

EU Sport Values Diplomacy

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PREFACE

Dear Sport Friends,

Sport diplomacy is still a relatively new topic within the European Union policies and I am delighted to share with you some of my thoughts in this field.

Starting chronologically, the very first policy document agreed by the European Union Member States was entitled **Council conclusions on sport diplomacy** and adopted in 2016 during the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union. I had the privilege, as Head of the European Commission's Sport Unit at the time, to contribute to shaping the policy agenda in this area of sport. The Council of the European Union acknowledged by this document that sport is a useful tool in supporting intercultural, economic and political cooperation and understanding between nations and cultures, and that its potential can be part of extending and strengthening contacts between the EU and third countries.

The Council recognised that sport diplomacy could be understood as **the use of sport as a means to influence diplomatic, intercultural, social, economic and political relations**. Sport diplomacy is an inseparable part of public diplomacy, which is a long-term process of communication with the public and organisations with aims such as heightening the attractiveness and image of a country, region or city and influence decision-making on policy areas. It helps to achieve foreign policy goals in a way that is visible and comprehensible for the general public.

Furthermore, beyond the **Council conclusions on sports diplomacy, a key policy document, the Council conclusions on promoting the common values of the European Union through sport**, was adopted later. This valuable contribution to the sports agenda of the European Union was approved during the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2018. It considers, among others, that we want a society in which peace, freedom, tolerance and solidarity are placed above all else. These values bind Europeans together and are worth fighting for.



Yves Le Lostecque



In light of above mentioned, there is no surprise that representatives of the **Erasmus+ project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy**, who were coming from Slovakia and Bulgaria, made especially those two policy areas of the European Union visible within their work. Their engagement allowed further development of both topics and gave a unique chance to connect people passionate about sport diplomacy and values of the European Union through sport.

I had the opportunity to meet some of them in person in Sofia when attending an event called Runathon 2023, which **interconnected sport diplomacy with intergenerational values of sports**. Runathon is clearly a perfect example of a significant sporting event promoting sport diplomacy and the values of the European Union through sports people. In addition, I was pleased to learn that Elena Malikova, former Chair of the Council Working Party on Sport, was a driving force in the development of the new continuation of sport diplomacy through these initiatives and proved that it could be realised in close cooperation with the sports movement whilst respecting its autonomy.

Both those projects funded by the European Union gave a chance for various synergies in the field and supported sport diplomacy in many aspects. I was very happy about it because some years ago, a notion of sport diplomacy was not that common and much developed within the European Union.

To wrap it up, the Erasmus+ project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy well develops Council conclusions on sport diplomacy and Council Conclusion on promoting the common values of the European Union through sport via **SPORT VALUES CHANNEL** as the core project outcome. Within six major sequences, there are various interactive activities, which efficiently interconnect sport diplomacy and values of the European Union through sport.

It concerns, among others, sequences on Slovak and Bulgarian sports personalities, because **sports people, in general, can bestow a positive image among foreign publics and organisations**. They have a great potential to support foreign policy goals, they can significantly contribute to strengthening economic relations and are often used to initial diplomatic relations between countries.

I had the pleasure to meet in person many Slovak and Bulgarian inspirational people who contributed to the SPORT VALUES CHANNEL. I must admit that I was very much impressed by the collection of their precious stories, which showed the power of sporting values across various societal sectors. Thus, in the next pages you might learn, for instance, about views of Anatoly Iliev, Ambassador of Good from Bulgaria or Slovak leading pianist Jordana Palovičová, just to start with a few of them.

I am very pleased that the Erasmus+ project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy belongs to one of the initiatives that the European Commission is supporting in the area of sport diplomacy. Let me encourage you to have a look at this amazing booklet, which offers alongside with great stories also core fragments of the whole project work of this exceptional international consortium.

My final words belong to those who were behind the scenes of this project - Elena Malikova, Kristiana Kazandzhieva, Yanka Dimitrova and their teams. They all did a great job in the development of this project and I have no doubt that their work has significantly improved the knowledge and impact of the sport diplomacy and EU values.

CHAPTER 1

About the project

01





About the project

EU Sport Values Diplomacy

Political background of the project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy recalled EU sport policies outlined by the EU Work Plan for sport 2021 - 2024, White Paper for Sport and Communication on Developing the European Dimension in Sport. It focused on the Erasmus+ priorities in the field of sport.

The project highlighted a topic of social inclusion through sport values. Its strategic aim was to promote a recent work

of the EU in sport sector. The main objective was to create an effective tool for raising awareness and dissemination of information in three interconnected areas: sport values, social inclusion and sport diplomacy.

Proposed consortium aimed to be a follow up of EU sport agenda of Bulgaria, Malta and Slovakia, which was developed during their presidencies of the Council of the EU. It stemmed from the Council conclusions on promoting the common values of the EU through sport approved by the Bulgarian Presidency, Council conclusions on sport as a platform for social inclusion worked out by the Maltese Presidency and Council conclusions on sport diplomacy developed by the Slovak Presidency. The project ambition was to develop these documents in a practical way and make them easy recognised for general public. The practical dimension was notably linked to the European Week of Sport.

The project enabled building capacity of organisations to



engage in international cooperation and networking as required by the small-scale partnerships of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme.

Proportional distribution of roles provided active involvement of entities on both management and operational levels. Project Manager, Dissemination Manager, ICT Manager, Sustainability Manager and Evaluation Manager created a Management Board and assured a high quality of a project and timeline monitoring. Proposed HR provided a wide range of knowledge and competences, covering interdisciplinary topics on transnational, European, nationwide, regional and local levels.

The project was digital, green, and innovative in the sport sector. It placed a strong focus on the green and digital transitions and contributed to priorities of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and the current call as well.

The platform entitled SPORT VALUES CHANNEL as a project outcome demonstrated one of many project digital aspects. Project goals were divided into tangible and intangible ones. They contributed to reach the project main objective and strategic aim.

Project tangible goals were sequences of the SPORT VALUES CHANNEL as a project outcome. Project short-term effects unfolded in its structure, in particular in the following sequences: FACES, STORIES, CHALLENGE, TEST YOURSELF, FACTS, YOUR VOICE.

Project intangible goals consisted of two sets. The first set of intangible goals were linked to general objectives of the call, notably:

- Attract and widen access for newcomers, less experienced organisations and small-scale actors to the programme. These partnerships act as a first step for organisations into cooperation at European level.
- Support the inclusion of target groups with fewer opportunities.
- Support active European citizenship and bring the European dimension to the local level.

The second set of intangible goals were linked to additional general objectives of the call, notably:

- Increasing quality in the work and practices of the organisations and institutions involved, opening up to new actors not naturally included within one sector.
- Building capacity of organisations to work transnationally and across sectors.
- Addressing common needs and priorities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport.
- Enabling transformation and change at individual, organisational and sectoral level, leading to improvements, in proportion to the context of each organisation.

Sustainability and green dimension were part of each project activity. Novelties were project core elements, including an innovative platform aiming at worldwide audience.

Sustainability guaranteed a pledge of stakeholders to keep project outcomes financed after its initial funding from the Erasmus+ programme.

Call for proposals 2021 – EAC/A01/2021 Erasmus+ Programme (2021/C 103/11)

Project consortium

A leading entity of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy was a Sport Club VEGA, which is active in several international programmes. With its impact beyond the EU, it contributes to

promoting sport diplomacy. The sport club participated as a partner institution in two Erasmus+ projects on sport values and social inclusion. The recent role of an Erasmus+ project coordinator was its new challenge and in line with requirements of small-scale partnerships designed for newcomers.

Partner institution BIONET was skilled in relevant fields and thoroughly selected to reach all the project objectives. They complemented each other work and assured common goals in close cooperation with their affiliated entities. The EU dimension brought an added value and was vital to reach planned objectives. Intended scope of the project activities would not have been attained individually by each member of consortium. The project enabled building capacity of organisations to engage in international cooperation and networking as required by the small-scale partnerships of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme.



Project coordinator

Sport Club VEGA from Slovakia works in Senec municipality, in a village of Bernolákovo. The club was founded in 2000 and nowadays associates mainly children and young adults. The coaches of the club achieved the highest qualifications in sport education. Sport Club VEGA is known for its multisport traditions. Many of the famous athletes of Slovakia are connected to this club.

The flagship initiative of the club was an international project Olympism. In Slovakia, children start to practise sport often at the age of seven to eight. By the experience of PE teachers and coaches, after that age the integration to sport clubs could be challenging when other players/athletes are already on a higher level. The cooperation of the Sport Club VEGA with the Bernolákovo Primary School on the first and the second grade in the framework of the project Olympism in 2000

focused on not only sport-oriented children, but also on a support of physically inactive children to start with sport through social inclusion.

Apart from Sport Club VEGA members, the project Olympism had a wide impact on all the teachers and pupils of the school as well as parents and school supporters. Children from minorities and with health handicaps were also fully involved in all the project activities and had a chance to meet new people and make new friends.

The project gave a unique opportunity to create a sport friendly environment within the school and was a basis for numerous other activities focused on development of physical activities of the young





generation. It also gave a possibility to all participants to become more conscious of sport values and Coubertin' ideas in its whole complexity.

Thanks to the project, the children were confronted with the sport in all the subjects and lessons of their school curricula. For instance, they used physical education topics during the lessons of mathematics, biology, physics, history, geography, Slovak language as well as English lessons.

This approach was appreciated also by the Slovak school inspection that belongs under the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. In general, project Olympism created by the Sport Club VEGA was a kind of milestone in a development of physical education and

sport activities in the framework of the whole community. It continued for instance with innovations and reconstruction of the outdoor premises of the school as well as increased mobility of teachers and students in a context of further international programmes.

In addition, the Sport Club VEGA closely cooperates with School of Pierre de Coubertin, one of the largest comprehensive high school in Slovakia with about 830 students. Pierre de Coubertin School in Piešťany is proud to bear the name of the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin, whose message of the spiritual and physical power strives to incorporate into teaching and feels honoured to have been entrusted with organizing the 10th international Pierre de Coubertin Youth Forum in August 2015.

A photograph of two women standing on a gravel path in front of a large, ornate church with multiple towers and domes. The woman on the left is wearing a dark blue coat over a patterned dress and is holding a small blue and white brochure. The woman on the right is wearing a teal dress and a black jacket. They are both looking at the brochure.

The cooperation of Sport Club VEGA with this school is based not only on numerous sport projects, but also on enriching programs and events intended to build up student community. It gives a room to the many talents of students, including annual ski trips for freshmen, environmentally focused trip for the juniors as well as educational trips abroad, cultural trips to museum and galleries. It offers theatrical performances, fun class trips, an initiation ceremony for freshmen – an evening of fun and games organized by juniors, prom nights for the seniors where they are the ones preparing the cultural program to show off their talents and entertain their parents and teachers, holiday assemblies where student entertain students and many others.

In light of the above mentioned it is evident that social inclusion through sport as well as education in and through sport phenomenon exists widely in the Sport Club VEGA activities and might be wrapped up by long-term close cooperation with the Slovak Pierre de Coubertin Committee whose seat is also in Bernolákovo.

Project partner

BIONETWORK Association from Bulgaria is a non-profit association established in 2014. It works actively to create positive public attitudes and policies in the field of health and well – being in a natural way of life. Its area of interest is a protection of the environment, especially in high urban pressure territories by organizing sport events, promotional events related to healthy way of life, healthy nutrition and physical activities, working with and supporting public authorities in their efforts for elaborating strategies related to sport, traditional games, tourism and **involvement of local communities**. BIONET is devoted to innovative the family life of Bulgarians by making it more healthy and active, starting with educational activities and sport.

When planning and carrying out activities BIONET has the experience to take into account all requirements for



environmental protection and resource efficiency.

BIONETWORK Association implements initiatives of high public importance in the field of **sports, healthy nutrition and environmental protection**.

The Association is a proven partner of:

- Municipality of Varna in promoting the Clean Air Program and organizing events, related to the initiatives Varna – European City of Sport 2019, as well as urban innovative actions related to sustainable use of land by turning it into sport and leisure open air facility.
- Municipality of Aksakovo in promoting urban gardening and physical activities for improving social inclusion and non-formal education for children and youth at risk
- Municipality of Pomorie in promoting transnational tourism products and routes, related to healthy gourmet and cultural heritage
- Municipality of Plovdiv, European Capital of Culture 2019

– in elaborating and implementing strategies for involving local community and business in developing urban cultural heritage (Plant Kapana project, funded by the PLOVDIV 2019 Foundation and EU).

Nationally funded projects increased the experience for working with local communities. Some of them are:

- **National family campaign for active and healthy life BULGARIA PLAYS** (own trademark of BIONET). Its aim is to unite families and remind them to find free time to be together by playing grassroot and traditional Bulgarian games. This initiative puts specific attention onto traditional sport and games and revival of these games. Big family games are organized in the frame of this campaign each year for five years in a row already, usually during the European Week of Sport with the support of different BG Municipalities. Over 1000 people take part in it each year.
- **PLANT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD** in Varna - BIONET

implemented urban agriculture measures to utilize vacant or idle land for production of healthy food. Adding green spaces to the neighbourhood, including community gardens provided a number of social, health, economic and environmental benefits.

- **CULINARY NEIGHBOURHOOD NETWORK** – EU program: Interreg IPA CBC Bulgaria-Turkey
- **DISCOVER ME...ON THE FARM** is a project for social inclusion where children of low economic and social background are taking gardening lessons and building own green house, learning how to cook and eat healthy food and receive healthy habits. The project has received the sign GOOD PRACTICE from the Managing body of the National Operational Program for Development of Human Resources.
- **BIONEST** – the project supports the social inclusion and professional integration of the vulnerable group of unemployed and inactive women over the age of 54, by creating a new social enterprise in the structure of the BIONETWORK for applied art articles and creating two new jobs for the vulnerable target group. Funded by the Local Action Group Byala – Dolni Chiflik.
- **RIBKA FEST** – the project contributes to the promotion

for investments and tourism, diversification of cultural and social life on the territory of FLAG Biela – Dolni Chiflik-Avren through the revival of the healthy culinary traditions of the region. It envisages organizing of three culinary festivals in the towns of Byala, Dolni chiflik and Avren, which demonstrate local customs in the preparation of traditional seafood and fishery dishes. Funded by the Fisheries Local Action Group Byala – Dolni chiflik – Avren.

BIONETWORK Association has also experience in Erasmus+ programme, such as:

- Project no: 2018-1-R001-KA105-048992, Name: EQUAL UP; Applicant/beneficiary – Dominou Association, Romania; Bionet is the Bulgarian partner of the project.
- Project no: 2019-1-FR01-KA204-062344, Name: CETAL, Applicant/beneficiary – Laboratoire d'Etudes et Recherche sur l'Intervention Sociale (LERIS)

Finally, BIONETWORK Association was involved in a lot of small sport project which have been funded through own resources and focused mainly on mentoring sport activities for disadvantaged children, volunteering activities for the organization of different sport events.



CHAPTER 2

Sport Values Channel

02





Sport Values Channel

A platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL is one of the core outcomes of the Erasmus + project entitled EU Sport values Diplomacy. It offers, besides others, twelve European policies in the field of sport, which were basis for the project.

They address a topic of social Inclusion through sport values and reflect priorities of the Call for proposals 2021 – EAC/A01/2021, Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions.

The platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL is accessible on **www.sport-values-channel.eu** and its sequences aim, in particular, at the project short-term goals and unfold in its structure:

1. FACES is a sequence on sport diplomacy promoting twelve ambassadors through their testimonials on sports
2. STORIES is a sequence on social inclusion developed through six inspirational stories highlighting social inclusion through sport
3. CHALLENGE is a sequence on sport values with a quiz for witty ones with twelve quiz questions
4. TEST YOURSELF is a sequence on physical and intellectual activity
5. FACTS is a sequence on European Union policy documents on sport with twelve European policies in the field of sport
6. YOUR VOICE is a sequence allowing external opinion on sport values / virtues

Contribution of the platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL to the priorities of the call in the field of sport is in increased awareness of the role of sport in promoting social inclusion, equal opportunities and a healthy lifestyle. It provides a deliberate, evidenced based and practical mechanism in integrating sport with social inclusion.

The project consortium got a **feedback on the project platform** SPORT VALUES CHANNEL from its members as well as from the general public. It was done primarily through the platform tools.

However, there were also designed other options and one of the ways to get it were the project flyers produced in Bulgarian, Slovak and English, through which opinions on sport values was obtained during various transnational project activities.

The summaries of all the received feedback information were used to rectify the platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL in order to improve its impact for the purpose of sustainability activities after the eligible period of the project. The updated version of all the sequences within the platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL is accessible online. Hereby we offer printed version of all the inspirational FACES and STORIES. In addition, some selected parts of the digital platform are given also in the relevant chapters of this booklet.



FACES & STORIES

Tsvetozar Hristov

"PERSISTENCY IS KEY"

If I have to introduce myself in three sentences - I am Tsvetozar Hristov and I am a table tennis referee. I organize and conduct competitions in this sport. I have refereed at many Olympic Games, World and European Championships and World Cups. My relationship with sport is a relation of love and dedication, which led me throughout all my life since I was a little child.

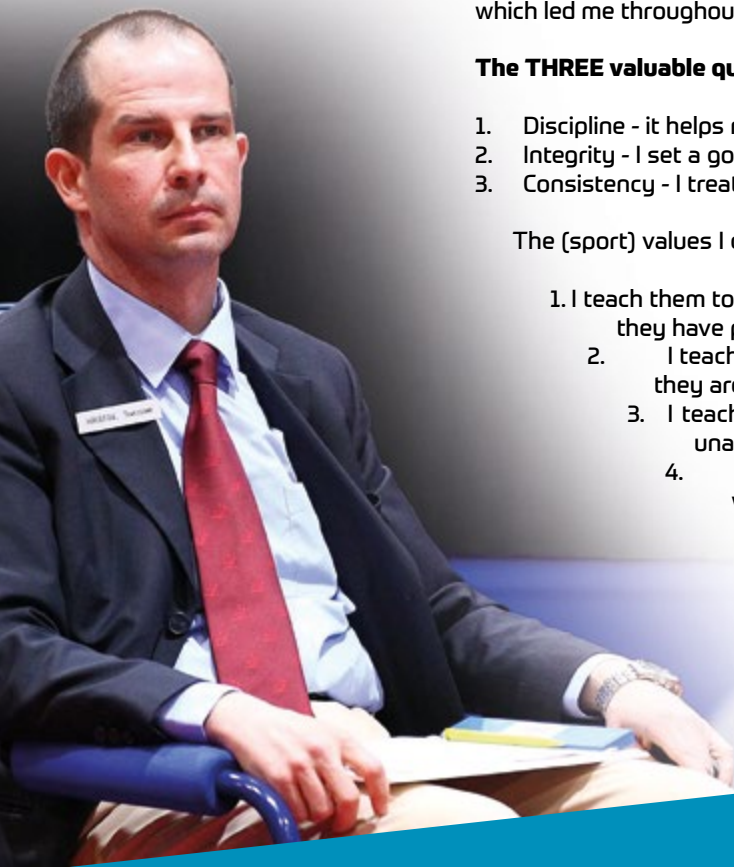
The THREE valuable qualities that sport has taught me are:

1. Discipline - it helps me achieve my goals personally and professionally
2. Integrity - I set a good example for my children and others around me
3. Consistency - I treat everyone the same, according to the rules of the sport

The (sport) values I do teach the children and young athletes I work with:

1. I teach them to be persistent, to finish what they start and to do it in the timeframe they have promised or set
2. I teach them to be responsible and to complete the tasks given to them as they are trained
3. I teach them to be honest, not to abuse their position and not to accept unauthorized benefits from it
4. I have acquired all of these values from my home upbringing, from what I have learned from the Education System, and from the training I have participated in as a table tennis referee and as an employee of the companies I have worked for.

I think that **additional training needs to be provided to coaches on how to teach the values of sport.** It should include the codes



of conduct of World Organizations and federations. In addition, I think every coach should know the latest rule changes, in the respective sport.

One of the most important topics for me is the discrimination – not only in sport, but in the workplace, in schools, on the streets, in the family, in the politics. And the EU sport diplomacy can be used to solve such issues. I think that EU sport diplomacy is the only way to do something TODAY against it.

There have to be the rule of law respected – same as the respect of rules in the sport.

What more should the European Union do to encourage more young people to embrace sport as a way of life?

1. Demonstrate clearly and openly the benefits of sport and physical activity, for example, as a way of combating overweight and obesity
2. To show sporting activities as a way of improving citizens'

fitness and wellbeing, their mental health and work-life balance.

I often remember the words of Pierre de Coubertin, the "father" of the modern Olympic Games, considered sporting events to be an important tool for promoting human rights. Given that sport has such a function, how can we use it? How do I see the relationship between sport and human rights?

Sport promotes gender equality and includes disadvantaged people by providing them with opportunities to compete in the world's biggest forums - Paralympics, Special Olympics Deaflympics, etc. Here I come back again to the issue of discrimination, as a matter of unfairness and inequality, and this is something the EU sport diplomacy has the power to overcome.

I would like to see a sport world where the heads of the international sports organizations equalize the conditions of participation and the prize money, for men and women.



Vencislav Ignatov



"TAEKWON-DO FOR THE MIND: GET A BLACK BELT IN VALUES"

My name is Vencislav Ignatova and I am the president of the biggest Taekwon-do Club in Bulgaria CENTRAL POLICE TAEKWON-DO CLUB (CPTK). We are based in Sofia but have our branches in other 3 big cities I Bulgaria.

I have worked for 3 years also as a Director of the School sport Directorate of the Ministry for Youth and Sport in Sofia, Bulgaria. However, I discovered that I could have more impact as a trainer and a club president, then as a sport administrator. This was a key lesson for me.

My club is member of the Bulgarian sports association of the Ministry of Interior (SAMI) where we have introduced about 9 years ago the sport program YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE POLICE. Through it, the police were supposed to promote sports activities among children in order to create a sense of responsibility for the affairs of society and a lasting attitude to respect the life, health, property, and opinion of others, to promote active participation in the democratic life of adolescents and young people and strive for social inclusion. CPTK wanted to encourage the participation in sport and physical activity and bring the values of TAEKWON-DO and sport to the children and young people making them active citizens. At the same time the club management observes in the frame of 20 years since its establishment, that the more its athletes are engaging with sport, the more active citizens they become in their school and communities, the easier they

find jobs and employment after school and the more inclusive societies they succeed to live in.

Something I consider one of our biggest achievements is the program we have created TAEKWON-DO FOR THE MIND: GET A BLACK BELT IN VALUES. The project was funded under the Erasmus+ SPORT Program in 2018. I am happy that the program is still working and unfolding and thanks to it our club members have tripled since 2019.

TAEKWON-DO FOR THE MIND encompasses an extracurricular physical activity program that simultaneously introduces elements of critical thinking to the children practicing this sport and develops additional knowledge and skills. When my colleagues and me elaborated TAEKWON-DO FOR THE MIND program we wanted it to include not only exercises and open learning resources (e.g., lectures, group games and lessons). We offered an innovative algorithm to track the progress of all participants and to master complex knowledge and skills newly acquired - not only in TAEKWON-DO but also in life. Part of this extracurricular program was a special Character Card Bonus System (CCBS) - children aged 7-11 years earn points each time they demonstrate qualities that are taught in TAEKWON-DO - such as respect, responsibility, self-control, discipline, mutual help. As a result of using the card the CPTK and its partners in the project from Slovenia and Greece doubled their members – only in the Sofia branch of the sport club the children in the age 7-11 have increased from 170 to nearly 400 in 18 months.

The parents of the participating children were extremely content not only with the sport progress of the kids, but also with their discipline, improved daily routine and communication skills. They insisted to continue and even increase the trainings and spread the word about the CCBS. The parents also wanted their older children to join such a program.

That is why we developed the TAEKWON-DO FOR THE SOUL program for teenagers, it went online and got viral – especially during the pandemics, teenage TAEKWON-DO athletes have used the program to practice online.

Now we continue with developing different other modules of this program – like TAEKWON-DO FOR THE RIGHTS sport events. My colleagues and me discovered the huge power and

potential TAEKWON-DO as a sport has for promoting lifelong civic participation. Recently we examined a study which found that in addition to the direct benefit that civic participation provides to the community, it also produces secondary health benefits for participants. Sports are excellent avenues for the learning of civic values that can invigorate our democracy. Simply by participating in sport, citizens can appreciate values that are critical to the success of the Union. One of the values needed for a thriving democracy is the ability to work for the common good. In order to do this, the us/them divide must be disrupted.

I consider this MY MISSION in life and work with all the 560 children in my clubs to succeed – not only on the tatami, but also in life.

Maya Shishkova - Karaslavov

"SPORT IS MOVEMENT, AND MOVEMENT IS
LIFE. ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIFE."

I have worked as a journalist and PR expert and/or manager in many different sectors and professional fields, but always alongside Yoga.

Currently I am teaching Iyengar yoga practices. Patanjali's Yoga Sutra is a collection of 196 sutras, each addressing a different aspect of the path to enlightenment through yoga. The treatise was composed over 2000 years ago and is recognized as one of the most profound and educational studies of human nature in search of spiritual liberation.

