sustaining long-term safeguarding efforts. To broaden its impact, SAFE HARBOUR will also organise National Multiplier Events to engage stakeholders beyond the consortium. By providing concrete tools and support networks, the project aims to empower NOCs and Federations, strengthen Safeguarding Officer networks, and lay the foundation for a future IOC Regional Safeguarding Hub.

### Kick-off Meeting

The project's journey began with a successful Kick-off Meeting held on 28–29 January in Brussels, where partners gathered to align on objectives and initial activities.

Day 1 featured presentations on key safeguarding topics, including the history of safeguarding, European and global strategies, prevalence of safeguarding concerns, and existing regulations. Participants also engaged in a Q&A session with a European Commission representative, gaining valuable recommendations for project implementation.



Day 2 focused on interactive sessions, where NOCs and IFs shared best practices and challenges, provided feedback on deliverables in development, and collaborated in group sessions to begin mapping key stakeholders involved in case handling of safeguarding concerns. Technical discussions throughout both days ensured a structured and effective approach to the next phases of the project.

### Looking ahead

With the Kick-off Meeting successfully completed, SAFE HARBOUR is now advancing its first major activities. The project will work towards the establishment of the ENSS, the development of National Strategies, and the creation of sustainable safeguarding frameworks to ensure long-term impact.

For more updates, follow the SAFE HARBOUR LinkedIn page, visit the website, and subscribe to the Newsletter.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

[SAFE HARBOUR project website](#)

[SAFE HARBOUR project LinkedIn](#)

[SAFE HARBOUR project Newsletter](#)

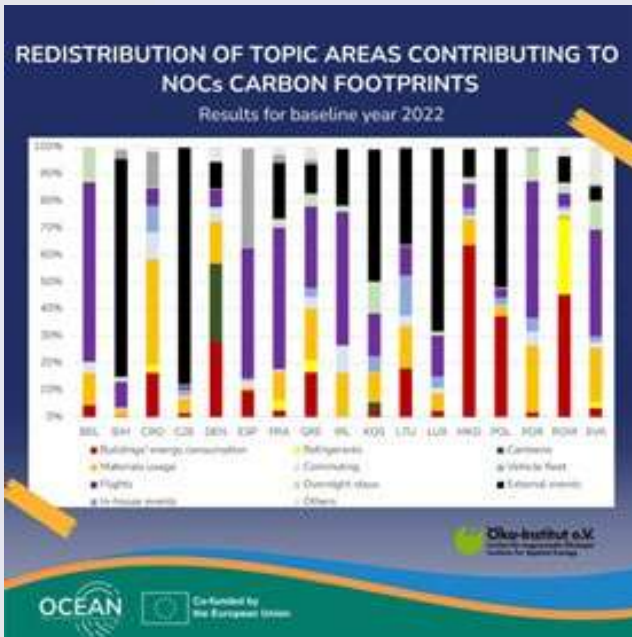
## OCEAN Toolbox platform: Empowering sport organisations to take on climate action

In January, the OCEAN Project celebrated its second anniversary and officially entered its final phase with Climate Action Officers from 18 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) advancing on their path to reduce their carbon footprints as part of a collective effort to tackle climate change.

### Analysis of 18 NOCs' carbon footprint

Throughout the project, the 18 NOCs have completed their carbon footprint measurement for 2022, marking the first step towards mitigating their environmental impact.

The [Comparative analysis of the NOCs' footprints](#), presented by Öko-Institut, highlights primary sources of emissions. Building on these results, the NOCs are now working towards adopting a carbon footprint reduction strategies by April 2025, aligned with the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework ([S4CA](#)), supported by the International Olympic Committee.



### Guide for Climate Action Officers

This comprehensive process has included a structured five-module training course for Climate Action Officers, covering key topics such as the fundamentals of climate change, measures to reduce the impact of transport or procurement, and communication about sustainability.

Building on this training, a practical [Guide for Climate Action Officers](#) was developed to serve as a step-by-step resource for sport organisations embarking on the carbon footprint reduction process. This guide provides clear, actionable steps tailored to the unique needs of sports entities, enabling them to systematically assess their emissions, identify reduction opportunities, and implement strategies that align with global sustainability goals.