Iyengar (1918 - 2014) is considered by many to be the most influential yoga teacher of our time.

Sport always teaches discipline and calmness in crisis situations. These help me in communicating with people from the professional sphere and I think it is a positive and adds benefits to the teamwork skill. Now I work for a huge global company focused on renewable energy infrastructure and the skills gained in sport teach me how to deal with crisis situations. I try to first understand the different values, people of different nations and backgrounds I work with treasure most and then respect these values.

I am aware that sport diplomacy is the use of sports as a tool to promote international relations, peace, and understanding between nations. That is why we often use the organization



of joint sports events, and sports as a platform to address social issues. In the rural areas our company builds its RE powerplants sport diplomacy aims to bridge cultural and political divides, promote mutual respect and understanding between local community and business, and build relationships between all community members through the common language of sports – traditional sports and games of different ethnic minorities are highly preferred when we organize sport events.

In professional sports - winning is the only motivation. But Yoga is rather a prevention for health of body and mind. If it must be categorized under sports it falls under the category of "grassroot" sports. There the most important thing is to participate, overcoming your own resistances. This is also the case with traditional games. I treat all my yoga trainees with respect, regardless of their progress, aptness, abilities.

My trainees learn patience, tolerance, acceptance of the different as well as of themselves. I personally acquired these qualities along the way, through the experiences I received.

I think that it is necessary for coaches to have an approach, pedagogical training, and psychological education as well to be able to transfer and explain the values of sport - in the form of regular training through the federations, clubs, universities etc. There are various innovative methods to quickly put the information in a digestible form, for example through various role plays, practices, through which a direct effect and awareness is gained.



Christiana Gencheva

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS COACH



Look at me – I am Kristiana Gencheva, devoted to sport by heritage – my father was a sport coach, my mother was training some of the world-famous gymnastics' champions of Bulgaria.

So, I grew up in the sport halls, next to the piano, playing for the ensemble or individual performances. I started training gymnastics, and it came naturally, as I didn't have anything to do while my mom was leading trainings. I spent a lot of my childhood years in the sports hall. Now I spent again my adult years in the sport hall, and I am so grateful for the love and dedication of my children in this hall. They often come to me with flowers, handmade drawings, and this makes my heart melting.

Now I am the President of the sports club in rhythmic gymnastics Grazia since 2008, former competitor and now coach. I like teaching physical education and sports. I have 15 years of experience as a physical education teacher and 5 years administrative experience as a civil servant at the Sports Department in the Municipality of Varna.

I have a priceless experience as a coach not only in Bulgaria, but also in Latin America – in 2006-2008 I was head coach of the national team in Salvador, where rhythmic gymnastics (then) was not so popular, but very intriguing – for sport communities, parents, and small girls. I was proud to be invited and to transfer the knowledge and know how I had from the

Bulgarian experience.

I think, that in order to succeed in sport as coaches we need to obey to three following principles: PATIENCE, DISCIPLINE, GRATITUDE!

We live in remarkable and tough times where hard work, respect, responsibility has to be implemented in every aspect of our life – not only related to sport, but also related to communication with public authorities, politicians, and colleagues.

I have the tough task now to be the head of a newly established NATIONAL SPORTS CLUSTER. I have to combine my duties as a trainer and the administrative tasks I have in my sports club with uniting and balancing the interests and needs of all 19 organisations that started the cluster. There is no such a structure in the sport ecosystem in Bulgaria and I am proud that the initiative came from Varna, where I live. I am glad that the sports clubs, companies, and universities who develop the cluster see the need of being united in order to create the best policies for healthy lifestyle, sport funding and education for sport staff in Bulgaria. It is not an easy task, but I am committed to it and I am convinced that with the support of all my colleagues I will succeed.

If you want to succeed you have to work hard, you have to

respect the coach's work and effort, you are solely responsible for ACTION and CHOICE (I learned this while growing up as an athlete).

Education for sport staff in good communication skills, problem solving, and strategic thinking is a must! I believe it is necessary because while sharing experiences, we can learn from the LIFE MANUAL of other coaches and colleagues. Now we are doing it when working with many Ukrainian coaches, who have settled in Varna because of the ugly war in Ukraine.

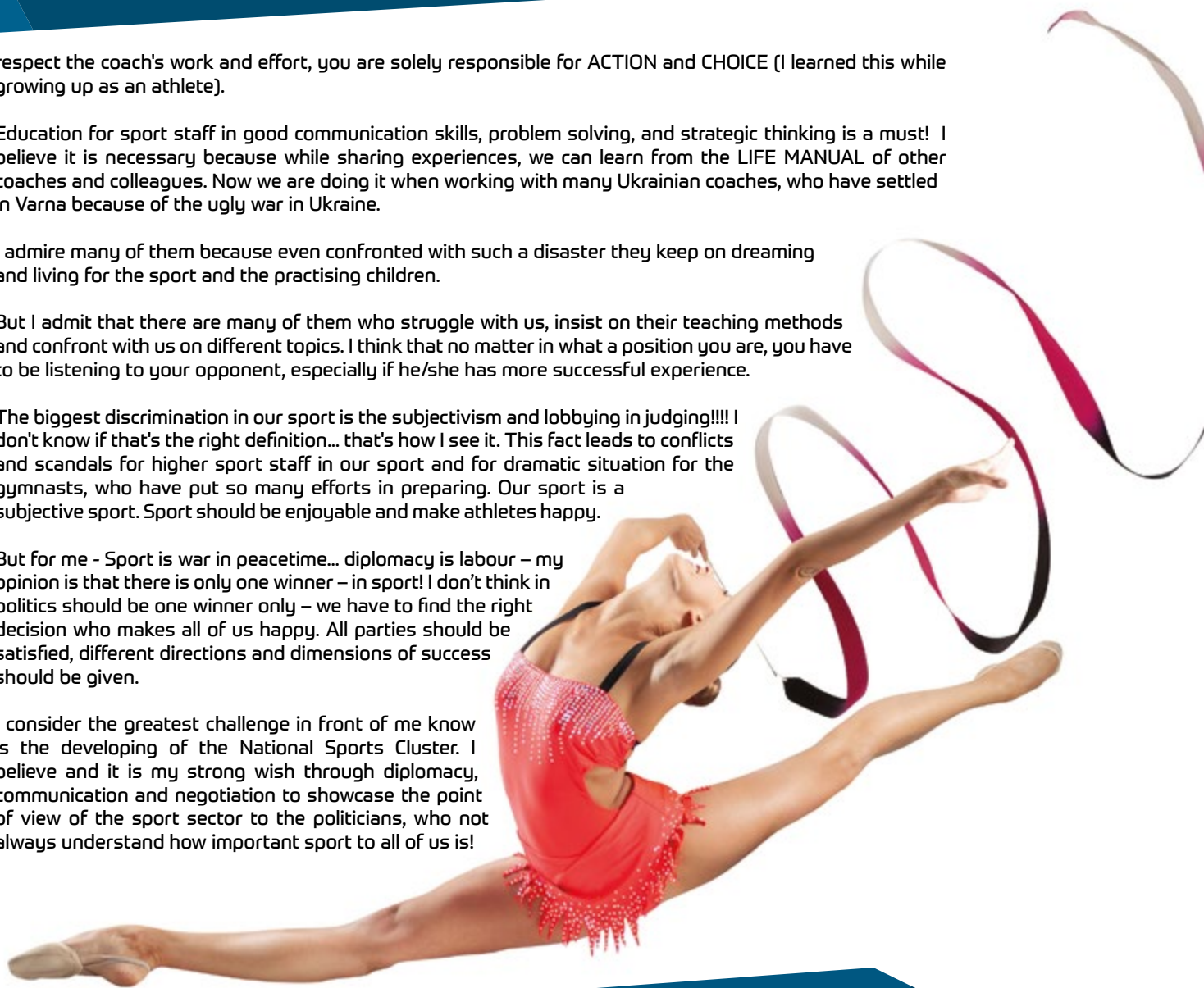
I admire many of them because even confronted with such a disaster they keep on dreaming and living for the sport and the practising children.

But I admit that there are many of them who struggle with us, insist on their teaching methods and confront with us on different topics. I think that no matter in what a position you are, you have to be listening to your opponent, especially if he/she has more successful experience.

The biggest discrimination in our sport is the subjectivism and lobbying in judging!!!! I don't know if that's the right definition... that's how I see it. This fact leads to conflicts and scandals for higher sport staff in our sport and for dramatic situation for the gymnasts, who have put so many efforts in preparing. Our sport is a subjective sport. Sport should be enjoyable and make athletes happy.

But for me - Sport is war in peacetime... diplomacy is labour – my opinion is that there is only one winner – in sport! I don't think in politics should be one winner only – we have to find the right decision who makes all of us happy. All parties should be satisfied, different directions and dimensions of success should be given.

I consider the greatest challenge in front of me know is the developing of the National Sports Cluster. I believe and it is my strong wish through diplomacy, communication and negotiation to showcase the point of view of the sport sector to the politicians, who not always understand how important sport to all of us is!



Dimitar Iliev

MUAYTHAI WORLD AND EUROPEAN CHAMPION

"LET'S TEACH CHILDREN TO BE ETHICAL"



I am Dimitar Iliev, three times world, two times European champion in Muay Thai for amateurs and professionals and a multiple national champion. I am so honoured to be part of the sport values' channel! I think such media is needed because values, not only in sport, matter today more than ever.

If I must name THREE valuable qualities the sport has taught me – they would be DISCIPLINE, PERSEVERANCE AND DESIRE TO WIN. Without discipline you can't achieve much in sport, everybody knows it. Accordingly, to become good at a sport, one needs perseverance. And the desire to win helps me, no matter what, to never give up and to seek results and victory at any cost. When I say ANY – mean it – but only for me. I never do compromises with ethics, with people feelings with fair play and sport rules.

As my sport is a combat sport, some people consider it a bit rough, yet more and more kids and young athletes are getting interested in it. It's discipline that I try to teach the kids that I train, not just in the gym but outside of the gym as well. I also teach them about helping each other, helping people in need, respect for their peers and respect for the older ones. I don't want to sound pessimistic, but I rarely see such attitude in kids. We work a lot not only with children, but also with their parents, exactly on this topic.

I am convinced that there is additional training needed to be provided to coaches on how to teach values in sports.

In my opinion there is a need to provide this kind of training to

be able to help children in the RIGHT and to be sure, that we do the right thing.

There are too many coaches nowadays in Bulgaria, some of them are active without qualification. Learning is a life long journey, you just start to walk backwards in the moment you stop learning. That is why it is important for coaches to undergo different types of training in order to be as helpful as possible to children and young athletes.

I have not only good memories and good feelings for my sport. I remember in 2009 I participated in the European Championship and lost in the final due to injury. After the championship I found out that I would only get half of my promised bonus because to get the full bonus there must be a certain number of participants in the category. In this case I had to refund all my expenses although the Ministry and state promised to cover all my expenses. This is not right; athletes should be supported by the government and unfortunately, I am not the only case.

Over the past year, Bulgaria decreases investment in sports, and I am wondering when the pattern will change. We have to learn how to invest in sport wisely and use sports as a tool to promote the country's reputation and image internationally as well as domestically. The increase in sports activity leads to positive developments in ultra-conservative countries (which Bulgaria is not) and diverts the country's

attention from the various concerns that ail it. Here I see the link between diplomacy and sport.

To encourage more young people to train, sport needs to be advertised and promoted properly. Its benefits need to be brought to light and made attractive to people. Conditions must be given so that a person has the motivation to play sport and compete, to lead a lifestyle with sport through which they can support themselves and their family.

I think one of the purposes of sport is to create bonds and friendships. I've always had an individual approach to the different persons, but with no back thoughts or preconceptions. It doesn't matter who is against or next to you, all people should have equal rights and opportunities.



Svetoslav Ivanov

"LIFE IS LONGER WHEN YOU RISK IT!"



In 1988 he defended his doctoral dissertation and received the title of Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences. He was head of the Department of Anatomy, Biomechanics and Informatics at the National Sports Academy (NSA). From 1999 to 2003 he was Rector of the NSA.

Prof. Svetoslav Ivanov has more than 100 scientific papers and has lectured as a guest lecturer in the USA, Poland, Italy, Serbia, Turkey, Greece, etc.

He holds author's certificates from the Institute of Inventions and Rationalizations for the development of video computer systems and methodologies for biomechanical analysis and modeling of motor actions.

Professor Svetoslav Ivanov is the first champion of Bulgaria in judo, he is also a champion in boxing. He holds the highest referee license of the International Judo Federation. He has been a central referee at the European, World and Olympic Games. He has been President of the Bulgarian Judo Federation, President of the Bulgarian Taekwondo Federation and Vice President of the Bulgarian Olympic Committee. He is currently the President of the Bulgarian Union for Physical Education and Sport. He is also Chairman of the Wushu (Chinese martial art) Federation. He is also called "the founder of martial arts". Currently prof. Ivanov is also professor in the National Academy for Performance and Film Art, where he teaches stage movement to students of NATFA. He is a stunt consultant and trainer. Stuntman.

"If I had to draw a parallel between stunts and politics where diplomacy rules I would say: The real stunt is one where not everything can be calculated, when you have to make decisions on the spur of the moment. Then there is risk. "The trick is to feel the measure of how much risk you can take. Otherwise, you need God to protect you."

Here are some of his insights on life and sport diplomacy:

I am already 82 years old. When I look back to my sport and teaching career I consider as my strongest characteristics (thought from sport):

a) To stand up on your feet again when you are down – mankind learns from its experience and experience comes from mistakes. Losses are the most useful, so is life.

b) Perseverance and a will to succeed – for me fast means slow but continuously. There is no a speed elevator to success – you have to use the stairs and advance slowly. Because this is the beauty of life.

c) To be proactive – Both wins and losses depend on you and your self only. In the competition you have to first compete with yourself and win over yourself. Because this is the beauty of life.

To what values I am teaching the young people I am working with, my students?

1. To be good people, wide hearted, to go to school and learn a lot.

2. The school teaches children. Sport EDUCATES them.

Here are some other things I teach my students: what you learn in math, history, physics, etc. may be forgotten, but the character you build will carry with you for life.

3. Integrity - spirit and body in one. What you say should match what you do.

4. The "adversary" in sports is your best friend because he helps you improve.

5. By force you can take, but by force you cannot give. This is fully relevant to politics and diplomacy as well. Therefore, everything depends on the motivation and desire of the coach. Methods and means – different and many, but the most effective are the individual approach, critical thinking, and creativity of each coach.

A teacher can also learn from his students.

I am a man who loves his profession, so I am a lifelong learner.

The greatest discrimination occurs when a coach's primary and almost sole goal is to achieve the highest possible athletic results with his team. Is that not relevant to politics and diplomacy again?

All children who do not have the necessary excellence and achievement are discriminated against.



CHALLENGE

The platform sequence called CHALLENGE offers a quiz for witty ones. For illustration, here are some questions, which can be found under this heading. Do you know the right answers?

The European week of Sport is...

- ☐ for everyone regardless of age, social background or fitness level
- ☐ exclusively for children and youth

The Healthylifestyle4All is the European Commission's two-year campaign that aims

- ☐ to link sport and active lifestyles with health, food and other policies
- ☐ to support fight against match fixing in sports

The #BeActive awards were created to support projects and individuals that are

- ☐ dedicated to promoting sport and physical activity across Europe
- ☐ supporting sport activities exclusively in schools

The #BeActive workplace Award celebrates exemplary activities in the workplace

- ☐ that encourage employees to #BeActive
- ☐ that support Europeans to eat healthy food

The EU Sport Forum is the main platform for structured dialogue

- ☐ between the European Commission and sport stakeholders
- ☐ exclusively for the Council of Europe and schools

The most important thing in sport is not winning but taking part, as an essential thing in life is not always conquering but fighting well." This idea was expressed by

- ☐ Baron Pierre de Coubertin
- ☐ Juan Antonio Samaranch

YOUR VOICE

Through the platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL, the general public can choose what values/virtues they consider the most important for sports and select up to five of the proposed options or add their own opinion. Part of the formal introduction of the platform was presentation of the project flyers to representatives of the media as well as the general public. Both, the platform and the flyers offered an amazing possibility to express **YOUR VOICE on sport values**.

Based on the opinion of 3589 active responders who entered the project activities, here is the feedback on sport values received through the project flyers and the platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL by 31 August 2023.



1. **Team spirit**
selected by 1589 responders
2. **Friendship selected**
by 1481 responders
3. **Fair play**
selected by 1259 responders
4. **Being the best that you can be / pursuit of excellence**
selected by 1025 responders
5. **Joy in endeavour in physical activity**
selected by 1003 responders
6. **Respect for persons**
selected by 987 responders
7. **Voluntary commitments**
selected by 795 responders
8. **Joy found in effort**
selected by 755 responders
9. **Satisfaction derived from hard work**
selected by 739 responders
10. **Discipline**
selected by 744 responders
11. **Equality selected**
by 635 responders

12. **Rationality and understanding**
selected by 541 responders
13. **Multiculturalism / international understanding**
selected by 506 responders
14. **Tolerance and mutual understanding**
selected by 468 responders
15. **Respect for diversity**
selected by 451 responders
16. **Fairness**
selected by 437 responders
17. **Justice**
selected by 420 responders
18. **Integrity**
selected by 411 responders
19. **Dedication**
selected by 409 responders
20. **Autonomy**
selected by 399 responders



TEST YOURSELF

Are you curious about your level of fitness?

Feel free to compare yourself with the best ones, who have already entered our biathlon competition. Submit your sports results in running and swimming, select your age category and confirm school, sport club or other organisation via the platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL through the sequence TEST YOURSELF. Good luck and fingers crossed!



**TEST YOURSELF
& RESULTS**

FACTS

The platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL offers twelve European policies in the field of sport, which were basis for the project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy. They address a topic of social Inclusion through sport values and reflect priorities of the Call for proposals 2021 – EAC/A01/2021, Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions.

The platform is designed in light of small-scale partnerships requirements to widen access to the programme to small-scale actors and individuals who are hard to reach in the fields of sport. It contributes to the creation and development of transnational networks and to fostering synergies with, and between, local, regional, national and international policies. Contribution of the platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL to the priorities of the call in the field of sport is in increased awareness of the role of sport in promoting social inclusion,

equal opportunities and a healthy lifestyle. It provides a deliberate, evidenced based and practical mechanism in integrating sport with social inclusion.

The European policies in the field of sport, which the platform offers to the general public are following:

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled “Developing the European Dimension in Sport”, 2011
- Council Recommendation on Promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors, 2013
- Council Conclusions on maximising the role of grassroots sport in developing transversal skills, especially among young people, 2015

- Council conclusions on sport diplomacy, 2016
- Council conclusions on sport as a platform for social inclusion, 2017
- Tartu Call for Healthy Lifestyles, 2017
- Council Conclusions on promoting the common values of the EU through sport, 2018
- Council Conclusions on combating corruption in sport, 2019
- Council Conclusions on the impact of the COVID- 19 pandemic and the recovery of the sport sector, 2020
- New European Bauhaus initiative, 2020
- EU Work Plan for sport (2021 - 2024)
- EU programme Erasmus+ (2021 – 2027)

Platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL strives achieving effective educative and social outcomes. Its inter-sectoral contribution to the priorities of the call is in better understanding of practices, policies and systems in education, training, youth and sport across countries in line with approved EU strategic documents.

All the above-mentioned European policies in the field of sport are accessible through the platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL and three of them can be accessed directly in this booklet through QR codes.

- Council Conclusions on promoting the common values of the EU through sport, 2018



- Council conclusions on sport as a platform for social inclusion, 2017



- EU programme Erasmus+ (2021 – 2027)



CHAPTER 3

EU Policies in Sport

03





A project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy highlighted a topic of social inclusion through sport values. Its strategic aim was to promote a recent work of the EU in sport sector. A main objective was to create an effective tool for raising awareness and dissemination of information in three interconnected areas: sport values, social inclusion and sport diplomacy.

Political background recalls EU sport policies outlined by the EU Work Plan for sport (2021 - 2024), White Paper for Sport and Communication on Developing the European Dimension in Sport. It focused on priorities of the EU programme Erasmus+ (2021 – 2027) in the field of sport. Proposed consortium

aimed to be notably a follow up of EU sport agenda of Bulgaria and Slovakia, which was developed during their presidencies of the Council of the EU.

It stemmed from the Council conclusions on promoting the common values of the EU through sport approved by the Bulgarian Presidency and Council conclusions on sport diplomacy developed by the Slovak Presidency. The project ambition was to develop these documents in a practical way and make them easy recognised for general public. The practical dimension was notably linked to the European Week of Sport.

In light of above-mentioned and with a purpose to raise awareness of the general public in the field, this chapter provides the full version of the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy, which were adopted during the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2016.

Council conclusions on sport diplomacy

(2016/C 467/04)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. RECALLING the political background to this issue as set out in the Annex;
2. ACKNOWLEDGING that sport is a possible tool in supporting intercultural, economic and political cooperation and understanding between nations and cultures, and that its potential can be part of extending and strengthening contacts between the EU and third countries;
3. RECOGNISING THAT:
 - sport diplomacy can be understood as the use of sport as a means to influence diplomatic, intercultural, social, economic and political relations. It is an inseparable part of public diplomacy, which is a long-term process of communication with the public and organisations with aims such as heightening the attractiveness and image of a country, region or city and influence decision-making on policy areas. It helps to achieve foreign policy goals in a way that is visible and comprehensible for the general public,
 - sport diplomacy at EU level encompasses all relevant tools from the area of sport which are used by the EU and its Member States in order to cooperate with non-EU countries and international governmental organisations. These should focus on policy cooperation and support to policies, projects and programmes. Emphasis should be made on the role of sport in the Union's external relations, including the promotion of European values
4. ACKNOWLEDGING that sport diplomacy can be realised in close cooperation with the sports movement whilst respecting its autonomy. It includes areas such as promotion of positive sporting values and it contributes to the development of political, social and economic cooperation and relations;
5. ACKNOWLEDGING the values that sport can promote such as fair play, equality, respect for diversity, integrity, discipline, excellence, friendship, tolerance and mutual understanding which can bring different people and countries together. Sport diplomacy uses the universality of sport as a way to transcend linguistic, sociocultural and religious differences and thereby has strong potential to promote multi-cultural dialogue and contribute to development and peace;
6. EMPHASISING that sports people and sporting events can contribute significantly to the development of sport diplomacy. They can bestow a positive image among foreign publics and organisations and shape perception in order to support reaching broader foreign policy goals. In this context sport can contribute to strengthening and complementing national and EU diplomacy;
7. CONSIDERING that sport can be a platform for building people-to-people relations, for example by supporting exchange programmes for athletes, young people, coaches and experts, or by organising international sport competitions both at elite and grassroots level;

WITH DUE REGARD TO THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCES AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO:

8. raise awareness within Member States and in the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) (including EU Delegations) on the potential of sport to contribute to public diplomacy;
9. encourage cooperation between public authorities and the sports movement in order to use the potential of sport in foreign policy;
10. enhance relations with relevant sport organisations and international governmental organisations as well as other stakeholders through the EU structured dialogue on sport in the framework of the Council meetings and the EU Sport Forum and other structures;
11. better use the potential of sport, including through education and the involvement of well-known athletes as messengers, to promote positive sporting and European values;
12. promote major sport events as an important aspect of EU intercultural, social and economic diplomacy in cases where they can contribute to the EU's economic objectives of growth, employment and competitiveness;
13. ensure that sport diplomacy remains on the EU political agenda;



14. examine the possibility of using the network of European Week of Sport Ambassadors to promote positive sporting values and European values with the aim of increasing the attractiveness, recognition and visibility of the EU in third countries;
15. support and participate in activities, such as conferences, seminars, peer-learning activities or informal ad hoc groups, which could contribute to the preparation of the strategic approach to sport diplomacy in the framework of the EU;

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

16. ensure that sport, and the contribution it can make to achieving the EU's external relations ambitions, is taken into account in agreements with third countries, including within the framework of Accession, Association, Cooperation and European Neighbourhood agreements;
17. collect and disseminate empirical evidence of the effectiveness of sport as a means of promoting values, intercultural dialogue, development and peace;
18. organise a high-level conference to discuss the possibilities of cooperation in the field of sport diplomacy, including on a possible platform or network for enhancing knowledge in the field of sport diplomacy, in particular through collecting and exchanging best practices on the role of sport diplomacy in society; and examine the possibility of preparing educational guidance or modules for public authorities and relevant stakeholders involved in sport diplomacy issues;
19. examine the possibility of funding sport-related activities from EU external relations funding programmes and consider supporting projects related to sports diplomacy with the participation of third countries through EU funding programmes in the area of EU external relations as well as through the Erasmus+ programme;
20. consider engaging third countries in the European Week of Sport.

ANNEX

In adopting these conclusions, the Council recalls in particular the following:

- Article 165(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) the Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of education and sport, in particular the Council of Europe,
- the Commission White Paper on Sport (2007) which underlines that the societal role of sport also has the potential to strengthen the Union's external relations ⁽¹⁾,
- the Commission Communication 'Developing the European Dimension of Sport', which stressed that the cooperation with European third countries, in particular candidate countries and potential candidates, and the Council of Europe should be priorities ⁽²⁾,
- the report of the High Level Group on Sport Diplomacy established by the European Commission (2016)

⁽¹⁾ Doc. 11811/07 + ADD 1-4.

⁽²⁾ Doc. 5597/11 + ADD 1-3.

CHAPTER 4

Chair's Perspective

ELENA MALÍKOVÁ

04





Story

“TEASER

“In my opinion, the benefits associated with sport diplomacy concern easier achievement of foreign policy goals in a way that is visible and comprehensible for the general public. I reckon that this can be done through the universality of sport as a way to transcend linguistic, sociocultural and religious differences.

Sports people can bestow a positive image among foreign publics and organisations. They have a great potential to shape perception in order to support reaching broader foreign policy goals. I deeply believe that in this context sport can significantly contribute to strengthening economic relations and is often used to initial diplomatic relations between countries.

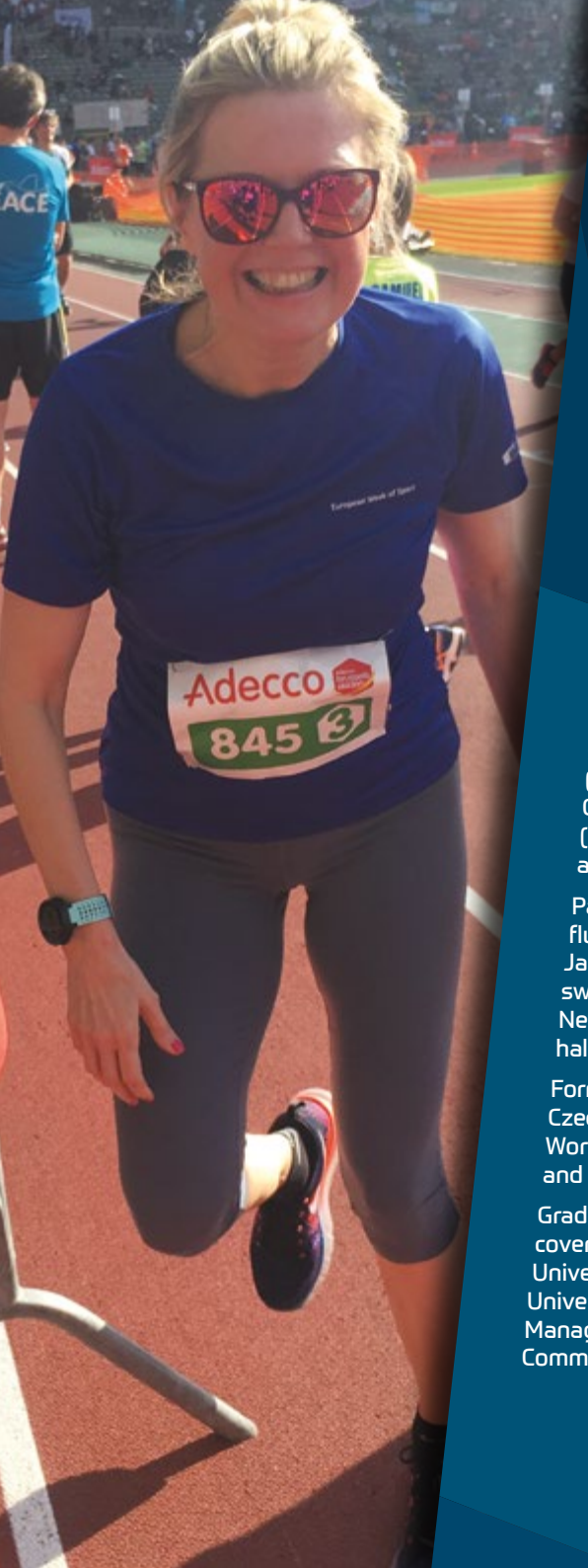
Promotion of EU values through sport beyond EU was part of our work when preparing the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy. In my view, that is exactly the most significant reason why the EU should use sport in its external relations with third countries.

I personally considered for the most vital a fact that sport diplomacy might promote in third countries positive sporting values and European values with the aim of increasing the attractiveness, recognition and visibility of the EU. Therefore, I was extremely happy that all the Member States of the European Union agreed with this precise texting during preparations of the final version of the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy.

Obviously, there are also plenty of other useful recommendations, how EU can use sport potential in its external relations with third countries, which can be found in that document.”

Elena Malíková





profile

Elena Malíková works at the Government Office of the Slovak Republic and has extensive managerial experience in civil service. Former Director of Department of Education and International Affairs at the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (2007-2017), Chair of the Council Working Party on Sport under the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union (2016), Head of Department of Education at the National Sport Centre in Slovakia (2004 - 2007).

Her non-governmental work comprises both professional and voluntary activities, notably within the International Modern Pentathlon Union - she was appointed member of the Pierre de Coubertin Committee and elected member of the Business Affairs Committee (2004-2008), Secretary General of the Slovak Modern Pentathlon Association (1993-2003), Chair of the Slovak Olympic Academy (as of 2021).

She was awarded by Trophy of the International Olympic Committee on Olympic sport and literature (2001), Editor-in-chief of the National Sport Centre Revue (2004-2007), Jury member of the EU #BeInclusive Award of the European Commission (2017) and the EU #BeActive Award of the European Commission (2022), author of publications and press articles on sport, social inclusion, values and Olympic education.

Passionate for intercultural dialogue, sport diplomacy and foreign languages, fluent in English, French, Russian, with sound knowledge of Polish, German and Japanese. Interested in sport and health enhancing physical activities, notably swimming and running, inclusive marathons. Proud finisher of three marathons in New York, USA (2005), Treviso, Italy (2006) and Bratislava, Slovakia (2007) and a half marathon in Cancale Saint Malo, France (2005).

Former high-level modern pentathlete, member of the national team of Czechoslovakia, later of Slovakia (1988-2000), a multiple national champion and World Cup finalist, participated in numerous foreign camps, including an educational and training camp at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas (1990).

Graduated at the University of Economics in Bratislava, educational background covers post-gradual French language specialisation “Le Français du sport” at the Université Michel de Montaigne in Bordeaux and studies in sports management at the University of Poitiers, France focusing on Executive Masters in Sports Organisation Management - MEMOS programme guaranteed by the International Olympic Committee.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black leather jacket over a white puffer jacket, red gloves, and sunglasses on her head, is sitting on a rocky mountain peak. She is smiling at the camera. In the background, there is a steep mountain slope with a waterfall and some snow patches under a cloudy sky.

“Sport? There is no better way how to start a day. Every day! Lovin’ Sunday running mornings. Fresh air, friends, fun! That’s it and we are all ready for the new working week.

Moreover, I feel great after swimming - my old new passion! I rediscovered a magic of early mornings with it. I am always delighted when I jump to the swimming pool. I love the feeling after swimming, with fluffy hair and vibrations in each and every cell of my body.

What sport taught me? Dream strong, believe in hard work and never give up. Systematic approach and patience are a way forward. Success and failure go hand in hand. Both push you further! Both are important in your life.

Finally, sport has a strong potential to promote multi-cultural dialogue and contribute to development and peace. In my view, there are three essential elements, through which sport diplomacy might be promoted - sports values, sports people and sporting events. All this and much more can be found in this sport values channel.”

Elena Maříková

INTERVIEW

What does sport mean to you?

Since early childhood, I was completely enchanted by the sports world, and it inspires me until now. It is not a secret that sport intertwined my whole life. Initial sporting background comes back to 1978 when I started with swimming. Later on, I was involved in modern pentathlon, where I competed for over a decade on a worldwide level. I went through several other sports as well, including marathon runs and jujitsu workouts, to mention just a few of them. Nowadays I am again a passionate swimmer, which gives me, alongside with running, the greatest relax, satisfaction and joy. It was mainly the case during those long pandemic times.

What about your sport professional life?

My professional sports portfolio unfolds in two dimensions – governmental and non-governmental. Currently I work for the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, and I am in charge of various governmental projects, which are often beyond the sport itself. Nevertheless, my previous experience in governmental sector was more sport oriented and included

a position of Director of Department of Sport Education and International Affairs at the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport. Thanks to this role, I was chairing the Working Party on Sport during the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

And what about your non-governmental engagement? Have you been involved in sport sector for a long time?

Indeed! My former professional engagement in non-governmental sector played a significant part in my sports life. Notably a long-term direct involvement in the work of the International Modern Pentathlon Union thanks to my position of Secretary General within the Slovak Modern Pentathlon Association. Especially this role alongside with my position as Head of Department of Education within the National Sport Centre enlarged my horizons in sports area and shaped my perception of sport from a worldwide perspective.



What are your current sports challenges?

In 2021 when being appointed as Chair of the Slovak Olympic Academy, I was delighted about a possibility to continue my life-long sporting mission in an area of Olympic education. Naturally, our projects are oriented to sport values, diminishing a certain gap between governmental and non-governmental sectors, or geopolitical dimension of sport, which is so obvious during the current war conflict in Ukraine. Recent activities of the Slovak Olympic Academy concerned mainly a strategical dimension of our work; we have developed a new strategic plan with a framework until 2030. In light of this, our up-to-date challenges lie in finding a way, how to put new strategies into reality in these unprecedented times.

What is your view on a position of sport within the agenda of the European Union?

I had a chance to represent the Slovak Republic in official governmental sport meetings as of 2007 and lived in complexity an evolution of sport policies throughout ten years. Considering that fact, I found out that sport cooperation was always present in the European Union, but only with the Lisbon Treaty it started to be more formalised and respected. With my foreign colleagues, we could witness before the Lisbon Treaty that informal sport meetings, including those of sport ministers, were rather organised

on a consultative basis, often as friendly events without a coordinated impact on the national policies.

What was a milestone in the European policies regarding sport?

In 2009 with the Lisbon Treaty, especially thanks to its articles 6 and 165, governmental sport meetings completely changed their character. However, it was not coming for granted, but there was a lot of thorough work behind that change. Mentioning sport in the Lisbon Treaty caused, that many structural and procedural changes happened. One of them was that the formal Working Party on Sport was formed within the structures of the Council of the European Union. This working group prepared documents for formal Councils of the European Union. Sport ministers from each Member State of the European Union gather twice a year in Brussels within the formal Councils and discuss partial sport policies in light of the European perspective, while always considering an added value of the European Union. Another huge change in sport policies, in my opinion, came when a word “sport” was included in the official name of the Council, which thus became EYCS Council. It structurally dealt with education, youth, culture, and sport issues. Thanks to this initiative, the European Union position regarding sports in general received a completely new dimension and I was delighted that I could witness these historical changes.

Elena

00:22:45

V DISCIPLÍNE: MINIMARATON - 4.2 km



BRATISLAVA
MARATHON





SPORT DIPLOMACY

from chair's perspective

What is your opinion on sport diplomacy in a framework of the European Union?

Sport diplomacy is a topic close to my heart and I was pleased that we could develop a new dimension of it during the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Let me start with the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy, which were adopted by the Council at its 3502nd meeting held on 21-22 November 2016 during the Slovak Presidency. The Council of the European Union recognised by this document that sport diplomacy can be understood as the use of sport as a means to influence diplomatic, intercultural, social, economic and political relations. Sport diplomacy is an inseparable part of public diplomacy, which is a long-term process of communication with the public and organisations, with aims such as heightening the attractiveness and image of a country, region or city and influence decision-making on policy areas.

In light of this, the benefits associated with sport diplomacy are associated, in my view, with easier achievement of foreign policy goals in a way that is visible and comprehensible for the general public. I reckon that this can be done through the universality of sport as a way to transcend linguistic, sociocultural and religious differences and thereby has strong potential to promote multi-cultural dialogue and contribute to development and peace. Moreover, in my

opinion, there are three essential aspects, through which sport diplomacy might be promoted – sports values, sports people and sporting events.

Do you think that sport diplomacy is significant for governmental sector?

Absolutely. Sport diplomacy is becoming a popular soft power instrument for countries, and I would point out that it is especially sports people who can bestow a positive image among foreign publics and organisations. They have a great potential to shape perception in order to support reaching broader foreign policy goals. I deeply believe that in this context sport can significantly contribute to strengthening economic relations and is often used to initial diplomatic relations between countries.

Was sport diplomacy an appealing topic when you chaired the Council Working Party on Sport during the Slovak Presidency?

Not really. In 2016 a notion of sport diplomacy was not common and much developed within the European Union. I remember plenty of precarious situations when we started preparations for the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union and opened a topic

of sport diplomacy. Relevant stakeholders were not so eager to develop this subject and it was not easy to persuade our foreign counterparts neither the European Union institutions to fully support our efforts. While sport diplomacy was appealing to some Member States of the European Union, not all of them were in favour to put sport diplomacy as a new topic on the table. It was mainly due to a political undertone concerned. We all knew that reaching a consensus on a common text of the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy would be a hard work with an uncertain end, but we took a risk and went through all the obstacles. I must admit that we were lucky enough to get a support of many people who were passionate to move the things in this new area forward. This helped us a lot in our challenging work.

What about a position of the European Commission regarding sport diplomacy?

The European Commission played, from my perspective, a strategic role in development of sport diplomacy in a framework of the European Union. Notably Commissionaire Tibor Navracsics, whose portfolio included sport, moved the processes forward. His cabinet gave a green light to sport diplomacy, and I reckon that this was the most significant part of achievements in the field. Hereby I would like to endorse an effective work in this area of the EAC Sport Unit, which was that time headed by Yves Le Lostecque. Personal commitments of his whole team were significant in reaching a consensus on this topic. Finally, I assume that a fact that the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy were finally adopted in 2016 was a very satisfying feeling for everybody involved in this work.

What was a role of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union in development of a topic on sport diplomacy?

In general, a support by the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union is immense for every chair of any Working Party during a respective presidency. Naturally, it was the case also for the Slovak Presidency. When I chaired a Working Party on Sport, I was grateful for a contribution concerning a topic of sport diplomacy to Jaroslav Pietras, Director General of Department, where sport belongs in this institution. His team was very supportive with this new topic. In this respect, we had, together with the representatives the European Commission and the Member States, various formal, but also informal meetings. Our common activities included sporting ones, where we could discuss all needed aspects. Moreover, common morning physical activities, such as running workouts before the formal meetings had also a great power. They created a specific ambience among plenty of competent people involved in preparation of official documents and thanks to them it was easier to discuss this topic.

What about the national perspective in terms of preparation of the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy?

Part of our success in a field of sport diplomacy was an effective internal coordination of the processes within the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. In addition, we capitalised on a constructive cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, in particular with the

Department
of Public Diplomacy.

A close collaboration with the Permanent
Representation of the Slovak Republic to the European Union
in Brussels was one of the success pillars as well.

Finally, I would like to mention an encouragement of our
colleagues from the Netherlands and Malta, with whom
we created the presidency trio. Their huge support was
very important for finalisation of the texting of the Council
conclusions on sport diplomacy. I still believe that, in a certain
way, we were simply lucky that the things happened as
they happened. Considering that we were able to reach a
consensus, while handling politically sensitive issues, such as
doping cases of Russian athletes and possible boycott of the
Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, I perceive our outcome as a
small miracle.

How did you like your work as Chair of the Working Party on Sport within the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union?

It was an extremely challenging work, and I am sincerely glad
that we reached a consensus of all the Member States of the
European Union on proposed Council conclusions on sport
diplomacy. In my view, this document was a valuable input
towards a development of the European Union sports policy
as such. Council conclusions on sport diplomacy presented
the first common opinion on sport diplomacy of the Member
States of the European Union, on which other initiatives
could capitalise later on. In light of this, I consider my work
within the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European
Union as my professional highlight so far. I was delighted to
be in a centre of all discussions on sport diplomacy when
chairing the Working Party on Sport and I am grateful for
this unique professional experience. Finally, I appreciated
a lot a work of all counterparts involved during the Slovak
Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

What do you think about a use of sport in external relations of the European Union with third countries?

Promotion of the European Union values through sport
beyond the European Union was part of our work when
preparing the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy. In my
opinion, that is exactly the most significant reason why the
European Union should use sport in its external relations
with third countries.

I
personally
considered for the most vital a
fact that sport diplomacy might promote in third
countries positive sporting values and European values with
the aim of increasing the attractiveness, recognition and
visibility of the European Union. Therefore, I was extremely
happy that all the Member States of the European Union
agreed with this precise texting during preparations of the
final version of the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy.

Obviously, there are also plenty of other useful
recommendations, how the European Union can use sport
potential in its external relations with third countries, which
can be found in that document. Perhaps a challenge for the
next steps to be developed in this area.

Is there currently the European Union strategy in place regarding sport diplomacy?

A good question, however, that is probably better to ask
governmental stakeholders who are currently involved in the
European Union sport issues. I am not aware of any common
European Union strategy in place regarding sport diplomacy,
but I might be mistaken due to insufficient up-to-date
contacts and information in this field.

Needless to say, that I am delighted that sport diplomacy
remained on the European Union political agenda as it was
indicated in the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy. It
was not easy to keep a texting about continuity of sport
diplomacy actions for the further period as there are plenty
of other priorities the Member States of the European Union
were focusing on. I consider this as a certain barrier in a
further development of sport diplomacy within the European
Union.

How was a topic of sport diplomacy developed after the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union?

I was happy to learn that this topic is still very alive and that
many activities were done in this area. For instance, our
colleagues from Portugal recently moved forward a topic of
sport diplomacy during the events within the Portuguese
Presidency. I am just curious about a further development of

this topic in accordance with the European Union Work Plan for sport (2021 - 2024) as it is indicated there.

Would it be possible to compare the European Union strategy on sport diplomacy to the one of a national level?

In my view, a comparison of the European Union strategy on sport diplomacy to the one of a national level is needed to be considered from different angles. The European Union strategy might be based on similar principles to national strategies on sport diplomacy. However, the European Union strategy must take into account completely different context, the one of the European Union. Each Member State focuses on different aspects of foreign policy when developing sport diplomacy and thus, in my opinion, it would have been difficult to standardise the same processes for all the Member States of the European Union in the field of sport diplomacy.

This is, from my perspective, another barrier in a further development of sport diplomacy within the European Union. I would recall here notably the article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty and in particular part dealing with adoption of incentive measures, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States. It is also important to point out that sport is specific, diverse and autonomous and that these three aspects are supposed to be always taken into account in a further development of sport diplomacy within the European Union.

What about sport diplomacy development in Slovakia?

Regarding sport diplomacy in Slovakia, the whole nation was amazed by a success of our skeet shooter Danka Barteková in becoming an IOC member during the Winter Olympic Games in Beijing 2022. This is something what I personally consider as a great achievement in the field of sport diplomacy on the national level. Needless to say, that Danka Barteková always closely cooperated with governmental

entities, notably with the Public Diplomacy Department at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. She is an example of sports personality that attracts attention and is able to present Slovakia in the best light beyond the country's borders. Actually, it was the reason why we invited her to the Council meeting in Brussels during the Slovak Presidency, where she could introduce to the European Union sport ministers her personal approach on relevant achievements. This was a great example and one of many ways of practical implementation of the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy into sports movement itself.



What should be the principles of the common European Union strategy on sport diplomacy?

I believe that key aspects of a common European Union strategy regarding sport diplomacy might concern besides worldwide known sport personalities also major sporting events organised within the European Union Member States. Inherent part of the common European Union strategy should naturally focus on the third countries with the aim of increasing the attractiveness, recognition and visibility of the European Union, as it is indicated in the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy. This could be achieved through promotion of positive sporting values alongside with European values. Another approach might be in collecting national strategies on sport diplomacy of the Member States and presenting a compendium of them as a good practice example.

What about cooperation with third countries in terms of sport diplomacy?

The article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty about fostering cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of education and sport, in particular the Council of Europe is, in my opinion, worth considering when talking about a common European Union strategy regarding sport diplomacy. In light of mentioned



examples, I reckon that there are plenty of possibilities how to develop sport diplomacy on the European Union level. However, as I stated before, there is a need of coordinated activities and support of the most significant stakeholders as a basic stipulation to achieve valuable outcomes in this area.

Do you think that the European Union should be more active in organising common major sport events, such as the Games of the European Union?

My personal view is that it is not up to the European Union to initiate or organise major sport events. I deeply believe in autonomy of sports, and it goes hand in hand with a right of the national sport federations and respectively international sport federations to determine how sports will be developed and which events will be organised under their auspices. If non-governmental sports entities consider the Games of the European Union as a good idea in pursuing its goals, I assume that this would be of a huge help of further development of sport diplomacy within the European Union. However, in my view, that is not up to politicians to impose their opinion to sports movement on organising such events.

Furthermore, it is necessary to distinguish between grassroots sports, including health enhancing physical activities and high-level sport on competitive international level. In my opinion, autonomy of sport is vital for the further sport progress, and it is up to sport entities to determine what is in benefit of sports development as such. Surely, there is no doubts that they must fully comply in their efforts and activities with legal environment of respective

Member States of the European Union and follow respective regulations.

What about a future of sport diplomacy within the European Union?

Sport diplomacy is still rather a new topic within the European Union policies, and I believe that it must always be considered in its complexity. In 2016, during the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union, we started with limited sources on this topic and, hopefully, we put an essential milestone in the field.

I am happy that currently there are several activities dealing with sport diplomacy, which are supported by the European Commission. They serve notably as a practical follow up of the European Union sport agenda within the non-governmental sport sector. Actually, one of them is this Erasmus+ project called “EU Sport Values Diplomacy” and I am proud to be involved in it.

It allows us further development of this topic and gives a unique chance to work with people, who are very passionate about sport diplomacy. I am grateful for this opportunity as it provides a great space to see and live sport diplomacy evolution. I hope that our mutual efforts will contribute to further development of sport diplomacy within the European Union.

I would like to thank you very much for your time and wish you all the best in fulfilling your new challenges and daring ideas.

CHAPTER 5

Ambassador of Good

ANATOLY ILIEV

05





Anatoly Iliev

- Anatoly Iliev is a municipal councilor of the Sofia Metropolitan Municipality since 2013.
- He graduated in 1988 from the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski" with a degree in Sports Management. In 1992 he acquired the qualification "Sports Manager" at the Centre for Postgraduate Studies at the Higher Institute for Sports Management.
- Deputy Chairman of the Standing Committee for Children, Youth and Sport.
- General Secretary of the Sofia European Sports Capital 2018 Foundation, which stands behind the sports life of all citizens of the Bulgarian capital.
- President of the Bulgarian Sports Federation for Children and Youth at Risk.



Mr, Iliev, you are a largely recognized person as a sport manager and renown sport expert in Bulgaria. Which is the most important award you have received? Which of them is closest to your heart?

The Bulgarian Sports Federation for Children and Youth at Risk (BSFYFC) was awarded the prestigious Ambassador of Good Award during the annual ceremony organized by the State Agency for Child Protection in February this year. Then, the Bulgarian sports icon Stefka Kostadinova, President of the Bulgarian Olympic Committee and unbeatable world champion and record holder in high jump (209 cm) personally presented the award to me, as a chairman of the Federation, founded 20 years ago. She said: "It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to be here, among people with such huge hearts, caring for our wealth and future - children. I bow to you, Mr Iliev, you are a very shining example to all".

Why is this award so precious?

I have put long years of efforts to create a model for engaging children in sport, for their integration and socialisation. Some of these youngsters have already won state titles, European, world and Olympic successes follow. The Federation provides children with new opportunities to show their talent and desire for sport. I would like to thank the BOC, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the State Agency for Child Protection for supporting and being with us in this important cause. We follow the development of children at risk, we help the most talented to realize themselves, we already have success at European and world level. These young people deserve more, much more. Annually, more than 2000 children take part in the various initiatives of the Federation. We have also provided special scholarships for the most talented. The Bulgarian Sports Federation for Children and Youth at Risk was established in 2003



and has been actively supporting and promoting sports activities of children from various social institutions in Bulgaria for 20 years. The "Ambassador of Good" award is an acknowledgment for these 20 years long efforts. I treasure it most.

We know that you stand behind the new award of Sofia – World Capital of sport 2024? Why is so important for Sofia to be a World Capital? It has been already a European Capital of Sport for 2018?

Sofia conducted one of the most successful campaigns as "European Capital of Sport", which was highly appreciated by all European countries. As an expression of this appreciation ACES Europe unprecedentedly announced Sofia as the permanent winner of this title. With its numerous sporting events, the Foundation has drawn many other Bulgarian cities into the large family of designated Cities of Sport. Active sports are among the most important activities of

modern people, they provide them with an opportunity to improve lifestyles and to overcome the consequences of the global pandemic. The title "World Capital of Sport" is particularly prestigious and gives the host city a new image and perspective. Sofia deserves to be nominated because of its excellence in sport and we would welcome the city's candidature for the World Capital of Sport in 2024," say ACES EUROPE leaders.