### Pool of Actions for carbon footprint reduction

To further support sport organisations in reducing their carbon footprints, the [Pool of Actions](#) was developed together with the Öko-Institut. Comprising a collection of over 100 measures and good practices examples to reduce carbon footprint in high-impact areas, such as travel, energy consumption, or event production.

### Looking ahead

To empower all sport organisations, the OCEAN Project is also developing Carbon Footprint Measurement Tool which will be soon freely available on the OCEAN Toolbox platform for all 206 NOCs and sport organisations. The tool designed by the Öko-Institut with the 18 NOCs and therefore fits the scope of activities of sport organisations. The tool will be available in English, Spanish, and French.

From April 2025, the carbon Footprint Reduction strategies from the 18 NOCs will be available at the [OCEAN Toolbox platform](#) to inspire and encourage NOCs and sport organisations to take on climate action.



### FURTHER INFORMATION

[LinkedIn Post](#)

[Subscribe to the Newsletter](#)

[OCEAN Toolbox Platform](#)

[OCEAN Website](#)



### DOSB: 17 fields of action for sustainable major sporting events - web portal now online



Picture: DOSB

On January 29, 2025, the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB), in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI), the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), the German Sport University Cologne (DSHS), and the Öko-Institut, launched the digital platform [www.nachhaltige-sportveranstaltungen.de](http://www.nachhaltige-sportveranstaltungen.de), concluding the project "Sustainable (major) sporting events in Germany".

This initiative aims to assist sports event organizers in Germany in implementing sustainable practices across 17 defined action areas.

The platform offers comprehensive guidance on various aspects of event planning and execution, including:

- Climate protection and energy efficiency: Strategies to minimize carbon footprints and enhance energy efficiency.
- Mobility: Promotion of eco-friendly transportation options for participants and spectators.
- Resource management: Efficient use of materials and waste reduction techniques.
- Biodiversity and environmental protection: Measures to preserve natural habitats and promote biodiversity.
- Social responsibility: Ensuring inclusivity, accessibility, and fair labor practices.

These action areas are designed to provide event organizers with practical tools, checklists, and best practice examples to facilitate the integration of sustainability into their events. The platform's development was supported by a total funding of approximately €680,000, equally contributed by the BMI and BMUV.

BMI State Secretary Juliane Seifert emphasized Germany's commitment to sustainability in sports, stating, "Germany is a strong sporting nation. We stand for sustainability. (...) Our new web portal for sustainable sporting events offers a wealth of information on responsibility for human rights and sustainability. No sports organizer in Germany has to start from scratch, but will find valuable tips and recommendations that can be put into practice."

Dr. Jan-Niclas Gesenhues, Parliamentary State Secretary of the BMUV, added, "Sports events should protect the environment, be socially responsible and economically viable. This is already a must for major international sporting events such as World and European Championships or the Olympic Games and is also required by the EU. However, it is important to us that sustainability is also becoming increasingly important at regional and local level. The portal for sustainable sporting events will be a helpful tool for associations, sports clubs and event organizers. (...) It is also based on a scientific analysis of all aspects of sustainability." The DOSB's initiative aligns with the European Olympic Committees (EOC) EU Office's ongoing efforts to promote sustainability in sports across Europe, notably through the [OCEAN Project](#), in which the Öko-Institut is involved, too. By providing accessible resources and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, the platform serves as a model for integrating sustainable practices into sports events, contributing to the broader goals of environmental stewardship and social responsibility within the sporting community.

The digital platform is available in German and English. For more information and to access the platform's resources, visit [www.nachhaltige-sportveranstaltungen.de](http://www.nachhaltige-sportveranstaltungen.de).



### UPCOMING EVENTS

**09 - 16 February 2025**

European Youth Olympics Festival (Bakuriani)

**27 February 2025**

EOC Executive Committee (Frankfurt)

**28 February - 01 March 2025**

EOC General Assembly (Frankfurt)



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