The designation of Sofia as World Capital of Sport is a natural continuation and upgrade of all the innovations and good practices created and developed during the European Capital of Sport initiative, and this title is an incentive for their continuation. Mass sport and physical activity have been proven to be the most effective means of restoring a normal way of life after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Experts point out that it is sporting activities that are a powerful anti-shock to overcome the effects of social isolation that forced





humanity to stay indoors for months during pandemic. I am very proud that I have contributed to the receiving of this award.

What has the state been indebted to sport for in recent years?

National sports facilities are really in a dire state. The lack of normative legislation, as well as the lack of specificity, is a serious problem. It has been stagnant for 10 years, thanks to different interests, different people. It is high time that the situation was cleaned up, that things were put on the same plane. For the last time, it is necessary to decide and say which will be the objects serving high sportsmanship, which objects will be given to the clubs so that they, in turn, can develop their sports activities. What will remain for the general public, for amateurs, for children in their free time? In Bulgaria, only the Sofia municipality has clear rules for using at reasonable prices (or for free) public sport facilities.

The classification of sports facilities must

be done as soon as possible. I stress that this is a legal framework that the specialists must discuss and shape. All of this involves money, which means that there must be a fixed subsidy for sports facilities in the state budget, and there must also be a municipal subsidy. Since 2008, the municipal infrastructure has been included in the European projects, and the local sports facilities are there. That is why projects must be drawn up and applied for. Naturally, the state should also support municipal budgets with earmarked allocations for sports infrastructure. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Science are involved and are helping to develop a targeted policy towards the facilities. Giving away the facilities serving the clubs is now imperative, they have been waiting for 10 years to get their bases. And here a new legal framework is needed. Some of the clubs have invested not a little money in improvements and reconstruction. And the ownership situation is unclear.

CHAPTER 6

Inspiration from a Concert Hall

JORDANA PALOVIČOVÁ

06







"I have been involved more actively in the world of sport since working with Ms Elena Malíková, the Chair of the Slovak Olympic Academy, participating in several excellent initiatives, including Erasmus+ transnational projects called "Coubertin Academy – Social Inclusion through Sport Values" or "Run – Swim – Learn! In the spirit of Coubertin". We have met as students at the 1st Language School in Bratislava studying English and immediately hit it off. Although coming from seemingly different worlds we have realised there are so many astonishing similarities.

Last year I had the rare privilege to represent the Slovak Olympic Academy at the 15th International Session for National Olympic Academies and National Olympic Committees' Delegates in Olympia in Greece. A glimpse at the stairs leading to the Pierre de Coubertin monument in Olympia sums up several valuable qualities: joy of effort, solidarity, peace, fair play, respect, friendship, excellence. We can apply them not only in the world of sport but also in the world of culture and most importantly in everyday life.

In my opinion, years spent at the academy are one of the most formative years. I work with students, fragile musicians' souls from the age of 18. To follow their transition between their 1st and last study year can be a really beautiful journey both artistically and personally. Not everyone will necessarily become an internationally acclaimed virtuoso, but everyone can become an enthusiastic, sensitive, cultivated, well-educated and well-behaved human being. I would quote famous pianist Ferruccio Busoni: "Being a great artist primarily includes intelligence, culture, comprehensive education in music and literature and in the matter of human existence," stressing the matter of human existence. And how to acquire these values? Just take a look at the Olympic values ☺"

STORY Teaser

INTERVIEW

from the Concert Hall

You are known as a leading Slovak pianist, laureate of many national and international competitions. What does sport mean to you?

Sport is a lifestyle, you can join the world of sport as a professional, as an amateur, as a fan, as a teacher with the same result – being active, motivated, and happy.

Taking it from a wider perspective, what is your opinion on sport? Is there a link between culture and sport?

Definitely. From a wider perspective culture and sport are key elements of diplomacy connecting people sharing a very special experience both physically and emotionally. From a closer perspective, there are striking parallels e. g. musicians start playing their instruments very early on, in order to

succeed they have to practise regularly, they need to stay focused and disciplined (a quality I learned as a teenager ☺), they have a special regime (not always close to the outer world...).

You are Board Member of the Slovak Olympic Academy, more precisely Coordinator of the Working Party on Culture and Sport within this institution. It is a surprising position for a professional musician. How did you enter the world of sport?

My pianist-turned mother started as a basketball player and 800m runner (being called the local Wilma Rudolph). As a child I have wonderful recollections of following enthusiastically Olympic games, watching ice-skating



competition
or basketball matches.

My mother even planned a sport career for me (being inspired by her Bulgarian roots) – a career of a rhythmic gymnast. Unfortunately, I was told I am too tall...and pursued a career in music later on ☺. I have been involved more actively in the world of sport since working with Ms Elena Malíková, the Chair of the Slovak Olympic Academy, participating in several excellent initiatives, including Erasmus+ transnational projects called “Coubertin Academy – Social Inclusion through Sport Values” or “Run – Swim – Learn! In the spirit of Coubertin”. We have met as students at the 1st Language School in Bratislava studying English and immediately hit it off. Although coming from seemingly different worlds we have realised there are so many astonishing similarities.

Have you been involved in sport sector for a long time? How do you like a world of sports?

Being curious and studious, I enjoy the variety of world of

sport,
many inspiring stories
behind many races and matches respectively, sport’s
beneficial effect on health, as well as the socialising aspect.
Moreover, André Agassi’s memoir OPEN is one of my most
favourite books.

If you have to name THREE valuable qualities that sport has taught you - what are they? Why?

Last year I had the rare privilege to represent the Slovak Olympic Academy at the 15th International Session for National Olympic Academies and National Olympic Committees’ Delegates in Olympia in Greece. A glimpse at the stairs leading to the Pierre de Coubertin monument in Olympia sums up several valuable qualities: joy of effort, solidarity, peace, fair play, respect, friendship, excellence. We can apply them not only in the world of sport but also in the world of culture and most importantly in everyday life.



You are associate professor at the Department of Keyboard Instruments of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. What values do you teach the students you work with and are there any similarities with a field of sport how to acquire them?

In my opinion, years spent at the academy are one of the most formative years. I work with students, fragile musicians' souls from the age of 18. To follow their transition between their 1st and last study year can be a really beautiful journey both artistically and personally. Not everyone will necessarily become an internationally acclaimed virtuoso, but everyone can become an enthusiastic, sensitive, cultivated, well-educated and well-behaved human being. I would quote famous pianist Ferruccio Busoni: "Being a great artist primarily includes intelligence, culture, comprehensive education in music and literature and in the matter of human existence," stressing the matter of human existence. And how to acquire these values? Just take a look at the Olympic values ☺.

There is a significant importance of foreign languages in a development of diplomacy as such. Could you tell us how many languages do you speak and what is your view on this topic?

I love learning new languages as well as speaking them and meeting people from all over the world. It is one of the best means to broaden one's mind, make new friends, stimulate one's brain and become an open-minded human being ☺. Personally, I try to encourage my students to attend a language school as I think it is much more difficult to find a proper time later in life and the younger you start, the easier it gets to learn new words. I must confess, I have met many students from my field who do not have a good knowledge of foreign languages compared e. g. to their non-field age peers. As for your second question, I speak English, German, French, a little bit Spanish, Russian and Bulgarian (and of course being born and raised in former Czechoslovakia, I can speak Czech too ☺).





Is it common also for the other people from a cultural environment to speak so many foreign languages?

On the one hand, they say that music is a universal language. On the other hand, travelling as a musician, working often with colleagues from abroad inspires one to learn foreign languages. I'd say, nowadays English is the most spoken language among members of my community, but musicians need also German (as many fantastic books on music are written in German), Italian (especially singers and collaborative pianists; French or Russian, at least basics, can be also very helpful for them when working on opera arias and so-called lieder repertoire by an wide array of world composers).

Do you have any sports challenges nowadays?

Walking.

Finally, in order to conclude our interview, what is your opinion on the recent European Union sport agenda? What more does the European Union need to do to encourage more young people to embrace sport as a way of life?

European Union should encourage young people to reduce the time spent on social media, at the computer, mobile phones and promote healthy lifestyle indoor and outdoor based on positive effects of socialising (especially after the bleak time of social distancing due to corona). The upcoming era

of intense digitalisation could be very tricky, luring people spending more and more time in virtual reality, lacking physical activities, losing their jobs, and becoming more and more depressed, staying isolated, not interacting with other people... The European officials need to step in and motivate people to stay positive and grounded through sport activities.

Is there something you would like to tell us on sport diplomacy and we did not ask you?

Sport diplomacy can bring together individuals from all over the world sharing their specific culture and habits. Some of these encounters can blossom into wonderful friendships worth cultivating and lasting a life-time... Some sport diplomacy-orientated projects can bring about even amusing situations. While in Bulgaria, homeland of my grandparents, I was spontaneously invited to well-known Varna-based Radio Darik. The main topic ought to be our very dear project "EU Sport Values Diplomacy", headed by Kristina Kazandzhieva, Yanka Dimitrova and Elena Malíková. Suddenly, at the very end of our interview I was asked to communicate in Bulgarian, a language I have spoken mainly as a child, and reveal some of the words I remember. My spontaneous reply: "Stork is in the water," accompanied by some basic introduction sentences ☺. I hope stork will make it one day to the Bulgarian Olympic games ☺.



Jordana Palovičová has studied piano at the Conservatory in Bratislava, the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, the Royal College of Music in London and the Musikhochschule Lübeck. She holds the position of Associate Professor at the Department of Keyboard Instruments of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. She has won awards, as both a soloist and an accompanist, in a number of national and international competitions such as Slovak Conservatories Competition, Virtuosi per musica di pianoforte, Johann Nepomuk Hummel International Piano Competition, Concertino Praga International Radio Competition, Talent of the Year, Chappell Gold Medal Competition. In 2016 she received the Ján Cikker Prize for active promotion of composer's work. Her recordings have appeared on MUSICA, Music Fund, Pavlík Records, REAL MUSIC HOUSE, Academy of Performing Arts labels, Slávik Slovenska, Konvergenzie, Slovak Radio & Television, Czech Radio & Television, Norddeutscher Rundfunk. Jordana Palovičová has also performed extensively as a soloist and a sought-after chamber music player in a number of major Slovak and international music festivals e. g. Bratislava Music Festival, Melos-Ethos, New Slovak Music, Music Spring in Košice, Festival of Nice Music, Convergences, Indian Summer in Levoča, Viva Musical!, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Music Days, Harmonie Starego Miasta Lublin, Duettissimo!, Cambra de Música, Cheltenham International Festival of Music, Sibelius Week, ARMONIE DELLA SERA. She has collaborated with a wide range of artists and chamber music ensembles respectively and performed as a soloist with a number of leading Slovak and international orchestras, including Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, Cappella Istropolitana, Slovak Sinfonietta Žilina, State Philharmonic Orchestra Košice, VŠMU Modern Orchestra, Moravian Philharmonics Olomouc, Prague Philharmonia, Lambeth Orchestra, RCM Sinfonietta Orchestra and Lübecker Philharmoniker.

Jordana
PALOVIČOVÁ

CHAPTER 7

Social Message of Sport

VLADIMIR ISKROV

07







Vladimir Iskrov

Vladimir Iskrov was born in Sofia, Bulgaria. At the age of 12 he started playing basketball in basketball club "Levski", with which he won a championship title and several second and third places in the junior championships. For two years he was part of the most successful national team for teenagers.

Vladimir started his basketball coaching training at the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski", where in addition to his coaching diploma, he also obtained a diploma for a teacher of physical education. He also successfully graduated in kinesitherapy. His master's degree is sports psychology, and later developed his master's thesis in PhD. The thesis is oriented towards analyzing group processes and competitive performance in basketball, i.e. "How team dynamics, cohesiveness, collective efficacy and leadership influence athletic performance?". Parallel to his studies in Bulgaria, he successfully completed the most prestigious basketball coaching course in Europe - FIBA Europe Coaching Certificate. In 2015 he was selected and became the first Bulgarian to take part in the International Coaching Apprenticeship in Basketball.

The program gives him the opportunity to be part of the Lehigh University Bethlehem, PA, USA. Parallel to the qualifications he has gained over the last 10 years, he has been able to work 5 years at Levski as a coach, where he was given the task to develop basketball in the town of Gabrovo.

Under his guidance the Gabrovo team "Chardafon Orlovets" achieved significant results in the Bulgarian basketball championships. After this success Vladimir received an offer to work in Ireland as head coach of N.A.B.A (North Atlantic Basketball Academy). When he came back to Bulgaria on the basis of the acquired experience and contacts abroad, he decided to implement the international Basketball Project Camp. The main goal of the camp is to provide an opportunity for the development of young talented basketball players abroad. A number of prominent coaches from the USA and Europe come to Bulgaria to look for and train basketball talents.

Since 2017 he has been the coach of the men's **national sitting basketball team**. Under his leadership, the team recorded its first participation in a European Championship and a historic first victory. As a coach, he is the champion of Bulgaria 6 times - three times with the Sofia-Balkan team and three times with the Levski team. In 2022 the national team finished third at the European Championship in Division C in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Vladimir is one of the most famous coaches in Bulgaria, with a strongly positive social image and good acceptance and admire in the Bulgarian sport eco-system.



1. If you have to name THREE valuable qualities that sport has taught you - what are they? Why?

Hard work, perseverance and struggle. They are useful for every activity I do in and out of sport.

2. What values do you teach the children and young athletes you work with and how did you acquire them?

First of all I teach them not to be afraid of anything, to be the best they could in life, as human beings. Secondly, I teach them that they ARE able to be the best in their sport no matter where they come from.

3. What more does the European Union need to do to encourage more young people to embrace sport as a way of life?

The EU does a lot to develop sport. Somehow this is not visible enough in Bulgaria OR it is visible, but we see only how it is being supported and developed in the other EU countries.

My personal mission in life is linked to the sport of people with physical disabilities and with adapted physical activity. In this connection we encounter very often discrimination issues, when trying to integrate as people and through sport in the everyday life. That is why we are participating in a lot of projects funded by the European Solidarity Corps.

People with disabilities continue to be severely discriminated against due to a lack of accessible environments in public and residential buildings, means of transport, sports, cultural, educational, and entertainment facilities, as well as in a number of areas of life such as education, health care, employment, social and other services, access to justice.

Most of today's human rights concerns affecting people with disabilities are related to discrimination. People with disabilities have the same human rights as those without disabilities; however, they are subject to direct and indirect discrimination and exclusion

in almost all areas of life.

So, one of our project **Let's do it** has the main aim to destroy prejudices and stereotypes and raise awareness of socially significant topics, thus stimulate engagement in society. Our target group are always people with disabilities and we strive to integrate them into society through sport.

Second project we work on is **United through sport for a better life** – it is a project to promote and offer equal opportunities for people with physical disabilities between the ages of 15 and 28. These opportunities will be created through the development and implementation of effective training and mentoring tools. This project is targeted especially to people with a higher level of disability. They have with us the chance to participate in specially designed and accessible outdoor sports activities and to improve their personal development through non-formal learning.

According to Eurostat data the number of NEETs in Europe is increasing constantly – young people who do not work, are not educated or trained, and are excluded from any kind of social activity. I see the consequences, they are enormous: in the first place, this phenomenon has personal and psychological effects (lower level of commitment and trust, lack of prospects, and deviant behavior due to social exclusion), second, is the inability of these young men and women to find work.

I will not stop my efforts to initiate legal changes, ensuring not only decent and non-discriminatory opportunities for sport for disabled people but also more funding for adapted physical activities and acknowledging the strong social message SPORT has.

INTERVIEW

CHAPTER 8

Importance of Sporting Events

DIMITAR DIMITROV

08







Dimitar Dimitrov

"EDUCATION PAVES THE WAY TO
EMBRACING SPORT VALUES"

Dimitar Dimitrov, lecturer with 20 years of experience at the University of Economics - Varna. All his life he has been studying and teaching physical education, sport, and tourism (sports tourism). He is a graduate of Sports School, Sports Academy - Bachelor, Sports Pedagogy - Master. Dimitar has acquired the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education in Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field Tourism, the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)". Former professional football player, former football assistant referee and Mentor at Level II of the UEFA Talents and Mentors Programme, which is part of the Convention for the Training and Organization of Football Referees, Consultant on football refereeing issues to the Bulgarian Association of Mini Football - Varna.

INTERVIEW

1. If you have to name THREE valuable qualities that sport has taught you, what are they? Why?

- Health - Mental and physical health is the most important and valuable condition to have a quality and good life, and often times sport is synonymous with health!
- Discipline - The ability to focus on a goal and to trust and listen to the opinion and advice of our mentor (coach, teacher, boss or even ourselves).
- Teamwork - The effort that goes into a goal is the sum of the efforts of the other team members. This rule is most true in group sports, but even in individual ones, success is the sum of the work of the athlete, their coach and the rest of the team!

2. What values do you teach the children and young athletes you work with and how did you acquire them?

- Through sports I try to teach my students and athletes to never give up on accomplishing a goal or task. I try to give them knowledge and build in them the necessary skills, while trying to form in them habits of organization, motivation, perseverance, discipline, courage, teamwork, fairplay, acceptance of failure, awareness of one's abilities and personal self-esteem, setting a personal example, trust in the leader, patience, drive to win.
- The values and qualities I have outlined were acquired during the time when I was a competitor myself, subsequently as a student in various degrees I have understood and studied them thoroughly, and in the present I am trying to pass them on to the younger generation.

3. Is there a need for additional training to be provided to coaches on how to teach values in sport? If yes - what should it include? In what form?

a. Upskilling coaches, through additional training on how to teach values in sport, will increase their competence and enrich the toolkit for managing training and coaching activities.





Thematic content model could encompass:

- Core educational and cultural values - a means of integration;
- Sport - hard work, solidarity, cohesion;
- A set of universal minimum standards promoting the holistic practice of sport;
- Sport volunteering - function and relevance for civil society;
- Fair play in sport - guarantee of fair competition, principle and responsibility;
- Social cohesion through sport;
- And much more in this regard.

b. In science, values are defined as "enduring beliefs that a particular type of behaviour or end state of being is personally and socially preferable to an opposite type of behaviour or end state of being"

c. Physical activity has been shown to be beneficial for mental strain, stress, mental disorders, physical illness, and problems with emotion and behavior regulation.

This can be realised through workshop training (in an in-person, online or combined environment) to form key or sport specific competencies for coaches. The training can be implemented by a licensed educational entity, together with sports federations, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Sport and NGOs with competences in the field.

4. What is the biggest case of discrimination in sport from your practice?

How could we do something TODAY against it?

In my practice, I haven't witnessed any major discrimination cases. But I can share something from my sports class - soccer, when a girl wanted to play with the boys and got disapproved by them. Subsequently, after a conversation between me and her, it became clear that she had the skills available and I included her in the game. As a result of her behaviour on the field, she gained the respect of her colleagues and whenever she wanted to rejoin the game she was accepted without objection.

5. What more should the European Union do to encourage more young people to embrace sport as a way of life?

I think that the EU should draw up and adopt a well-thought-out strategy based on scientific evidence and in-depth analysis of physical activity, psychological problems and stress levels in the daily lives of children and teenagers. On the basis of the results, measures could be identified that include programme proposals for activities through sport for fun, recreation and sportsmanship, to be implemented during sports classes in schools, municipal sports departments, sports federations and NGOs involved in this activity.

6. Pierre de Coubertin, the "father" of the modern Olympic Games, believed that sporting events were an important tool for promoting human rights. Given that sport has such a function, how can we use it? How do you see the relationship between sport and human rights?

The importance of major sporting events, and sport in general, goes beyond the exclusive focus on sports fans. Sport and major sporting events have significant potential to contribute significantly to the protection and promotion of human rights. It is the collective responsibility of sports federations, host cities and countries, and corporate sponsors of such events to ensure full respect for human rights and to promote responsible behaviour and transparency.

Major sporting events offer host governments the opportunity to take important measures to promote development and respect for human rights. Local and international media have a special responsibility and role to play, and journalists, including those from the 28 EU Member States, should be granted free and unhindered access to the host country.

Some host governments, including authoritarian regimes, may use sporting events to enhance their global reputation as well as the personal prestige of their leaders.



CHAPTER 9

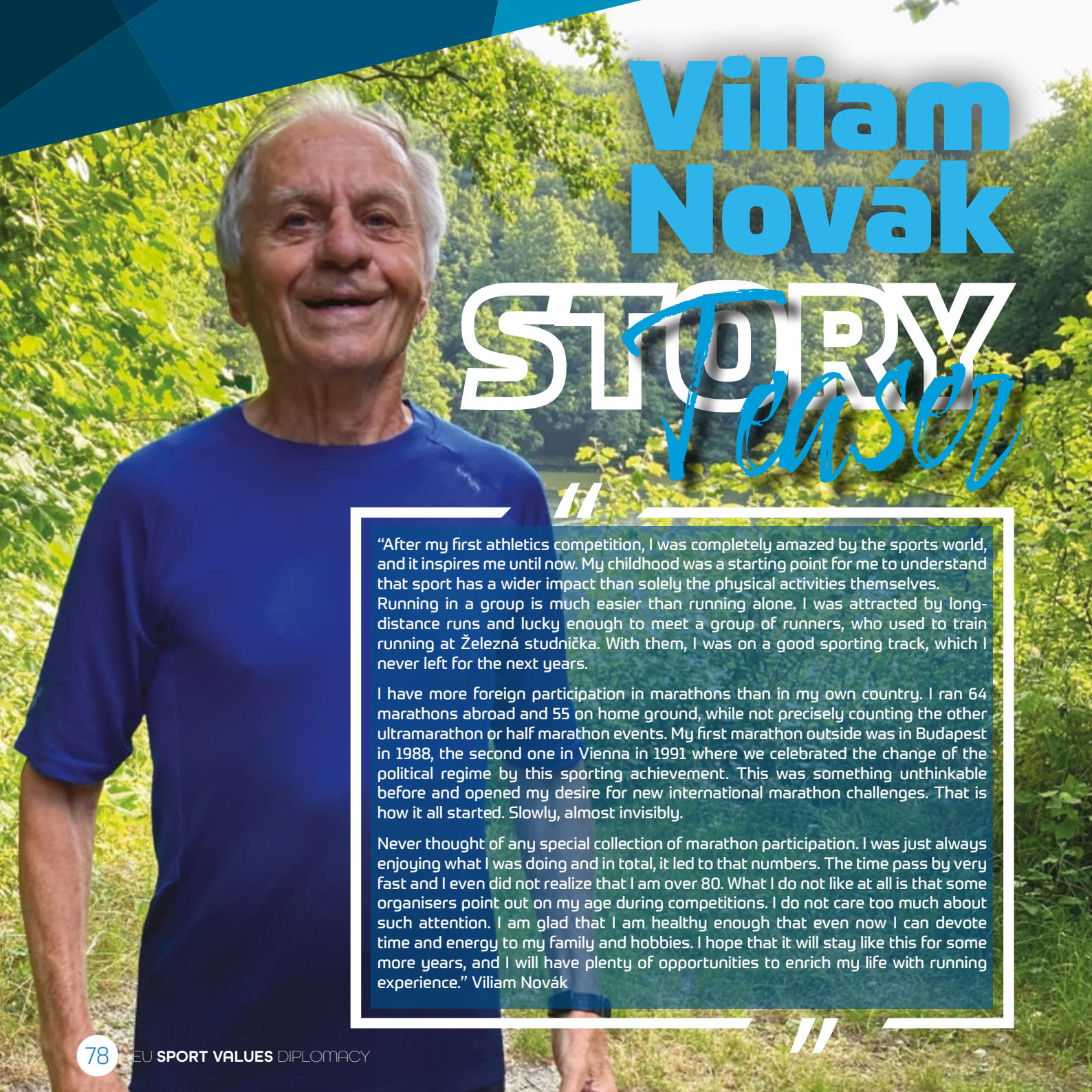
#BeActive Champion

VILIAM NOVÁK

09





A portrait of Viliam Novák, an elderly man with white hair, smiling, wearing a blue t-shirt. He is standing outdoors in a lush green forest. The background is slightly blurred, showing dense foliage and trees.

Viliam Novák

STORY *Teaser*

“After my first athletics competition, I was completely amazed by the sports world, and it inspires me until now. My childhood was a starting point for me to understand that sport has a wider impact than solely the physical activities themselves. Running in a group is much easier than running alone. I was attracted by long-distance runs and lucky enough to meet a group of runners, who used to train running at Železná studnička. With them, I was on a good sporting track, which I never left for the next years.

I have more foreign participation in marathons than in my own country. I ran 64 marathons abroad and 55 on home ground, while not precisely counting the other ultramarathon or half marathon events. My first marathon outside was in Budapest in 1988, the second one in Vienna in 1991 where we celebrated the change of the political regime by this sporting achievement. This was something unthinkable before and opened my desire for new international marathon challenges. That is how it all started. Slowly, almost invisibly.

Never thought of any special collection of marathon participation. I was just always enjoying what I was doing and in total, it led to that numbers. The time pass by very fast and I even did not realize that I am over 80. What I do not like at all is that some organisers point out on my age during competitions. I do not care too much about such attention. I am glad that I am healthy enough that even now I can devote time and energy to my family and hobbies. I hope that it will stay like this for some more years, and I will have plenty of opportunities to enrich my life with running experience.” Viliam Novák



INTRODUCTION

This story is devoted to all inspirational and enthusiastic people who shape sports in the European Union and beyond. On behalf of all those people, we would like to endorse a popular Slovak scientist and enthusiastic runner Viliam Novák whose life approach brightens people up and gives them positive emotions. With his tenacity and strenuous approach, Viliam Novák keeps a very high moral profile in the sport world. He promoted sport virtues across sectors and influenced generations of people during his entire life. Even in the age of 80 years, he is still inspirational and successful in supporting intergenerational aspects of health enhancing physical activities in local communities.

We focused on capturing his engagement in health enhancing physical activities, but also added other interesting aspects from his professional career as a scientist. We offer his impact on social inclusion through sport and his influence on young generation as well. However, apart from the authentic personal dimension, there are also other perspectives we would like to endorse with his story.

The most significant perspective is linked to the European Union sport policies. His story offers a new dimension to the Council Conclusions on Sport Diplomacy prepared and adopted during the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2016. Lifelong approach of Viliam Novák well represents a notion of EU Sport Values Diplomacy, which was developed as a follow up of the Council Conclusions on Sports Diplomacy. In addition, it brings a great satisfaction for the whole Slovak Presidency team that prepared this political document. For better illustration of the recent activities done in the field, we are delighted to offer throughout the whole story relevant testimonials and references given on achievements of Viliam Novák by some Slovak personalities.

We are pleased to introduce a unique life approach of Viliam Novák through his professional and sports achievements, which are illustrated by vivid pictures. With a short interview from the forest during running training, we complemented his story and added a description of the community where Viliam Novák belongs. Finally, testimonials on his achievements alongside with references given on his work nicely wrap up his influence on local communities and worldwide impact.

The overall concept underpinning the story is to promote successfully sport and physical activity across Europe. The main idea is to introduce inspirational personality to both Pan-European and national audience. We intend to recognise and celebrate outstanding initiatives and commitments of Viliam Novák at all levels, in particular local, to promote participation in sport and physical activity and encourage people to be active.

"If I were asked to point out just one person who represents the best a notion of EU Sport Values Diplomacy, my very first choice would be definitely Viliam Novák. I would nominate him intuitively because of his kind approach, lifelong achievements, promotion of sport virtues across sectors and influence on generations of people. If thinking more and taking into account rational arguments, I would decide again for Viliam Novák. His life approach is simply a unique representation of the European Union sport policies since 2007 when the Lisbon Treaty entered into the force and sport became the formal policy of the European Union. He has a power to convey a message of the European Union values worldwide with such a simplicity and authenticity that only a few people can." Elena Malíková



Who is Elena Malíková? Chair of the Working Party on Sport during the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2016 that was in charge of the preparation of the Council Conclusion on Sport Diplomacy. Current Chair of the Slovak Olympic Academy. Multiple World Cup finalist and national champion in modern pentathlon. Represented Czechoslovakia, later Slovakia at major sport events, including the World and European Championships. Passionate for foreign languages, sport diplomacy, marathons, writing and photography, with demonstrated long-term voluntary activities in sports and awarded by the Trophy of the International Olympic Committee "Sport and Literature".

Through extraordinary personality of Viliam Novák, we would like to give visibility to projects and initiatives where he actively participated and that have successfully promoted sport and physical activity across Europe. We would like to highlight also his commitments, which contributed to the HealthyLifeStyle4All initiative and to the promotion of sustainable and green sport. His lifelong initiatives support and promote ties across generations through the practice of sport and physical activity. In light of this, we would like to contribute to give visibility and support the dissemination of innovative ideas, initiatives and best practices throughout Europe.

Our idea is to honour an individual achievement in motivating others to be active because Viliam Novak worked consistently to promote participation in sport and physical activity not only internationally, but also in his local community and environment.

We were absolutely privileged to have Vilko on board during our lives and would like to appreciate all his efforts with this story. It was designed with a purpose to highlight and successfully promote sport and physical activity in different environments. Through a great personality of Viliam Novák, we captured his commitments in various areas, from his professional occupation as a scientist, capturing his impact on schools, universities and educational establishments, enterprises, business administration, ICT sector, sport clubs, local communities, associations, etc.

With this story, we illustrated the way, how he participated

in various international programmes and projects focused on different aspects of the sport, such as social inclusion through sport values, education in and through sport, the fight against discrimination in sport and promotion of intergenerational sport. With an interview we provided data on ways, how to tackle some of the barriers that can prevent the target groups from being active, such as lack of time, lack of interest/motivation, disability/illness, costs. We paid attention also to influence of Viliam Novak on people with limited access to sport activities as well as his contribution to the fight against discrimination in sport and promotion of intergenerational sport.

We structured the story in several areas, through which we developed the above-mentioned intention. The story starts with a part on professional achievements of Viliam Novak, which is entitled WHO IS VILIAM NOVÁK? His sport successes are given under the heading VILIAM NOVÁK AND SPORTS and developed in the part called RUNNERS FROM ŽELEZNÁ STUDNIČKA.

His life approach is well illustrated by INTERVIEW FROM THE FOREST. The interview was done during running training and complemented his story with a short description of the local community where Viliam Novák belongs.

Finally, TESTIMONIALS on his achievements alongside with REFERENCES given on his work by some Slovak personalities nicely wrapped up this story. They reflect an authentic perception of the impact of Viliam Novak and the reasons why we decided for his selection.

Who is?

Viliam Novák



Ing. Viliam Novák, DrSc.

Occupation: scientist and hydrologist at the Institute of Hydrology Slovak Academy of Sciences (IH SAS), Bratislava, Slovakia;

Born: Považská Bystrica, 08.14.1942; MS: RNDr. Katarína, PhD.;

Children: Ing. Alžbeta 1967, Ing.arch. Jaroslava 1969, Ing. Bronislav, PhD. 1985;

Education: 1964 Faculty of Civil Eng., Slovak Technical University Bratislava (STU), 1972 PhD studium, IH SAS, 1992 doctor of Sciences (DrSc) in hydrology, IH SAS;

Career: since 1964 Institute of Hydrology SAS Bratislava, scientist, principal scientific officer, member of Presidium of SAS (1998 - 2005), Extenal workplaces: Russia, UK,

Germany, USA, Japan. Important achievements: Method of transport coefficients of water and energy in the water unsaturated porous media measurement and evaluation, method of evapotranspiration and its components calculation, infiltration of water into cracked soils – method of calculation, mathematical modeling of water and energy transport in the Soil – Plant – Atmosphere Continuum (SPAC), method of soil water regimen diagnosis in relation to the plant canopies water regimen and biomass production, the role of Earth surfaces properties in actual global changes and methods of their mitigation, external pedagogic activity at Faculty of Civil Eng, STU Bratislava;

Writings and creative works: 4 monographs, the most important among them are Evapotranspiration in the soil-plant- atmosphere system (Springer Science + Bussines Media, Dordrecht, 2012), Applied Soil Hydrology,(coauthor), Springer Nature Switzerland, AG (2019); author and coauthor more than 70 scientific papers, 2 patents, cca 900 citations. 1995 - 1998 responsible for the US – Slovak Project Modeling the transport of water and solutions in soils of Zitny Ostrov area, as a result of Gabčíkovo waterwork, 2004 responsible for the Project The influence of the plant canopy structure changes on water regimen in High Tatras, after heavy ravage;

Awards: SAS Prize for science popularisation (1985, team member), Pioneer of International cooperation (1988), Honorary Silver Plaque SAS od Dyoniz Stur for achievements in Natural Sciences (1992), SAS Prize for results in research (1999, team member), Prize of academician Dub (2002), Golden medal SAS for merit in science (2012), Plaque of Merit at sixty jubilee of SAS (2013); Prize Fides et Ratio for merit in improving relationships between religion and science (2017); SAS Prize for top level monography (2020).

Memberships: International Soc. Soil Sci., IAHR;

Achievements: pioneer in application of mathematical models as tools in diagnosis of soil – water regimen.

Hobby: sport (long distance running), aviation, Earth global changes, opera, balet;

Reason of success: systematics and persistence.

Viliam Novák & Sports

Viliam Novák, born on 14 August 1942 in Považská Bystrica, Slovakia. Sport achievements: finisher of 119 marathons plus 7 ultramarathons. Personal best in marathon: 2:57:21 at IBUSZ Marathon Budapest in 1998. During 35 years of running, he covered over 73,413 km that is nearly twice around the Globe, in average 2100 km per year and 175 km per month. He participated in five out of six Marathon Majors - NYC Marathon 1997, Chicago La Salle Marathon 2001, Boston Marathon (five times), Real Berlin Marathon 1990, Flora London Marathon, 1999. The most iconic were Sydney Host City Marathon, Australia, 2000 and Athens Classic Marathon 2000. Regarding to Olympic track in Sydney Viliam Novák is the fastest Slovak on this Olympic track; being the first of three Slovaks runners with his time 3:28, while the Slovak Olympian Robert Štefko was DNF (did not finish) in the Olympic race. This was given as a joke by his son Broňo, who is also a runner, but it is true!

His 64 marathons were performed abroad, in comparison to the 56 finished in Slovakia; among the most impressive were US Marine Corps Marathon in Washington D.C. 2004, 2009, Paris Marathon 2002 and Košice Peace Marathon, which he likes the best of all and he ran it already eight times. Moreover, he considers Prague Int. Marathon as a great experience as well.

Viliam Novák finished first in the age group at Moscow Int. Marathon 2012 (M70), Regensburg Marathon 2015, Budapest Marathon 2015, Lublin Marathon 2013, Ljubljana Marathon 2012, Copenhagen Marathon 2019. Among the best results in marathons, he considers the first place in Moscow, and the third place in Boston marathon 2018 (M75); notably considering that the Boston marathon is the world oldest and most iconic one.

In addition, he achieved three times the first place in the age group (2015, 2018, 2019) at the oldest European road race in Bechovice - Prague, which is organised since 1897, similarly to Boston Marathon.

Another success is the title of World Vice-Champion in mountain running 2017 and World Champion in mountain running of teams with V. Bašista 2017.

In accordance with Viliam Novák, the most important in sport, and running particularly, is its relaxation and regeneration effect leading to good health and improved ability to do our duties. Camaraderie is another significant effect of running that counts the most.





“

interview from the forest



Questions Elena Malíková

Answers Viliam Novák



”

How and when did you start with sport?

In Kremnica, where I lived as a child, everyone used to practice cross-country skiing. Naturally, it was also my case. Later on, during my high school age, our PE teacher motivated us to regular physical activities and compete locally. After my first athletics competition, where I finished on the second place on 1 km run, I was completely amazed by the sports world, and it inspires me until now.

What happened next? How was your sporting career unfolding?

Coming to Bratislava for my university's studies, I had a little break in sport activities. Soon I was addressed by my fellow students, who were athletes from orienteering club in Pezinok to join them and that was it. Competing for sport club Lokomotíva Pezinok was amusing, we had a couple of advantages when being affiliated to this orienteering club under the railway's auspices. For instance, we had a possibility to travel free of charge by trains that opened us plenty of new opportunities to widen our horizons. We could not afford such a lifestyle as students, and I was grateful for those years. It was a starting point for me to understand that sport has a wider impact than solely the physical activities themselves.

Did you succeed to practice sport when working?

This would have been possible but having my own family with two small daughters it was a bit tricky to continue seriously in my sports career. Everything changed when our children became a bit older, and I restarted with regular running in eighties. This time I was amazed by long-distance runs. Firstly, I went to observe a traditional Devin-Bratislava races and decided, considering my sporting shape, to try it myself for the first time in 1981. Since then, I used to run regularly this traditional 12 km race and some years later I was lucky enough to meet there a group of runners, who used to train running at Železná studnička. With them I was again on a good sporting track, which I never left for the next years.

What were your new challenges that time?

You know, running in a group is much easier than running alone. Thanks to this running group I ran soon my first marathon in Nové Mesto nad Váhom, which I succeeded to finish in a time around 3 hours 8 minutes. Not bad for a marathon beginner – I said to myself that time. It was in 1987 and my result gave me a taste for improvements in this distance. My next marathon was in Kysuce - not an easy one due to its hilly profile, but I succeeded it with more than 2 minutes better time than during my marathon debut. Those were my marathon beginnings, which comprise now 119 marathons and 7 ultramarathons.

That is an admirable number! What about half-marathons? How many of them did you run?

It was a lot, but frankly, I am not aware of the exact number of them. More I remember is the ambience which was always present in such events. Fantastic people, smiles and cheering is what I have associated with all the races I participated in. No matter if they were half marathons, marathons, ultramarathons or whatever else.

Impressive approach, indeed. Did you participate abroad as well? How did you succeed to collect such a huge number of marathons?

Sure, actually I have more foreign participation in marathons than in my own country. I ran 64 marathons abroad and 55 on home ground, while not precisely counting the other ultramarathon or half marathon events. My first marathon outside was in Budapest in 1988, the second one in Vienna in 1991 where we celebrated the change of the political regime by this sporting achievement. This was something unthinkable before and opened my desire for new international marathon challenges. That is how it all started. Slowly, almost invisibly. Never thought of any special collection of marathon participation. I was just always enjoying what I was doing and in total it led to that numbers.

Talking about sporting achievements, which were the most valuable for you?

Apart from my marathon times that were often deeply below 3 hours, I consider for the most valuable achievement a fact that sport completely changed my life. It brought a joy, new friendships, knowledge, and many other assets into my everyday routine. I would have never gained all that without sports participation. A good example is this interview and EU sport policies I became aware of thanks to this initiative.

What are your current challenges and next sporting plans?

Recently, I ran half marathon during the Bratislava marathon week and consider an iconic one in Rajec, a beautiful place in Slovakia. This is my supposed to be in August 2022. Later on, I would like definitely to participate in some other races, contemplating for instance half marathon in September 2022 in Copenhagen. There are several reasons for that, out of which one is my daughter who currently lives with her family in the capital of Denmark. Copenhagen alongside with Boston belong to my favourite places for running competitions.

Does your August run in Rajec mean that you want to celebrate your 80th birthday there?

Sincerely, not really! I am not so much interested in celebrations. The time passes by very fast and I even did not realize that I am almost 80. What I do not like at all is that some organisers point out on my age during competitions. I do not care too much about such attention. I am glad that I am healthy enough that even now I can devote time and energy to my family and hobbies. I hope that it will stay like this for some more years, and I will have plenty of opportunities to enrich my life with running experience.

Absolutely true! Let me wish you many outstanding sporting results and all the best with your new challenges. Many thanks for your time and interesting talking. It was an amazing experience interviewing you during an active running!



IMPACT

of Viliam Novák

Impact of Viliam Novák is evident in many sectors. His ideas on importance of sport are well accepted by the **academic field**, where he professionally comes from. Thanks to his good example and sport benefits aware raising, countless number of the scientists all over the world followed his advice and included physical activities into their daily routines. His interventions involved both national and international scientific events and conferences abroad where he successfully motivated and persuaded his peers to join him in the morning running workouts. His slogan is to be active everywhere, **workplace** included.

“Systematic, strenuous, with analytic thinking – Viliam Novák is a great scientist and academic. I am pleased to get him known and grateful for an opportunity working professionally together. Moreover, we also shared for quite a time our common sport passion, which is running, and we still regularly meet on Sunday mornings in the forest for common health enhancing physical activities. It is such a privilege to have him on the board! He keeps a high moral profile in our sporting group.” Michal Guttman



Who is Michal Guttman?

Significant national contributor, well-known European patent attorney, with thousands of inventions patented in the field of chemistry and pharmacy, who contributed enormously to the several international project outcomes under the leaderships of the Slovak Republic. Michal Guttman is an enthusiastic runner, responsible for the work with senior categories within the sport club. Former high-level runner, he is an advisor on matters of active aging and inclusion of seniors into sport activities within the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy.

Another example of impact of Viliam Novak concerns **school environment**. Thanks to his sports achievements alongside with kind approach and enormous overall knowledge, he is often invited to high schools and universities to share his life attitude on sport values. He has a power to convey his ideas in a way that only few people have. This can be illustrated by his recent involvement in the activities of the Slovak Olympic Academy and Gymnázium Pierra de Coubertina in Piešťany, notably in the Erasmus+ project Coubertin Academy – Social Inclusion through Sport Values and Ivan Luknár Trophy, a sport-knowledge competition, where he dominated in his age

category. He served as a good example of **intergenerational dimension** for high school students with whom he shared in inspiring ambience his approach to.

With his frequent attendance of local sport events, Viliam Novak has also **influence on development of policies on the level of municipalities**. He actively opens discussions with mayors or head principals of the cities, towns and villages about necessity of sport promotion in citizens' lives, construction of sport premises, etc. With such interventions, he influences their view of sport and physical activities.

"I was very happy to see Viliam Novák on the starting list of our traditional running event in Levice in May 2023. I remembered him from my sports career many decades ago and was amazed that he has not changed at all. After so many years, I met again a charming, amusing and wise man. After finishing his running performance in Levice, he gave a great interview for the television about our sports competition, highlighting especially sports virtues. His modest approach made us speechless, and we were happy to award him with a trophy for the oldest athlete of the event. However, Vilko surprised us all also with his running result and finished on the podium with twenty years younger competitors. His amazing sports result in Levice was just like an icing on the cake!" Mária Kuriačková

Who is Mária Kuriačková?



Leading Slovak triathlete, successful coach and sports manager. Capitalising on her outstanding sport and coaching achievements, she runs her own swimming school and is dedicated to the development of swimming literacy in children and youth. She is currently a member of the Levice City Council and has on her political agenda a development of sport in the city and region. She is the initiator and coordinator of a number of projects aimed at social inclusion through sport. She works closely with at-risk and vulnerable groups, including pensioners from the Levice Retirement Home.

Finally, the most appreciated impact of Viliam Novak on local level is on the sport community, where he spends the most time: it means sport competitions and trainings, in particular in Železná studnička, a beautiful forest park belonging to

Bratislava, capital of Slovakia. Therefore, we decided to introduce this environment and influence of Viliam Novak in more details below.





runners from železná studnička

Runners from Železná studnička, a recreational zone of Bratislava, a capital of the Slovak Republic, is an informal gathering of sport enthusiasts coming from different professional environments. It is unique in a Slovak runner's community and their common regular sport workouts, mainly traditional Sunday morning runs, date back to 1985. Many of them are known within the international runner's community thanks to their podium achievements in different age groups.

Typical feature of their running discussions is passion for multiculturalism, which brings alongside with topics of social inclusion, better understanding of different cultures and various EU sport policies. Their long-term common activities and friendships stems rather from sport values than competitive features.

Social inclusion, respect and mutual understanding are vital elements for intergenerational dimension within this running group and are main fields this story aims to address. Runners' sporting backgrounds are not solely athletics, but include plenty of other sports, such as swimming, orienteering, triathlon, modern pentathlon, shooting, skiing, golf, fencing, horseback riding etc. **Friendship and love for running is a common element that binds this heterogeneous group of people. It fully demonstrates a great power of sports and health enhancing physical activities in social inclusion.**

Among all those people, it is notably worth mentioning a popular Slovak scientist Viliam Novák who keeps, with his tenacity and strenuous approach, very high sport moral in the group. Despite his age (born in 1942), he is still an active runner,



with a rich worldwide marathon history. With more than 120 long run races, such as marathons and ultramarathon, including Boston, New York, London, Berlin, Beijing, or Paris marathon, he fully deserves a huge admiration for his sports achievements. His ambitions for 2022 included competing internationally in long-distance runs to celebrate his 80th birthday and he set similar goals for 2023 as well. Thanks to his personality, language skills, general overview and kind approach, the common running gatherings in Železná studnička became a multicultural melting pot, which was often attended by foreign runners and thus spreading this

unique spirit abroad.

In order to convey a specific ambiance of this place to a wide audience on grassroots level, this story aims to address challenges, which are beyond great personalities coming from Železná studnička. Representing different professional environments, such as academic field, science, innovations, civil service, business and corporations, runners from Železná studnička have a **huge international potential to widen a recent work of the European Union in sport sector beyond traditional sport channels.**

“I am delighted to be part of the group “Runners from Železná studnička” where I met Viliam Novák. He is a wonderful person – kind, with a huge overall knowledge, pleasant to talk and despite his age, we can hardly keep his running pace during trainings or races. We all admire his life approach, vitally and optimisms. When waking up on Sunday, I am always sure that my day will be just beautiful after our common running workout in the forest. He makes our days brighter every Sunday, no matter how good or bad it might start. Simply privileged to know him.” Tomáš Poláček

Who is Tomáš Poláček?



Legal Counsel at HB Reavis, Legal Associate with a demonstrated history of working in the legal services for international clients. Skilled in M&A, Legal Advice, Legal Compliance, Corporate Law and Tax Law. Member of the Slovak Bar Association since 2018. Working with significant sport stakeholders, such as the Slovak Olympic Academy, Slovak Pierre de Coubertin Committee, and National Sport Centre, just to mention a few of them. Supported all the sports events organised in the framework of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2016. Author of several publications and articles on values of sport, such as Coubertin Academy – Social Inclusion through Sport Values.

Impact of Viliam Novak and his activities on participants who entered any of the project, where he was in charge of, is enormous. The same concerns communities where he acted in various capacities. He was well perceived from both

a qualitative and a quantitative point of view and concerned benefits for the participants beyond the sport practice, such as job placement activities, language learning, empowerment, business administration, ICT sector, etc.

“It was very inspirational to learn that a popular Slovak scientist Viliam Novák actively promotes sport values throughout his entire life. In his eighties, being still an active runner, he absolutely belongs to the most influencing personalities in the world of sport. I still have in my mind engaging discussions with him on the potential of sports values in today’s global world. I was impressed by his life approach on multiculturalism, which took us even beyond the borders of the European Union. With more than 120 marathons and ultramarathons, including Boston, New York, London, Berlin, or Paris marathon, he fully deserves a huge admiration for his sports achievements. An icing on the cake was his ambition to compete internationally in long-distance runs to celebrate his 80th birthday. That is just breath-taking and worth sharing!” Julián Vojtech

Who is Julián Vojtech?



Digitally and technically supported all the sports events organised in the framework of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2016. Leading and directing many national initiatives in ICT and physical education, including curriculum and qualifications development, Olympic related matters and presenting internationally and nationally. Being responsible for policy development for ICT and physical education/sport, invited to numerous international conferences abroad. Currently a freelancer with a close affinity to sport, working with significant sport stakeholders, such as the Slovak Olympic Academy, Slovak Pierre de Coubertin Committee, National Sport Centre, just to mention a few of them.

Apart from local and nationwide impact of Viliam Novak in many sectors, we would like to mention his international impact, which is enormous and creates synergies with local level impact. As an example, we can firstly give his active and regular participation in international marathons and ultra runs, where he actively promotes sport values and virtues within sports community.

In addition to that, we had a pleasure to see him in discussions with people from cultural environment, such as actors and musicians, but also high-level politicians, policy makers and prominent diplomats, including ambassadors. His excellent foreign language skills and unbeatable desire to promote sport virtues is evident even outside sports environment and might be considered as an evidence base for his eternal sport passion.

"When I met Viliam Novák for the first time, I was impressed by his vitality and optimism. I admired his sports achievements and congratulated him to all his sports successes. However, after a couple of minutes I understood that apart from sports personality, I spoke to an extraordinary person, with interest in fine arts, a deep understanding of music and generous approach, eager to share all his knowledge with others. I am extremely honoured and delighted that our life paths crossed and had an opportunity to know him in person." Jordana Palovičová

Who is Jordana Palovičová?



Leading Slovak pianist, laureate of many national and international competitions. She has performed as a soloist with leading Slovak and foreign orchestras. In 2016, she was awarded the Ján Cikker Prize for active dissemination of the composer's works. Currently, she is an associate professor at the Department of Keyboard Instruments and Church Music of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. Collaboration and expert advice for the link between culture and sport in international projects supported by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme. Expert consultant in the development of several documents on sports diplomacy during the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2016.

Regarding impact of Viliam Novak, one example wraps it all up – when visiting famous PARK FOTO photographic contest, he had an opportunity to discuss a topic of sport diplomacy with His Excellency Makoto Nakagawa, **Ambassador of Japan in Slovakia**. In discussions he naturally actively promoted sport values and virtues and in particular EU Sport Values

Diplomacy. This showed not only his diplomatic dimension and feeling, but after this event, we understood that example of Viliam Novak fully demonstrates a power of sport diplomacy. It emphasised that sports people and sporting events even on a local level can significantly contribute to the development of sport diplomacy worldwide.

"Viliam Novák is the humblest athlete I have ever met. He is incredible in everything he does – professional achievements, family relations, hobbies... He is highly recognised scientist and academic, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, passionate runner, pleasant companion and a cool friend. His nature and character are overarching components, which make him so unique and extraordinary. Simply the best!"

Eva Corticelli

Who is Eva Corticelli?



Board member of the Slovak Olympic Academy and Coordinator for communication, in charge of development, innovations and cooperation within this entity. Interpreter and moderator for sports and Olympics related events at the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic during a conference Education in and through Sport organized at the occasion of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2016. Translating and interpreting materials and events related to Olympism and sport, including the 10th International Coubertin Youth Forum organised in Slovakia. Facilitating and supporting activities promoting sport, Olympic values, and education.



impressions from the Rajec half marathon 2023

JUBILEJNÝ, UŽ 40. RAJECKÝ MARATÓN, 12.8.2023
(Alebo: Bežali sme v Rajci so Zdenom Chárom...)

RAJEC, NÁMESTIE, ZA ŠTARTOVÝM PORTÁLOM, 8:45

Po krátkom rozbehaní som sa vtláčil do davu bežkýň a bežcov s nádejou, že to aj dnes dobre dopadne. Nechcem provokovať to povestné „šťastíčko“ a zapísal som sa „len“ na polmaratón. Myslím, že aj maratón by som dobehol, ale nebudem nič riskovať a nepokážim si môj negatívny rekord (4:27) dosiahnutý tu, v Rajci v povestnom roku 2015, keď tu bolo až 35 °C.

To je ale prekvapenie! v hlúčku národa bežeckého, kam som sa vtláčil aj ja, je niekoľko dobrých známych. Bojovo naladená, usmievavá Radka Paulíniová, ale aj príjemná a dobre vyzerajúca žužka Kamendy, vedľa nej stojí Marian, jej manžel (zákonitý), za mnou sa škerí Vlado Krčmárík... No prostě dobrá partia, v ktorej čas zostávajúci do štartu pol a maratónu rýchlo ubieha. Davom preletela správa, že je tu aj známy borec, nielen hokejista, ale aj bežec Zdeno Chára a že vraj pobeží polmaratón. Tak fajn, aspoň ho uvidíme, keď sa budeme mierať niekde v Rajeckej Lesnej. Zdeno je teraz podstatne lepší ako ja, ved' tohtoročný „Boston“ zabehol za skvelých 3:38! Tak, ako to dnes „dáme“? Pýtam sa okolo stojacej konkurencie. Ja nemám žiadne iné ambície, okrem dokončenia „polky“ vravím. Radka, ty bežíš celý? veru, teraz som prvý raz v 75, tak by som to chcela dobre zabehnúť. veru, nevyzeráš na tú vekovú skupinu, vravím jej ale kto športuje, ten začína sa odpočítavanie posledných desiatok sekúnd pred štartom. Nervozita vrcholí. Žužka s Marianom si dávajú predmaratónsku „pusu“.

Aha, tak preto to mne tak biedne ide, lebo nedostávam pred štartom tú „pusu“. Nedá sa nič robiť, už je po sezóne. všetko dobré, želám spolubežcom a pomaly sa pohýňame hore rajeckým rínom...

ODŠTARTOVANÉ

Je presne deväť hodín, sniečko pripeká, ale tú „polku“ by som zvládnut' mal. Začiatok je pomalý, navzájom si zavádzame, ale aj to sa po niekoľkých stovkách metrov upraví. S Radkou sa držíme zatiaľ spolu. Radka ako vždy beží s fľaškou vody v ľavej ruke. Neotravuje ňu to, tá fľaška? Nie, som na to zvyknutá, vraví. Okolo sú známe tváre; zdravíme sa počas behu so Zlaticou Semanovou. Bētká (Tiszová) tu nie je? Nie, vraví. Boli to kedysi časy, keď bežalo hneď niekoľko manželských dvojíc (Tiszovci, Semanovci, Balošákovci alebo Sebastiánovci; tí bežia aj dnes, ale maratón si dáva len Silvia). v maratónskej akcii je len manželská dvojica Kamendy, ale táto dvojica je to dobrá. Uvidíme, ako im to dnes pôjde.

odbehli sme si rajecké mestské koliesko, prebiehame znova priestorom štartu a cieľa, ten cieľ je ešte poriadne ďaleko; máme za sebou len asi dva kilometre. Kontrolujem tempo a zisťujem, že je celkom svižné, hlavne zásluhou Radky. Ako to chceš bežať, pýtam sa jej. Tak na štyri hodiny, rečie. Je to tak, hodinky ukazujú tempo asi 5:30, je to rozbehnuté asi na 3:50, lenže tie väčšie stúpania ešte len prídu. Neviem, či by som toto tempo udržal do konca, skôr nie...Kúsok pred Šuju vraví Radka nie je ten v bielom vpredu Házucha? Veru je, toho poznám na hony. vždy má v maratóne poraziť, ale tentokrát (podľa štartovnej listiny) beží polku...Ahoj Jano, pod' s nami, vravím. Nejdem, mám problémy. Aké problémy, nebolo kedy vysvetľovať (asi je to problém, daný vekovou kategóriou, ktorú máme spoločnú). Radka držala svižné tempo, však je v porovnaní so mnou mladica...Spomalit' som nechcel, lebo sa mi s Radkou dobre bežalo a rozprávalo, vari tých sedem kilometrov po odbočku do lesnej vydržím. Tak ahoj Jano a drž sa!

Pokračovali sme svižným (pre mňa) tempom cez Šuju; hneď za dedinou sa nám otvoril pekný pohľad na „zubiaci sa“ zub Kláku, a k nemu sa vinúci dlhý had rôznofarebných bodiek - bežcov, až kam oko dovidelo.

Je teplo a sniečko svieti. Preto som si dal na hlavu čiapku a biely ešte „tigácky“ dres. Potím sa stotočne, ale nie je to kritické, teplota vzduchu je pod 30 °C, asfalt nie je ešte prehriaty, takže bežať sa (zatiaľ) dá. S Radkou sa stále bavíme, však sme sa pár rokov nevideli a ja za chvíľu odbočím do Rajeckej lesnej; Radka má však namierené do Čičmian. A už je to tu (teda rozlúčka). Ahoj Radka a drž sa...

KAŽDÝ POŠIEL (ALEBO POBEHOL) SVETA SVOJOU STRANOU.

ja hore súpaním doláva, do lesnej už preriedený zástup maratónco sa uberá priamo, do Čičmian. Stúpanie cesty sa zvyšuje, snažím sa držať tempo. Mám smolu, lebo som si zabudol stlačiť stopky a neviem, ako na tom s časom som. Nevadí, pôjdem na pocit, nebudem predsa sam seba sekírovať. Národ „rajcko-lesnícky“ v hojnom počte vysedáva na priedomi a povzbudzuje, občas im podakujem a snažím sa držať tempo. Je to však pomalšie, ako na hlavnej ceste, lebo stúpanie je väčšie a kvalita cesty je nižšia. Pred kostolom sú nastúpení „štafetári“ (4x5 km) a je ich veru hodne, vari aj sto štafiet, natáhujú krky a vyzierajú „svojich“ ľudí, aby prevzali čip. Sme asi v prostriedku dediny, mal by sa objaviť prvý polmaratónec. A už je tu. Beží naozaj svižne; za ním dlho, dlho nikto...Asi po kilometri sa objavuje druhý v





poradí K. Kocian (čas v cieľi 1:46:27). Prvý čaj v cieľi M. Hujša dobehol za (na tento polmaratón v dobrom čase) 1:09:50 a druhému v poradí "dať" 6 minút a 37 sekúnd. Vráťme sa však na trať. Krútim krkom, aby som neprepásoľ Zdena Cháru. Je to síce veľký chlapisko, ale aj ostatní bežci sú väčšinou urastení mládenci. Konečné! Ku koncu dediny, zaradený v riedkom zástupe sa objavuje Zdeno. Beží svižne, od ostatných bežcov sa výškou výrazne neodlišuje, ale je to iný typ ako ostatní bežci; je ramenatý a svalnatý, jeho robustnosť zvyčajne biele tieľko. Ostatní mladí bežci sú tiež vysokí, ale sú tenkí...

Už za dedinou je občerstvovačka; vypil som dva poháre obstožného "ionťáku", až mi ločkal v bruchu. Vďaka ty sa vstrebeš, myslím si. Cesta je už hrbolatá (a to nehovorím o stúpaní) treba si vyberať cestičku. V protismere nás míňajú davy bežcov, lepších ako som ja...Čo už, čas sa zastaví nedá. Len aby tu už bola obrátka, tento úsek za dedinou nemá konca - kľáka.

OBRÁTKA POLMARATÓNU

Konečne sa objavuje aj ona - obrátka; je asi na 12,5 kilometri. Tak už menej ako "desať" do cieľa. Beží sa mi celkom dobre, snažím sa držať tempo. Bude to pod "dve"? Uvidíme, nemám sa čoho chytiť, hodinky nefungujú. Dolu dolinou je to rýchlejšie aj keď už cítim únavu. Asi pol kilometra pod obrátkou beží Jaro Házucha. Beží ľahko, tempo má svižné, pozdravíme sa a každý beží sveta svojou stranou. Zvyšok trate bežím sám, poznám tu už málo ľudí; z mojej vekovej kategórie je ich na trati len pár. Aj keď bežím "len" polmaratón, už cítim únavu, už to nie je ten ľahký beh ako na začiatku. Len sa snažím udržať tempo. Konečne sa blížime k Šúji aj s občerstvovačkou (nechcem, tu mi už nič nepomôže; čo nemám v krvi, to sa do svalov nedostane.) A je tu povestná "štyridsiatka" v zákrute pri kostole. Už sme v Rajci, blížim ku skupinke bežcov ktorej dominuje zrelá dáma s čipom (je to členka štafety) a vedľa nej bežia dvaja mladí - dievčina a mládenec. A ten mládenec stále hučí do dámy s čipom, pridaj, musíš bežať rýchlejšie (do cieľa sme mali asi kilometer). To sa necháte buzerovať týmto mládencom? Pýtam sa jej. Ten mládenec je syn, ozve sa onen mládenec. Tak to je iné, rečiem a pridávam...

KONEČNE V CIELI (1:56:38)

Lešie, ako som očakával, podarilo sa mi udržať nasadené tempo až do cieľa, je to dobrý signál pred "košicami", kam by som rád išiel. O víťazoch v kategórii mužov som sa v texte zmienil. Skvelý výsledok zabehla Veronika Páleniková (1:21:29). A čo Zdeno Chára? Dobehol 1:46:40 v M40, v čase 1:33:40. Skvelé.

Večer som už bol doma a pozeral som v televízii správy dúfajúc, že tam bude niečo aj o Rajeckom maratóne. Bolo. Dozvedel som sa, že maratón sa naozaj konal a že sa na ňom zúčastnil aj Zdeno Chára. Ukazovali ako dobehol a ako mu "otýc" odovzdal veľkú drevenú medailu. Kto zvíťazil, som sa nedozvedel. Nedá sa nič robiť ten Zdeno je nielen skvelý hokejista ale aj výborný bežec. Je to prosté fenomen.

Ako dopadli bežci v "našej" najstaršej kategórii M60? Zvíťazil (kto iný?) v. Nagy z Tlmáča (135:01), ja (v. Novák) som dobehol v čase 156:38 na 8. mieste a Ján Házucha dobehol 13. (20151). Do cieľa dorazilo 29 bežcov z kategórie M60. Absolutórium si zasluží tiež Marián Michalik, účastník všetkých ročníkov Rajeckého maratónu, ktorý však v ostatných ročníkoch (zo zdravotných dôvodov) predsedal na polmaratón. Do cieľa polmaratónu dobehlo 520 pretekárov, z toho 106 žien a to nepočítam štafety.

AKO TO BOLO S 40. RAJECKÝM MARATÓNOM?

Maratón, je hlavná disciplína tohoto rajeckého tešenia, polmaratón je až jeho neskoršia nadstavba, aby mali príležitosť aj tí menej vytrvalí...

Na štart maratónu nastúpilo 201 bežcov maratónskych, z čoho bolo len 23 dám. Čo je to v porovnaní napríklad s maratónmi v USA, kde je ich podiel väčší ako tretinový? Pravdou však je, že tie "naše" dievčatá sú onakvejšie... Keď som spolu s bratrancom na jeho aute dorazil pred pretekmi do priestoru štartu a cieľa, tam suverénne kráľoval Alfonz Juck, známy to športový odborník a na ploche tesne pred cieľovým portálom sa predvádzali rajecké mažoretky zvané "kordovánky". Ešte pred ich skvelým vystúpením boli (čo hodinu skôr ako ostatní) odštartovaní tí pomalší bežci maratónski, medzi nimi známy matador Šaňo Simon, hosť z Rakúska Anton Reiter a tiež Cyril Bohunický, ktorý vybehol z námestia vari posledný... Zatiaľ čo kordovánky predvádzali svoje tanečné umenie, tí skôr odštartovaní zabochli doľava a potom sa to stalo... Skoro všetci namiesto toho, aby (v nasledujúcej zákrute) odbočili znova doľava, bežali rovno a tak sa stalo, že Cyril Bohunický (ktorý to tam dobre pozná) sa dostal do čela maratónskeho behu a v takom poradí prebehli aj malý dvojkilometrový okruh. Vraj to nebolo označené (tá odbočka doľava). Nemyslím si, že by to ovplyvnilo poradie na prvých miestach, ale nabudúce radšej tam treba dať veľkú šípku...

ČO SA STALO POTOM?

Pretože som bežal "len" polmaratón, z trate maratónu sa mi do uší dostalo len málo bezprostredných informácií. Až do Čičmian bežali prví dvaja v celkovom poradí M. Ilavský (Dubnica) a T. Michalec (Rajec) bok po boku, až v klesaní M. Ilavský ušiel T. Michalovi, aby zvíťazil v dobrom čase (233:41) o 3:20 pred T. Michalom (237:09). Tretí celkovo a prvý v M50 bol dvojnásobný víťaz Rajeckého maratónu T. Kopčík z Tmavy v čase 343:24. U dám nič nového (ale hodne staronového), keď sa na stupeň najvyšší postavila Sylvia Sebastian (312:10). Dobré dobehli



manželia Kamendy; Zuzka dobehla siedma v ž40 (34:509) a Marian bol druhý v M50 (2:59:40). Marian bol dvanásty (a posledný), ktorý to zabehol pod 3 hodiny. Zámer sa vydaril aj Radke Paulínyovej, ktorá dobehla prvá v ž50 a bolo to pod 4 hodiny, tak ako plánovala (3:58:09). v "najstaršej" mužskej kategórii sa diali veci! Zvit'azil Š žuberník (4:14); Cyril Bohunický dobehol v čase (5:06), Šaňo Simon to "dal" za 6:18, ale, viacnásobný víťaz M70 Poľiak Tadeusz Jasek vzdal! Eva Seidlová dobehla do cieľa (odštartovala spolu s nami ostatnými) v čase 5:13, obdivuhodné...

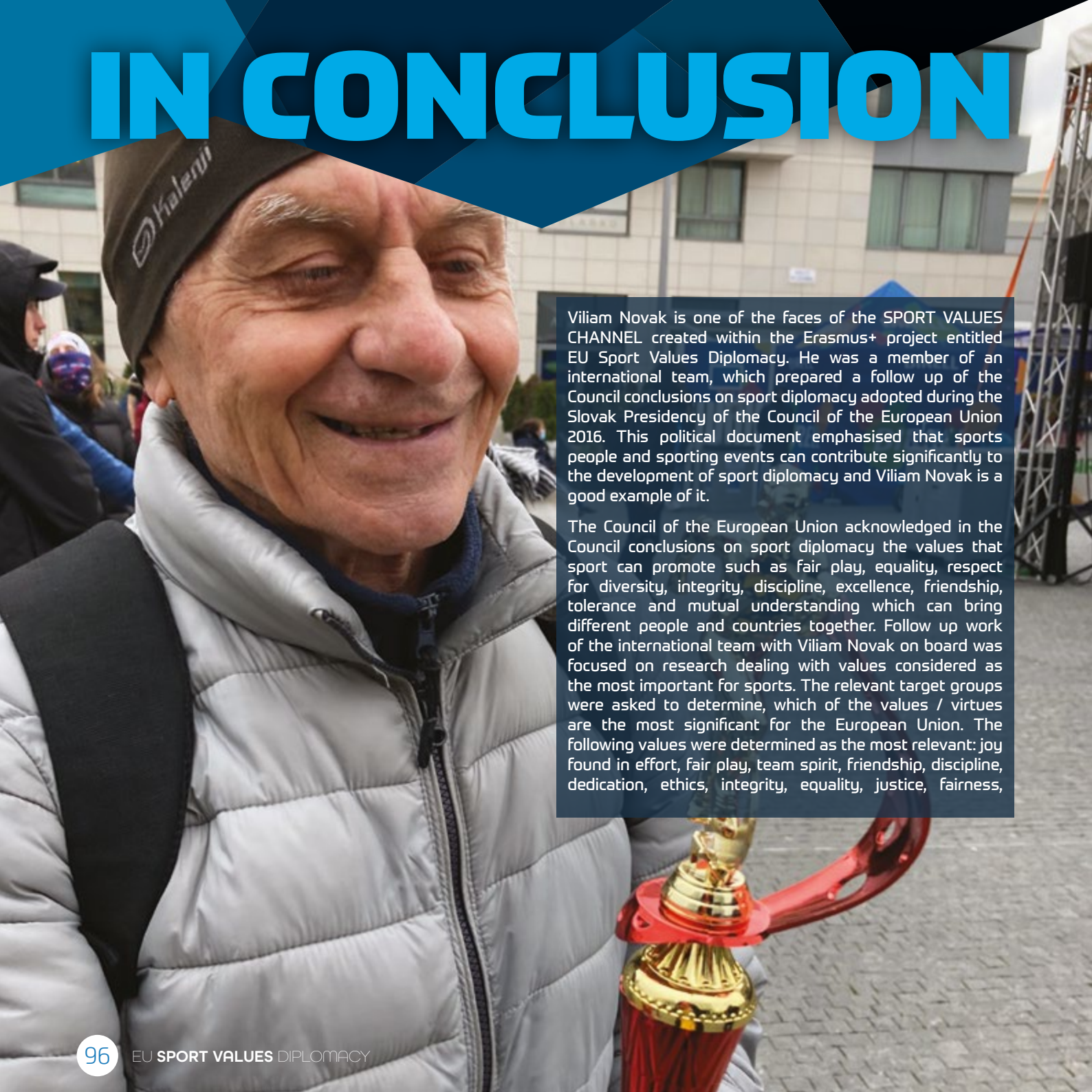
Maratón (ale aj jarmok) sa rajčanom vydaril; dotiahli to do neuveriteľného 40-teho ročníka a tento maratón sa stal (spolu s MMM) najobľúbenejším slovenským maratónom. Rajčanom (najmä "otýcovi" Palovi Uhlárikovi) blahoželáme a prajeme mnoho ďalších (vydarených) ročníkov tohoto už legendárneho maratónu.

Rajecký maratón je sám o sebe atrakcia, ale k pestrosti zážitkov prispeli aj rajecké "kordovánky" teda mažoretky viacerých vekových skupín, čo je iste slovenským unikátom. Zaujímavý bol aj stánok žilinského pluku špeciálneho určenia, ktorý "verboval" na službu v armáde. Ja som nemal šancu si takto privyrobit', lebo horná veková hranica je 30 rokov a v prípade mimoriadnej fyzickej zdatnosti vraj rokov 35. Aspoň zostane na mladších. Ešte jedna atrakcia tu bola: dlhočizný rad na bagety a kofolu. Nebolo by možné kofolu podávať vo fľaškách a tak urýchliť celý proces? Pravdou je, že dievčatá roznášali poháre s (dobrým) iónovým nápojom a aspoň trochu zmiernili smäd dehydratovaných polmaratóncov. Maratóncov bolo menej a pribiehali s odstupmi, tam tento problém nebol.

Vilo Novák, Bratislava, 15.8.2023



IN CONCLUSION

A close-up photograph of Viliam Novak, an elderly man with a warm smile. He is wearing a black beanie with the 'Kalenji' logo and a light grey quilted jacket. He is holding a large, ornate trophy with a red base and a gold cup. The background shows an outdoor setting with a building and other people.

Viliam Novak is one of the faces of the SPORT VALUES CHANNEL created within the Erasmus+ project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy. He was a member of an international team, which prepared a follow up of the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy adopted during the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2016. This political document emphasised that sports people and sporting events can contribute significantly to the development of sport diplomacy and Viliam Novak is a good example of it.

The Council of the European Union acknowledged in the Council conclusions on sport diplomacy the values that sport can promote such as fair play, equality, respect for diversity, integrity, discipline, excellence, friendship, tolerance and mutual understanding which can bring different people and countries together. Follow up work of the international team with Viliam Novak on board was focused on research dealing with values considered as the most important for sports. The relevant target groups were asked to determine, which of the values / virtues are the most significant for the European Union. The following values were determined as the most relevant: joy found in effort, fair play, team spirit, friendship, discipline, dedication, ethics, integrity, equality, justice, fairness,

A man with a shaved head, wearing a red short-sleeved athletic shirt with a white logo on the back, black shorts, and bright green running shoes, is captured from behind as he jogs along a paved path. The path curves gently to the left and is bordered by lush green foliage and trees. The scene is misty or foggy, with the background trees appearing soft and out of focus.

autonomy, respect for diversity, tolerance and mutual understanding, joy in endeavour in physical activity, satisfaction derived from hard work, rationality and understanding, respect for persons, voluntary commitments, multiculturalism / international understanding, being the best that you can be / pursuit of excellence.

Consequently, the relevant target groups were asked to explain the reasons for such assumptions and give their own opinions in the field. The results were disseminated through different channels during the major sport events and Viliam Novak was selected among twelve ambassadors who promoted sport diplomacy through their testimonials. He was also honoured to offer his inspirational story highlighting social inclusion through sport within the SPORT VALUES CHANNEL.

Political background of the research recalled EU sport policies outlined by the EU Work Plan for sport 2021 - 2024, White Paper for Sport and Communication on Developing the European Dimension in Sport. The research highlighted a topic of sport diplomacy and social inclusion through sport values with strategic aim to promote a recent work of the EU in sport sector. We were delighted to capitalise on outcomes reached by Viliam Novak within this research and build on sport diplomacy, which uses the universality of sport as a way to transcend linguistic, sociocultural and religious differences. We used strong potential of his personality to promote multi-cultural dialogue and contribute to development and peace.

CHAPTER 10

Green Deal and Sustainability

10





Green Deal & Sustainability



Green deal and sustainability of the Erasmus + project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy, which is co-funded from the European Union, is notably linked to the project work plan and project core outcomes. This part aims to provide a comprehensive overview of efforts towards sustainability and the impact on the environment and society achieved by involved organisations.

The project EU Sport Values Diplomacy was digital, green, and innovative in sport sector. It placed a strong focus on the green and digital transitions. The project platform called SPORT VALUES CHANNEL just underlined these project aspects.

Sustainability and green dimension were part of each project activity. Sustainability guaranteed a pledge of stakeholders to keep project outcomes financed after its initial funding from the Erasmus+ programme.

Sustainability of the project went hand in hand with green aspects. It represented one of basic project elements. The project was designed in an eco-friendly way and incorporated green practices in different project phases. The project consortium was very much focused on the sustainable aspects, especially reducing of the partners' and channel's environmental footprint, including carbon emissions, water

usage, waste generation, etc. Each project meeting, including national and transnational ones dealt with raise awareness in the field. In addition, there were several measures taken to reduce environmental impacts, such as energy-efficient practices, waste management, and water conservation. Combination of online meetings with the meetings on-site reduced unnecessary travels and demonstrated project's green and digital dimension.

Environmental impact of the project might be proved by various examples, including paperless agenda and administration striving to be environment friendly. Green aspects were evident in project operational field as well. For instance, local transport during transnational project meetings was assured by electro mobiles, public transport and bicycles. All project activities strived to be as green as possible while using eco-textiles and fair-trade approach for all the gadgets and eco administrative materials, mentioning just a few of them.

In addition, transnational project meetings were organised mainly in outside environment with several aims. One of them was to reduce electricity consumption and carbon footprint.

Moreover, it allowed active approach for participants, including physical activities on the fresh air. Outdoor project activities eliminated a threat of virus infections too that was notably important in this Covid-19 pandemic time. Finally, outside activities took into account also all the pandemic restrictions concerned.

To wrap it up, sustainability and green dimension was part of each project activity, ecological affairs were integral parts of everyday life of the project members and EU Green deal was transformed into practical dimension through number of actions.

In light of the above mentioned, the project consortium of the project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy worked out a collective pledge, committing to the further sustainability actions, notably environmental impact of sports activities in favour of the planet.

The pledge was well perceived and accepted by all the members of respective organisations, which were involved in the project. The full wording of the pledge is following.

COLLECTIVE PLEDGE OF SPORT CLUB VEGA AND BIONETWORK ASSOCIATION

"We wholeheartedly commit ourselves to promoting sport values and sustainability for the betterment of society and the planet. With passion, dedication, and a sense of responsibility, we pledge to:

1. Advocate for Sustainable Practices by raising awareness about the environmental impact of sports activities and events and encourage adoption of such practices in sports organizations, venues, and events.
2. Empower local communities by engaging and supporting them to participate in sports activities for personal development and community cohesion based on the principles of fair play, respect, integrity, and inclusivity in all aspects of sports and thus have a collective positive impact.
3. Educate for Environmental Stewardship by sustaining our SPORT VALUES CHANNEL and lead by example, ensuring that our organizations adhere to the highest standards of sustainability in all our operations and initiatives.

Through this pledge, we commit to championing the European sport values while promoting sustainable practices that leave a positive legacy for current and future generations. We recognize that by combining the power of sports with a commitment to sustainability, we can create a healthier, more inclusive, and resilient world for all."

sustainability AND CONTINUATION

The part on sustainability and continuation describes the follow-up of the project after the EU funding ends. It deals with information how the project impact would be ensured and sustained. It offers solutions on parts of the project that should be continued and maintained as well as how this would be achieved.

This part names sustainability activities, resources necessary to continue the project and how the results would be used in the future. Moreover, it mentions synergies and complementarities with other EU funded activities on which the project capitalised in the past as well as it can build on the project results in the future.

Follow-up of the project

The project consortium ensured sustainability of the project after the EU grant has been used up by several actions. The starting points of the project were significant, since the partners possessed a common need and desire to develop the young people's physical activities by means of the project goals. It means experience and knowhow received from various partners, which were adaptable into practical activities, since it was part of the everyday activities in the organisations. The fact that the cooperation has been initiated and the project has been taken into use, created a solid basis for the continuation and further development of the children's and young people's physical activities. This might guarantee the **contribution of a physically active lifestyle even at an adult age.**

In order to assure sustainability, long-term impact and continuation the project consortium, Evaluation Manager and Sustainability Manager worked in close cooperation and were in charge of documents preparation linked to evaluation and sustainability. Each entity was responsible for their proper evaluation and sustainability of each phase of the project and sent a summary to the project coordinator. Based on those documents, Evaluation Manager alongside with Sustainability Manager prepared the evaluation and sustainability summary. In addition, after each transnational project meeting, Evaluation Manager was in charge of preparing information on the progress of activities. It stemmed from questionnaires with feedbacks from the participants. It served for the next steps in preparation of the



future activities.

The monitoring and evaluation started at the very beginning of the project, which guaranteed that the results were achieved in the most economical way and on time. The evaluation and sustainability of the project implementation was agreed by the Management Board. It covered the whole project-period, between and after transnational project meetings. The participants wrote an assessment of what they learned and feedback on the impact of their work within and outside their organisations.

The Management Board reviewed the feedback summary after each transnational project meeting. The project team guided follow-up actions based on feedback, evaluated the implementation of the goals, gave instructions to partner organisations and informed about the progress of the project. Partner organisations adopted **new ways of working** during the project, which remained part of the school's and sport clubs' activity. As an example, we would like to highlight a possibility of expressing opinions on sport values through the project flyers as well as through the interactive digital project platform entitled SPORT VALUES CHANNEL. The project outcomes on these aspects belong to the most valuable parts of project legacy.

After the project, the partners participated in a qualitative questionnaire on how the project succeeded. The impact of project on participants emphasized especially relationship between sport clubs and the schools and at the same time with external coaches and PE teachers in order to support social inclusion through sport values. This is for instance fully **in line with current strategies in the field of sport in the Slovak Republic**, notably focusing on synergies of sports coaches working in the school environment.

Sustainability activities

Sustainability activities are linked to the digital platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL that is the core outcome of the project. It will serve to all target groups defined within the project also after the project timeline, as the project coordinator will keep it functional. Contribution of the platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL to the priorities of the call in the field of sport is in increased awareness of the role of sport in promoting social inclusion, equal opportunities and a healthy lifestyle. It provides a deliberate, evidenced based and practical mechanism in integrating sport with social inclusion.

In this regard, several stakeholders of entities involved in the project consortium pledged to support the project activities and finance or support follow-up of the project. Notably, the Slovak Modern Pentathlon Association committed to fund the project outcome after the lifetime of the project and thus keep the digital platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL functional in order to assure sustainability of the whole project in the future. As a result of this generous gesture, sustainability of the project in the future might reach **long-term nationwide promotion of the project objectives within Bulgaria and Slovakia**. It will have an effect also on increased number of general public, especially children and young generation, in proposed programme thanks to

its permanent online accessibility as well as increased number of members of the participating organisations involved into physical activities with learning aspects in the framework of this project.

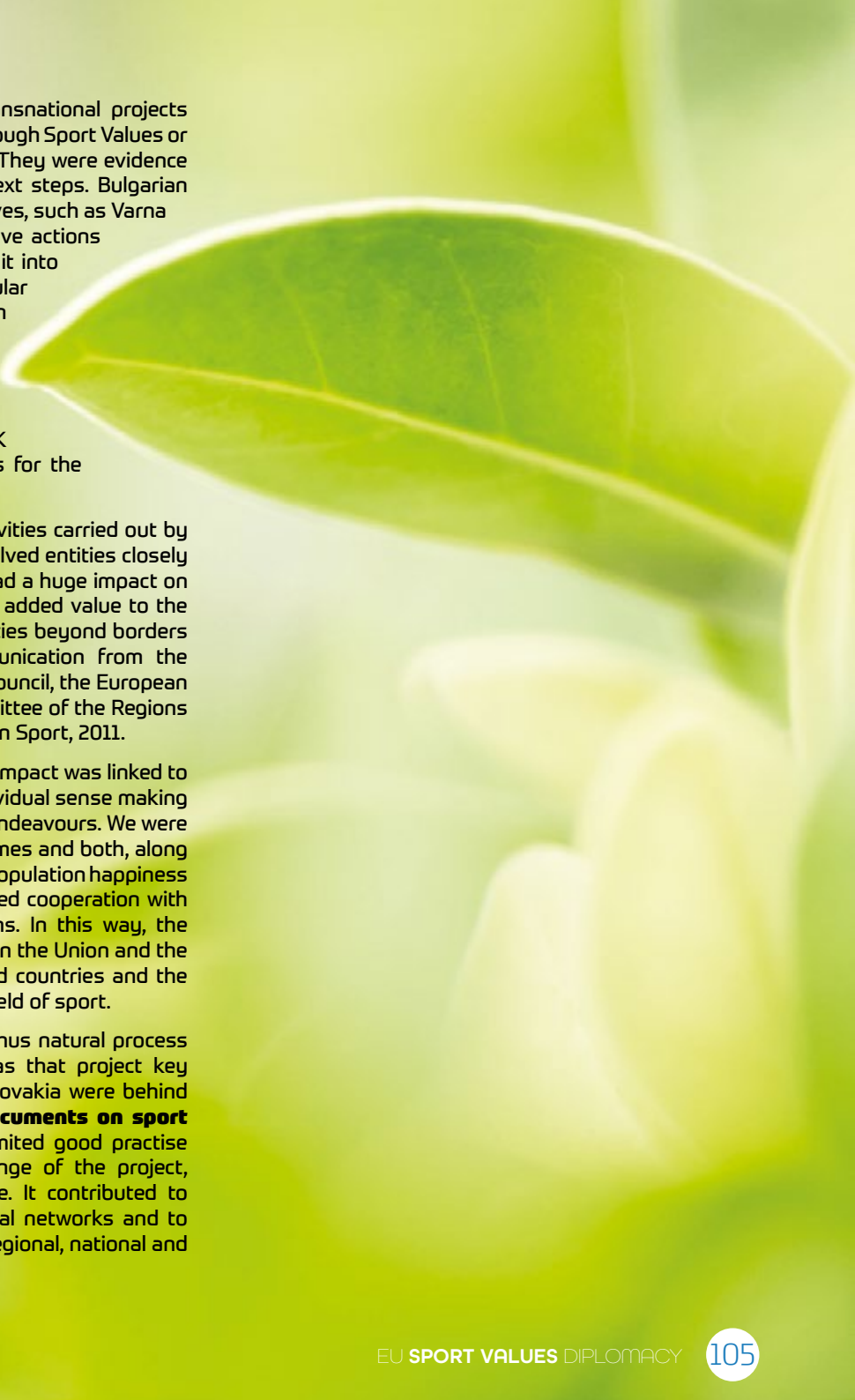
Sustainability activities provide a possibility to participate **for disadvantaged groups and wider promotion of benefits of sports and healthy lifestyles**. Keeping digital platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL functional after the project lifetime, enlarged project outcome within the international environment outside the EU within the most significant stakeholders of this project. In this way, the project consortium assumes a promotion of the Erasmus + Programme and European values within the EU and beyond towards the EU third countries. Finally, it would make EU sport policies more visible in the future, notably in non-governmental sport and education areas through the project core outcome.

Synergies and complementarities with other activities

The project was designed in a way that synergies and complementarities with other activities were core elements not only during its lifetime but also in a future. It fostered synergy with, and between, local, regional, national and international policies to promote sport and physical activity and to address sport-related challenges such as establishing stronger links between education and sport, its social and ethical values and its contribution to aspects of social inclusion. Moreover, **synergic effect was reached by different backgrounds and types of institutions**, which created the project consortium.

Using synergy of previous efforts was a basic project philosophy and resulted **from previous activities within Erasmus+ of**





the Slovak partner institution, such as transnational projects called Coubertin Academy – Social Inclusion through Sport Values or Run – Swim – Learn! In the spirit of Coubertin. They were evidence base and inspiration from Slovakia for the next steps. Bulgarian events concerned also several previous initiatives, such as Varna – European City of Sport 2019, urban innovative actions related to sustainable use of land by turning it into sport and leisure open-air facility. Of particular importance was also BIONEST, the Bulgarian project, which supported the social inclusion and professional integration of the vulnerable group of unemployed and **inactive women over the age of 54**, by creating a new social enterprise in the structure of the BIONETWORK for applied art articles and creating new jobs for the vulnerable target group.

Relevant to the complementarity to other activities carried out by other organisations is also a fact, that the involved entities closely cooperated with the EU third countries, that had a huge impact on the EU added value and brought an essential added value to the project. It allowed to widespread project activities beyond borders of the European Union, recalling on Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled “Developing the European Dimension in Sport, 2011.

From the worldwide perspective, the potential impact was linked to the construct of joy that can be both from individual sense making embodiment and through institutionalisation endeavours. We were mindful that both these needed specific outcomes and both, along with the promotion of wellbeing benefit to the ‘population happiness index’ that UNESCO promotes. It also concerned cooperation with third countries and international organisations. In this way, the project contributed to the Lisbon Treaty calls on the Union and the Member State to foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of sport.

Building on those aspects in the future was thus natural process for the project work. Amplification factor was that project key actors within the project from Bulgaria and Slovakia were behind preparation of the two **EU presidencies documents on sport values and sport diplomacy**. Overcoming limited good practise in integral approach was the highest challenge of the project, which is worth developing also in the future. It contributed to the creation and development of transnational networks and to fostering synergies with, and between, local, regional, national and international policies.

CHAPTER 11

EU Visibility and Communication

11







EU Visibility and Communication

Part on EU visibility and communication describes the communication and dissemination activities, which were achieved in order to promote the activities/results and maximise the impact. It provides clarification on how the project consortium reached the target groups, relevant stakeholders, policymakers and the general public and explains the choice of the dissemination channels.

This part also describes how the visibility of EU funding was ensured during the lifetime of the project and indicates channels through which it would be achieved in the future.

Communication and dissemination project activities were interconnected and reflected dissemination and exploitation goals of the project. The activities and results of the project were actively disseminated during the project lifetime as results and experiences began to accumulate. The project team evaluated the dissemination and exploitation of the

project after each transnational project meeting. The project team have appointed Dissemination Manager, who guided and monitored the partners' dissemination.

Project communication, dissemination and exploitation goals in general were linked to the visibility of the Erasmus+ Sport chapter possibilities. Project consortium shared a grassroots experience towards the EU Sport policy. Moreover, it informed how the EU sport policy could have an influence on the local policy and practices. Communication and dissemination goals were also to raise awareness on sport values, social inclusion through sport and sport diplomacy as well as ability to implement it. In addition, project consortium shared the solutions and knowhow inside and outside the project. Exploitation goal was to influence sport policy and

practice on the local level and to develop new partnerships. tion were:

- end-users (schools and sport clubs on the grassroots level)
- partner organisation's staff, stakeholders and experts in the field of sport-specific genres
- national and regional sport federations,
- decision makers on the regional and local level,
- the press and media reached by the project partners on all the levels,
- general public,
- existing contacts and networks.

The core communication and dissemination channel was a project outcome - the digital platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL. It served to all the target groups defined within this project. Apart from the digital platform also social media were used to make the project easier to follow by the project partners and the wider audience. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were created to promote the project content.

Different local, regional, national and EU-level events, meetings and discussion opportunities were used to raise awareness of the project idea and its deliverables in the participating countries. The aim was to find also such events and meetings, in which there were participants from both sport environment and educational system.

Within communication and dissemination affairs, project coordinator was responsible for following tasks:

- coordination of activities within the digital platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL,
- preparation of project documentation for Erasmus+ Project Results Platform,
- communication with media representatives, such as newspapers, radio and television,
- presentations of the project outcomes to various national and international stakeholders,
- project social media accounts and website.

The partner institution was responsible for following tasks:

- communication with media representatives, such as newspapers, radio and television,
- presentations of the project outcomes to various national and international stakeholders,
- national coordination of activities within the digital platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL,
- partners social media and websites.

The communication outcomes were the increased awareness, increased skills, improved abilities, knowledge and experience gained by the participants, partners or other stakeholders involved in the project.

Visibility of EU funding

Visibility of EU funding was assured mainly during communication and dissemination activities, which took place throughout the whole project timeline and were well perceived by the project participants themselves, as well as the project stakeholders, schools, sport clubs, media representatives and the general public. More details are to be found in a chapter, which deals with materials for dissemination and the final conclusions presented towards the public. It provides the figures on dissemination received by 31 August 2023 and concerns the **major communication and dissemination events, activities and relevant target group**. In addition to this chapter,

Materials for dissemination and the final conclusions of the project

the updated figures on dissemination activities are available on the project platform called SPORT VALUES CHANNEL that played a vital role in the communication and dissemination processes.

It is worth mentioning that the number of communication and dissemination activities was increased compared to the foreseen planning, which was caused by unexpected interest expressed by several project stakeholders after the initial dissemination efforts. Thanks to this fact, also a number of participants in dissemination activities was expanded. This consequently led to the improved impact and number of people who were introduced to the project as such.

EU Sport Values Diplomacy presented towards the public were linked to communication and dissemination events, which were assured both on-site and online. On-site events reached mostly Bulgaria and Slovakia while online dissemination process reached also a target group beyond the countries of the project consortium.

Communication and dissemination process concerned the whole timeline of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy. Needless to say that communication and dissemination activities will continue in the near future as part of the project sustainability. Upcoming communication and dissemination events would be assured thanks to interference of several stakeholders and especially a commitment of the Slovak





Modern Pentathlon Association to keep the project platform called SPORT VALUES CHANNEL operating and functional after the project timeline.

During communication and dissemination activities, a special attention was given to the visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus + programme. Moreover, dissemination process focused on raise awareness about various European policies in the field of sport.

In addition to the continuous communication and dissemination process, there were particular on-site communication and dissemination events. All of them were supported by virtual communication and dissemination activities and online dimension. The next chapter introduces in a chronological order the most significant on-site dissemination events. Provided events are well illustrated by vivid pictures of materials for dissemination in order to capture an ambience and spontaneous approach of the target group as well as project team. On-site dissemination events were complemented by online activities, which are provided in the final part of the report.

Dissemination and communication activities were closely linked to the press conference during the Transnational Project Meeting held in June 2023 in Bulgaria and the closing project meeting within the Transnational Project Meeting 6 held in August 2023. It comprised closing meeting and evaluation phase summary. Synergies in communication and dissemination involved the presentation of the project outcomes towards the public during the event of Runathon in Sofia in September 2023. Apart from project objectives/activities/conclusions, also European values and European policies in the field of sport were promoted.

Communication, dissemination and exploitation of results concerned tangible and intangible results. Tangible results were linked to increase children's and youth's physically active lifestyle in general and good practices, ideas and methods. Intangible results concerned knowledge about the EU funding and how the Erasmus+ Sport project cycle was managed. Apart from that they were linked to knowledge and experience gained by participants, sport clubs, staff. Dissemination and exploitation of results had an impact on increased skills and achievements. Finally, it improved physical activities and sports awareness.

Exact figures and more details on visibility of EU funding are described in a relevant chapter dealing with materials for dissemination and the final conclusions presented towards the public. They are well developed in particular regarding Dissemination Manager tasks, dissemination and exploitation goals and project management.

CHAPTER 12

Dissemination and Conclusions

12





Dissemination and Conclusions

Dissemination activities of the Erasmus + project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy, which was co-funded from the European Union, were notably **linked to the project work plan and project core outcomes**. Dissemination activities took place throughout the whole project timeline and were well perceived by the project participants themselves, as well as the project stakeholders, schools, sport clubs, media representatives and the general public.

This part deals with materials for dissemination and the final conclusions presented towards the public. It provides the figures on dissemination received by 31 August 2023 and concerns the **major dissemination events, activities and relevant target group**. In addition to this document, the updated figures on dissemination activities are available on the project platform called SPORT VALUES CHANNEL that played a vital role in the dissemination process.

The number of dissemination activities was increased compared to the foreseen planning, which was caused by unexpected interest expressed by several project stakeholders after the initial dissemination efforts. Thanks to this fact, also a number of participants in dissemination activities was expanded. This consequently led to the improved impact and number of people who were introduced to the project as such.

Materials for dissemination and the **final conclusions of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy** presented towards the public were linked to dissemination events, which were assured both on-site and online. On-site events reached mostly Bulgaria and Slovakia while online dissemination process reached also a target group beyond the countries of the project consortium. Dissemination process concerned the whole timeline of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy. Needless to say that dissemination activities will continue in the near future as part of the project sustainability. Upcoming dissemination events would be assured thanks to interference of several stakeholders and especially a commitment of the Slovak Modern Pentathlon Association to keep the project platform called SPORT VALUES CHANNEL operating and functional after the project timeline.

During dissemination activities, a special attention was given to the visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus + programme. Moreover, dissemination process focused on raise awareness about various European policies in the field of sport. In addition to the continuous dissemination process, there were particular on-site dissemination events. All of them were supported by virtual dissemination activities and online dimension. This document introduces in a chronological order the most significant on-site dissemination events. Provided events are well illustrated by vivid pictures of materials for dissemination in order to capture an ambience and spontaneous approach of the target group as well as project team. On-site dissemination events were complemented by online activities, which are provided in the final part of this chapter.

Coordination meetings 2022 – 2023

Dissemination activities started on the national level in May 2022 with a number of regular coordination meetings on project achievements for the members of the project consortium. They were organised throughout the whole timeline of the project. Inevitable part of them were interactive educational and raise awareness activities, practical workshops, seminars and other formats of educational activities, which were



focused on various topics, such as health enhancing physical activities, sport values, culture, diplomacy, protocol affairs, gastronomy etc.

They included use of small scale learning/teaching, training materials, tools, approaches, educational device, accessories, sports gear, facilities, equipment. They were a place for a transfer of theoretical knowledge towards practical level and based on the feedback received, they were very much appreciated by the participants.

Coordination meetings served for dissemination of the national perspective of the project specific objectives and

concerned:

- develop new international cooperation and reinforce already existing networks,
- increase capacity of involved organisations to operate at transnational level,
- exchange good practices, confront ideas and methods in several areas relating to sport and physical activity,
- bring fresh thinking to the delivery and practice of sport in order to develop its educative and social potential,
- better develop the links between sport and social inclusion through sport values.

Coordination meetings were a useful tool for initial dissemination process and served as pilot activities for further dissemination activities. They tested dissemination intentions and were well accepted by the members of the project consortium. Provided educational events in a framework of coordination meetings were organised in various places of the project consortium and were professionally lectured by the qualified project team members. All of them were personally assured by human resources on a voluntary basis.

Dissemination goals during coordination meetings were achieved by several tools. The concerned namely the project roll-up and T-shirts through which visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus + programme was assured. Moreover, dissemination process during coordination meetings highlighted raise awareness of various European policies in the field of sport. In reaching this goal, the coordination meeting were used to continuously promote partial conclusions of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy presented towards the public.

Ivan Luknár Trophy in Piešťany

The very first dissemination event outside the internal meetings and members of the project consortium was organised in Slovakia. It took place on 27 September 2022 on the premises of the Pierre de Coubertin Secondary Grammar School in Piešťany on the occasion of an award celebration of the Ivan Luknár Trophy. The award was granted from the hands of Director of Pierre de Coubertin Secondary Grammar School in Piešťany to the winner of the knowledge-sport completion.

The celebration supported the dissemination goals of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy through the project roll-up and T-shirts given to the ceremony participants. In this way, the project consortium highlighted a visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus + programme. Finally, the Pierre de Coubertin Secondary Grammar School in Piešťany became one of the core stakeholders of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy and developed many further joint activities with the project consortium.

Presentation by the Japanese Ambassador

Thanks to support and understanding of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy by Director of the Pierre de Coubertin Secondary Grammar School in Piešťany, the further dissemination activities were held on 4 October 2022 during



the school pedagogical process. In the framework of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy, a specific presentation was given by the Japanese Ambassador in Slovakia HE Makoto Nakagawa to the students and teachers from the Pierre de Coubertin Secondary Grammar School in Piešťany. It focused on the geography and history of Japan, vastly dealing with diplomatic affairs and highlighting sport dimension in cooperation among the countries.

The event gave an opportunity for visibility of the European Union documents and the Erasmus + programme beyond the European Union borders. Moreover, dissemination process highlighted raise awareness of various European policies in the field of sport. Event and project outcomes were promoted through various social media of the relevant stakeholders, including the Pierre de Coubertin Secondary Grammar School in Piešťany and the Japanese Embassy in Slovakia.

Winter series 2022/2023 in Slovakia

Winter series 2022/2023 organised from December 2022 to March 2023 within the preparation for the Bratislava Marathon provided for the project consortium an ideal opportunity for an on-site dissemination process within sporting community in Slovakia. The partial events were organised on 10 December 2022, 14 January 2023, 11 February 2023 and 11 March and comprised a large number of running enthusiasts, who took part in these



events.

Dissemination activities were achieved by project T-shirts through which the project consortium promoted the EU Sport Values Diplomacy. Relevant topics related to the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy were discussed with a large community of runners who participated in these events. They concerned namely European policies in the field of sport, visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus + programme.

Transnational project meeting in Bratislava and Piešťany

Materials for dissemination and the final conclusions of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy presented towards the public were well developed during the third transnational project meeting organised in the framework of a project EU Sport Values Diplomacy.

It was held from 12 till 15 January 2023 in Bratislava and Piešťany, Slovakia. The meeting was hosted by the project coordinator Sport Club VEGA and attended by relevant experts from BIONETWORK Association, Bulgaria. It was the very first occasion for the project partners to meet in person and was held in very friendly and sincere ambience.



It capitalised on the previous active virtual dissemination work and was a very fruitful follow up of the project online meetings. Project non-formal discussions and health enhancing physical activities as well as side events just emphasized the great atmosphere and confirmed a cooperative spirit of all the involved individuals.



The meeting started on the premises of the Gymnázium Pierra de Coubertina in Piešťany by introduction of cooperation of Sport Club VEGA and educational institutions. It continued with presentation of the school premises, its history, and greatest achievements. Within this part, there were presented practical examples on social inclusion through sport values and experts job shadowing during which dissemination goals were achieved.

The meeting continued by a working lunch on project outcomes, which took place in Thermia Palace Ensana Health Spa Piešťany. This place also hosted the first part of the formal transnational project meeting that started with an official opening of a meeting and introduction by a project coordinator. Welcome

speech
by a project
coordinator was followed
by presentation of project work
of Sport Club VEGA from Slovakia that was
illustrated by a Powerpoint Presentation and discussed into
the details during a vivid discussion session.

The next part dealt with the work programme of the project,
which started with an introduction to the topic by the project
coordinator and information about communication with
EACEA and state of play within SyGma.

It was illustrated by uploaded deliverables from the second
transnational project meeting and development of working
processes and responsibilities. Discussion focused on all
the outstanding issues and miscellaneous points. The
programme concluded with good practice from Slovakia on
sport physiotherapy, balneology, cultural performance, and a
working dinner on project outcomes.

The second part of the formal transnational project meeting
took place on the bank of the Danube River in Bratislava with
an active participation in the sport competition Winter Running
Series. It was held in a form of a good practice from Slovakia
on health enhancing physical activities, practical examples,
experts job shadowing, pilot activities testing, discussions
and with a working lunch on project outcomes.

This part of the meeting supported the dissemination goals
of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy through the project
roll-up and T-shirts given the participants. In this way, the
project consortium highlighted a visibility of the European
Union and the Erasmus + programme. Summary of the
meeting outcomes was disseminated through press release
where project objectives, activities, conclusions, together with
European values and European policies in the field of sport
were promoted.

The third transnational project meeting organised in the
framework of a project EU Sport Values Diplomacy fulfilled
expectations of all the involved participants. It was considered
as a very useful mechanism to develop the project outcomes
and reach expected project dissemination goals.

Bratislava Marathon 2023

After successful dissemination activities within the sports
environment during the Winter series 2022/2023, there were

plenty
of other sporting
occasion suitable for dissemination of
the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy.

The most significant was the Bratislava Marathon 2023,
which took place on 1 – 2 April 2023. The project consortium
in cooperation with project main stakeholders, such as the



French Embassy in Slovakia, French Institute in Bratislava and
the Slovak Olympic Academy capitalised on the well organised
sport event and highlighted the Erasmus + programme and
various European policies in the field of sport.

This event vastly contributed to the dissemination process,
highlighted raise awareness of the project EU Sport Values
Diplomacy and assured visibility of the European Union.
Dissemination goals during the Bratislava Marathon 2023
were achieved by several tools. They concerned namely the
project flyers, roll-up and T-shirts, which were distributed to
the runners and assured visibility of the European Union and
the Erasmus + programme.

A mixed French-Slovak team entitled Sports Diplomacy
actively participated in the half marathon relay competition

reached a solid ranking in the final results. On this occasion, gadgets for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games were distributed among the active participants, including mascots, T-shirts, lanyards, pins, etc.

They supported the project dissemination goals with up-to-date aspects in the field of sport diplomacy and attracted attention of a large scale of various age categories, who expressed their interest in the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy.

A successful dissemination event was overarched by discussions with famous Slovak athletes, including Ján Volko, the best Slovak sprinter in the history, who is currently getting



ready for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. Feedback on sport values through the first distribution of the project flyers was given by 228 responders and gave a solid ground for further successful dissemination activities.

Paralympic Day 2023

Paralympic Day 2023 in Bratislava on 5 April 2023 provided an ideal occasion for an on-site

dissemination process for handicapped athletes. In addition, it gave an opportunity to the students from the Secondary Grammar School Metodova in Bratislava to be acquainted with the EU Sport Values Diplomacy project goals.

The event took place on the premises of the specialised table tennis sports hall in the outskirt of Bratislava called Rača. It was organised in cooperation with several project stakeholders, notably the Slovak Paralympic Committee, the French Embassy in Slovakia, French Institute in Bratislava and the Slovak Olympic Academy.



The target group was introduced to the topic of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy by initial presentation given by the project coordinator, which was further developed by invited Paralympians in table tennis and their coaches. A vital role in this event was played by the French Embassy in Slovakia, which provided during the event a practical link to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Fruitful discussion of students and handicapped athletes during the Paralympic Day 2023 in Bratislava were complemented by a distribution of the project flyers on the project EU

Sport Values Diplomacy. Participants were informed about the Erasmus + programme and dissemination process highlighted raise awareness of various European policies in the field of sport. Feedback on sport values through the project flyers from 38 responders and this number alongside with previous figures gave a huge satisfaction to the project consortium for the work done so far.

Iconic Devín – Bratislava 2023



An iconic running race called Devín – Bratislava, with a long sport history was part of dissemination activities toward the general public in 2023.

The running course of almost 12km connects outskirts of Bratislava called Devín with a city centre of Bratislava and is one of the most popular mass races for the Slovak running community. It is

always attended by high number of domestic and foreign athletes. That was the reason why the project consortium decided to use it for the purpose of dissemination. The event was organised on 16 April 2023 and provided plenty of side events, which were suitable for dissemination activities of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy.

The project roll-up situated in the heart of the city centre of Bratislava and the project T-shirts which were worn by project members highlighted a visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus + programme. Dissemination material designed by the project consortium and produced in the framework of the project successfully introduced the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy towards the wide range of participating runners, spectators and general public.

Europe Day 2023

Dissemination activities within the Paralympic Day 2023 in Bratislava and a previous fruitful international cooperation were a basis for the project consortium to enlarge the foreseen dissemination activities beyond the planned events. During celebrations of the Europe Day 2023 on 9 May 2023, dissemination process of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy continued with addressing the general public. A stand of the French Institute in Bratislava within the premises of the Old Market (Stará Tržnica) in the city centre of Bratislava provided a space to get a feedback through project flyers on sport values from 153 responders.

The event was organised in cooperation with several project stakeholders, notably the French Embassy in Slovakia, French Institute in Bratislava and the Slovak Olympic Academy.

It was attended by several authorities, both from sports and educational environment. They included Director of the French Institute in Slovakia, Educational Attaché from the French Embassy and Chair of the Slovak Olympic Academy, just to mention a few of them. A recent portfolio of the European policies in the field of sport and presentation of the Erasmus + programme were part of the joint activities and gave a space

for visibility of the activities of the European Union in this area.



Numerous sporting events in May 2023

May 2023 was full of various sporting events, where the project consortium disseminated the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy towards the wide range of participating runners, spectators and general public. The most important events for dissemination purposes were Ivanska Five and a Half on 1 May 2023, Wings for Life on 7 May 2023, Levice Streets Running on 8 May 2023 and Štrbské Pleso Night Run on 20 May 2023. The dissemination goals were achieved especially through the project T-shirts, which were worn by project members and highlighted a visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus + programme.



Transnational project meeting in Varna, Bulgaria

The fifth transnational project meeting organised in the framework of a project EU Sport Values Diplomacy took place on 17 – 19 June 2023 in Varna and Byala, Bulgaria. It was hosted by relevant experts from BIONETWORK Association, Bulgaria and attended by the project coordinator Športový klub VEGA/ Sport Club VEGA, Slovakia.

As indicated in a project description, apart from exchange of expertise, it dealt with dissemination phase summary and agreement on the next steps regarding specific tasks that were focused on the major project objectives. Prior to the meeting, relevant documentation was circulated along with appropriate articles that promote fresh thinking on the project concept.

Summary of the meeting outcomes was disseminated through press release where project objectives, activities, conclusions, together with European values and European policies in the field of sport were promoted. Project objectives, budget, methods and activities were evaluated after the virtual project meeting.

Relevant experts from BIONETWORK Association, Bulgaria attended the meeting alongside with experts from the project

coordinator

Sport Club VEGA. Experts from BIONETWORK Association, Bulgaria prepared questionnaires from the meetings as one of required tasks under their responsibility is monitoring tools preparation and support with relevant documentation.



The need for the given number of participants and specification of the roles of each of them was linked to overall coordination of the project, communication with stakeholders and the European institutions. It was based also on responsibility for logistics and organisational affairs within the project, sport/educational affairs, and administration of the project. It concerned as well facilitation of IT and digital affairs linked to the project.

Finally, it was linked to dissemination of the project outcomes and visibility of the project as such. Justification of each participant's need and his/her specific role were described in the cooperation arrangements and discussed during the meeting. The need for given number of participants was connected, besides the activities indicated in the description of the meeting, with preparation of foreseen core project outcome. It was linked to project main objective, which was to create an effective tool for raising awareness and dissemination of information in

three

interconnected areas:

sport values, social inclusion and sport diplomacy. A platform entitled SPORT VALUES CHANNEL was finalised as a core project outcome. Indicator for measuring achievement is a new digital platform as a practical mechanism integrating relevant affairs, legal acts and documents on EU level. Baseline value for measuring achievement is zero, target value is one.

The meeting was also linked to several specific objectives, such as attract and widen access for newcomers, less experienced organisations and small-scale actors to the programme. These partnerships act as a first step for organisations into cooperation at European level. In addition, the meeting



supported the inclusion of target groups with fewer opportunities and supported active European citizenship and bringing the European dimension to the local level.

The meeting was in general organised in accordance with the program sent to participants by email before the meeting. There were only slight time modifications of the programme, which were caused mainly by ad-hoc discussions on topics that arose before and during the meeting itself.

The meeting started on Friday, 17 June 2023 with welcome greetings and a quick sync meeting about fifth TPM objectives and logistics.

It was followed by the partners' working dinner, during which the participants discussed notably presentation of project work of the project partners and other related affairs. In particular, there were given information on regular coordination meetings on project achievements, meeting significant national and foreign stakeholders during major sport events.



Another related topic, which was discussed were interactive educational and raise awareness activities on EU Sport Values Diplomacy, notably workshops, seminars on various topics, such as health enhancing physical activities, sport values, culture, diplomacy, gastronomy, protocolar affairs etc. In this

respect there were discussed small-scale learning/teaching, training materials, tools, approaches and their efficiency in the project work.

The key discussions were linked to approval of the partial sequences of the digital platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL, which is a core project outcome.

Part of discussions were linked to the quiz for witty ones, under the sequence named CHALLENGE. The consortium agreed on these questions:

1. The European Week of Sport is
 - for everyone regardless of age, social background or fitness level
 - exclusively for children and youth
2. The HealthyLifestyle4All is the European Commission's two-year campaign that aims
 - to link sport and active lifestyles with health, food and other policies
 - to support fight against match fixing in sports
3. The #BeActive awards were created to support projects and individuals that are
 - dedicated to promoting sport and physical activity across Europe
 - supporting sport activities exclusively in schools
4. The #BeActive Workplace Award celebrates exemplary activities in the workplace
 - that encourage employees to #BeActive
 - that support Europeans to eat healthy food
5. The EU Sport Forum is the main platform for structured dialogue
 - between the European Commission and sport stakeholders
 - exclusively for the Council of Europe and schools
6. "The most important thing in sport is not winning but taking part, as an essential thing in life is not always conquering but fighting well." This idea was expressed by
 - Baron Pierre de Coubertin
 - Juan Antonio Samaranch

The project consortium also agreed with the wording on all the other sequences of the digital platform, notably TEST YOURSELF and YOUR VOICE.

Working programme was notably under responsibility of Yanka Dimitrova, a Dissemination Manager, who was in charge of the Work Package 2 on Communication, dissemination and visibility. However, at the same time Kristiana Kazandzhieva as a Sustainability Manager, who leads the Work Package 3 on Green deal, sustainability and impact informed about the upcoming activities.

Moreover, Project Manager coming from Slovakia and as Sustainability Manager coming from Bulgaria provided information how they operate on national management level and are leading capacities on national level within their own countries. They lead and manage their own micro teams in respective countries within their own institutions in favour of the project as such.

On Monday, 19 June 2023, the project team dealt with outstanding administrative affairs and financial procedures, information on state of play with submitted project documents to EACEA portal. The final part of the meeting was devoted to project partners final tasks and feedback and questionnaires from the meeting.

Inevitable part of the meeting was introduction to the topic with submitted project documents to EACEA and information on state of play regarding division of responsibilities and tasks, project partners contracts and bookkeeping affairs. After the meeting, feedback questionnaires from the meeting were sent to the meeting participants.

It is worth noting that project is interlinked with the national perspective of sport policies in Bulgaria and Slovakia, while taking into account the policies developed on the international levels. It focuses on both non-governmental and governmental levels, striving to foster communication and mutual discussions. Of particular note is the recent attention governments across the world are giving to sustainability and green dimension. Apart from project objectives/activities/conclusions, also European values and European policies in the field of sport were promoted.

The very last project activity in Varna was preparation of interview sessions of partners in the Bulgarian National Darik Radio and dissemination of results, preparation of the upcoming online transnational project meeting. After presentation of the meeting conclusions, the meeting was formally closed.

Byala Gastronomic Festival

The next day, Saturday 18 June 2023 the meeting continued with formal opening of a meeting and introduction by the host and Dissemination manager from BIO NETWORK. Welcome speech by the Dissemination manager and chairperson of BIONETWORK was followed by presentation of the state of play by Sport Club VEGA and dissemination activities of the project. Introduction to the topic was given by the Dissemination manager with an impressive presentation of the forthcoming HealthyLifestyle 4 all event in Byala – the European Town of sport.



It capitalised on Bulgarian events, related to the initiatives Varna. Namely, it concerned these events and initiatives: the European City of Sport 2019, urban innovative actions related to sustainable use of land by turning it into sport and leisure open air facility and BIONEST. This Bulgarian project supports the social inclusion and professional integration of the vulnerable group of unemployed and inactive women over the age of 54, by creating a new social enterprise in the structure of the BIONETWORK for applied art articles and creating new

jobs for
the vulnerable target group.

Dissemination Manager Yanka Dimitrova guided and monitored the partners' dissemination, where the target groups were:

- end-users (schools and sport clubs on the grassroots level)
- partner organisation's staff, stakeholders and experts in the field of sport-specific genres
- national and regional sport federations,
- decision makers on the regional and local level,
- the press and media reached by the project partners on the local, regional and national level and the general public,
- existing contacts and networks.

She proudly announced that all dissemination and exploitation goals were successfully achieved and summarised that they were especially:

- visibility of the Erasmus+ Sport chapter possibilities,
- sharing a grassroots experience towards the EU Sport policy,
- informing how the EU sport policy could have an influence on the local policy and practices,
- raising awareness of social inclusion through sport measures and an ability to implement it,
- sharing the solutions and knowhow inside and outside the Project,
- influence on sport policy and practice on the local level,
- developing new partnerships.

Details were given also on preparations and discussions about the participation of Sport Club VEGA from Slovakia and presentation of results to the wide public and media.

The partner expressed their experience on responsibilities for following tasks:

- communication with media representatives, such as newspapers, radio and television,
- presentations of the project outcomes to various national and international stakeholders,
- national coordination of activities within the digital platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL,
- partners social media and websites.

Materials for dissemination and press conference, including flyers, t-shirts and roll-up visuals are accessible in the portal of the EACEA as a public document with a due date on 30 June 2023.

Finally, after transportation to Byala, there was a participation in the healthy lifestyle4all event, interaction with athletes, sport clubs, healthy food producers, mayors and local administrations' officials, and local community. The highlight of this part of the meeting was a presentation of the project results to the general public and media and introduction of the digital platform EU SPORT VALUES channel. The project work continued after the lunch in Byala and transportation to Varna with administration agenda and preparation of the formal conclusions of the project.

The dissemination goals were achieved especially through the project T-shirts, which were worn by project members and the project roll-up displayed on all the events of the transnational project meeting in Bulgaria. Of a particular importance, there were notably radio and television dissemination channels, where all the project team members had an opportunity to spread project intentions.

Throughout the transnational project meeting, a wide range of participating spectators and general public were acquainted by the European Union policy documents on sport and in



particular with twelve European policies in the field of sport promoted by the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy.

This fact led to the higher visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus + programme as well as raise awareness of various European policies in the field of sport. Feedback on sport values received through the project flyers from 214 responders gave the final touch for successful on-site dissemination activities.

Olympic Day 2023

Dissemination activities focused on sport values during the Olympic Day 2023, which took place on 23 June 2023 all over the world, including Bulgaria and Slovakia. The project consortium used the opportunities of this event as well as plenty of side events organised throughout the involved countries. In Slovakia, they were organised for instance in cooperation with representatives of several project stakeholders, such as the French Embassy in Slovakia, French Institute in Bratislava and the Slovak Olympic Academy.



Overall dissemination activities concerned the project quiz on the European Union with 188 responders in English and the project part on sports values in French, Slovak, English and Japanese with incredible 582 responders.

Apart the project outcomes themselves, the project consortium provided during the Olympic Day 2023 a brand new quiz on Paris 2024 with 141 responders. This quiz served as a practical demonstration of the project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy.

In addition, dissemination activities of the project consortium concerned a knowledge quiz on Olympism, which

complemented the number of responders with additional 128 responders.



The respective templates of all the mentioned quizzes, where participants of the Olympic day 2023 could give their answers, were worked out by the project consortium in cooperation with the Slovak Olympic Academy. They were complemented by the project flyer on part on sports values.

Finally, thanks to the dissemination activities during the Olympic Day 2023, the total number of online responders evidently increased within the project platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL up to 823 responders. This fact led to the higher visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus + programme as well as raise awareness of various European policies in the field of sport.

Japanese Day 2023

Dissemination activities of the project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy continued on 8 July 2023 in Bratislava during the Japanese Day 2023. The event offered an optimal ground for the project dissemination goals as it combined all the relevant

elements
in one place.

The most significant were gastronomic stands with Japanese cuisine, alongside with sporting and cultural performances focused on traditional Japanese sports and theatre. This event created a soil for fruitful discussions of the project team members with the participants.



Japanese Day 2023 offered a wide range of participating spectators and general public, who were acquainted by the European Union policy documents on sport and in particular with twelve European policies in the field of sport promoted by the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy.

This fact led to the higher visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus + programme as well as raise awareness of various European policies in the field of sport. Feedback on sport values received through the project flyers from 334 responders gave the final touch for successful on-site dissemination activities.

French Day 2023

Summer dissemination activities went on during celebrations of the French Day 2023 on 14 July 2023. It was organised on the Main Square (Hlavné námestie) in Bratislava and attended by project team members alongside with numerous general

public.

Very similarly to the Japanese Day 2023, also the French Day 2023 offered a wide range of participating spectators and general public, who were acquainted by the European Union policy documents on sport and in particular with twelve European policies in the field of sport promoted by the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy.

This fact led to the higher visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus + programme as well as raise awareness of various European policies in the field of sport. Feedback on sport values received through the project flyers from 298 responders gave the final touch for successful on-site dissemination activities within this event.



Materials for dissemination and the final conclusions of the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy presented towards the public were well developed through project T-shirts, which were worn by project team members as well.

Project T-shirts alongside with the project roll-up attracted attention of the general public and created a platform for the initial communication and explanation of the project aims. Dissemination process was also facilitated by the fact of the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024. In light of this fact, an interest in the project ideas was

enormous and the project consortium was very much pleased with a great number of new audience, which participated in numerous activities offered also by the project online platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL. During the French Day 2023, the most valued discussions of this core project outcome were linked to the quiz for witty ones, under the sequence named CHALLENGE.

Olympia 2023

Project dissemination process towards the on-site international public was concluded during the session for delegates coming from the national Olympic academies and national Olympic committees, which took place from 16 until 22 July 2023 in Athens and Olympia. Project consortium decided to distribute during this event project materials for dissemination. This facilitated discussions and the final conclusions presented towards the public. In this way a target group beyond EU member states was successfully reached.



The session for delegates coming from the national Olympic academies and national Olympic committees in 2023 comprised 105 participants from 92 countries who were addressed by the project aims.

This fact led similarly to previous events with a vast international audience to the higher visibility of the European

Union and the Erasmus + programme as well as raise awareness of various European policies in the field of sport. Feedback on sport values received through the project flyers from 23 responders gave the final touch for successful on-site dissemination activities within this event.

Consequently, the total number of online responders evidently increased within the project platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL up to 63 foreign responders from all over the world. This fact confirmed the right decision to use dissemination materials during the event in Olympia and led to the higher visibility of the European Union and the Erasmus+ programme as well as raise awareness of various European policies in the field of sport.

Dolná Krupá 2023

Disseminating activities in Slovakia culminated during the sporting event organised in Dolná Krupá on 5 August 2023. This enchanting village, which is believed to be a place where Beethoven composed his Moonlight sonata offered an amazing running race blending sport with culture. It was well attended by a number of stakeholders of project EU Sport Values Diplomacy, including the members of the project consortium.



Their presence widened the event portfolio for new aspects

and explained relevant project notions and definitions, such as EU values and sports diplomacy.

The dissemination goals were achieved especially through the project T-shirts, which were worn by project members and the project roll-up displayed on the running course in a beautiful park belonging to the castle in Dolná Krupá.

A wide range of participating runners, spectators and general public were acquainted by the European Union policy documents on sport and in particular with twelve European policies in the field of sport promoted by the project EU Sport Values Diplomacy.

This fact led to the higher visibility of the European Union programme as well as raise awareness of various European sport values received through the project flyers from 189 dissemination activities.



and the Erasmus + policies in the field of sport. Feedback on responders gave the final touch for successful on-site

Online dissemination process

Online way of dissemination was specifically linked to the project platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL, which is accessible on www.sport-values-channel.eu. Its sequences aim, in particular, at the project short-term goals and unfold in its structure:

1. FACES is a sequence on sport diplomacy promoting twelve ambassadors through their testimonials on sports
2. STORIES is a sequence on social inclusion developed through six inspirational stories highlighting social inclusion through sport
3. CHALLENGE is a sequence on sport values with a quiz for witty ones with twelve quiz questions
4. TEST YOURSELF is a sequence on physical and intellectual activity
5. FACTS is a sequence on European Union policy documents on sport with twelve European policies in the field of sport
6. YOUR VOICE is a sequence allowing external opinion on sport values / virtues

Contribution of the platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL to the priorities of the call in the field of sport is in increased awareness of the role of sport in promoting social inclusion, equal opportunities and a healthy lifestyle. It provides a deliberate, evidenced based and practical mechanism in integrating sport with social inclusion.

The platform called SPORT VALUES CHANNEL offers, besides others, twelve European policies in the field of sport, which were basis for the project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy. They address a topic of social inclusion through sport values and reflect priorities of the Call for proposals 2021 – EAC/A01/2021, Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions.

The platform is designed in light of requirements of the small-scale partnerships to widen access to the programme to small-scale actors and individuals who are hard to reach in the fields of sport. It contributes to the creation and development of transnational networks and to fostering synergies with, and between, local, regional, national and international policies.

The platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL was formally introduced to the general public during the transnational

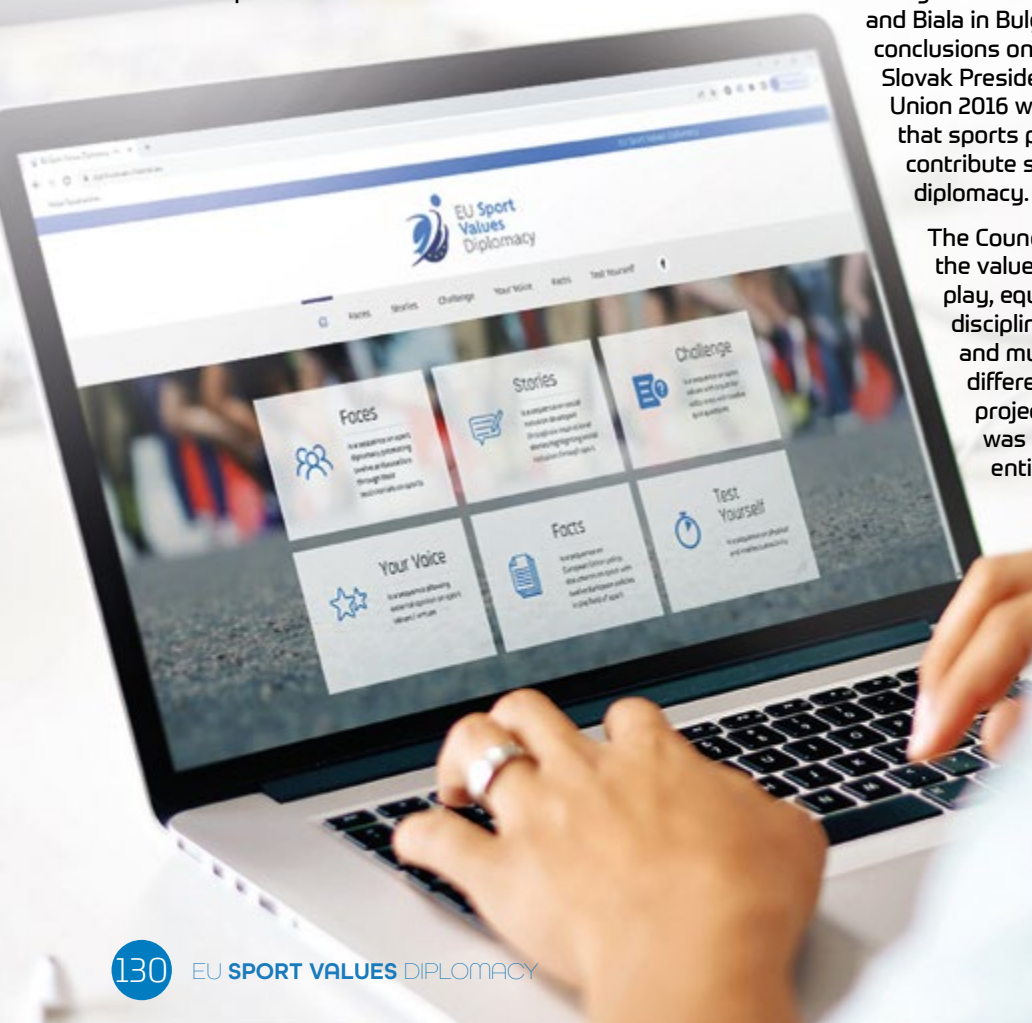
project meeting of the Erasmus + project entitled EU Sport values Diplomacy, which was held in Varna and Biala in Bulgaria from 17 until 19 June 2023. Part of its presentation was linked to highlighting a notion of sport diplomacy, which uses the universality of sport as a way to transcend linguistic, sociocultural and religious differences and thereby has strong potential to promote multi-cultural dialogue and contribute to development and peace.

Part of the formal introduction of the platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL was presentation of the project flyers to representatives of the media as well as the general public. The flyers offered an amazing possibility to express YOUR VOICE on sport values. The general public could choose what values/virtues they consider the most important for sports and select up to five of the options below or add their own opinion.

1. Joy found in effort
2. Fair play
3. Team spirit
4. Friendship
5. Discipline
6. Dedication
7. Integrity
8. Equality
9. Justice
10. Fairness
11. Autonomy
12. Respect for persons
13. Voluntary commitments
14. Respect for diversity
15. Rationality and understanding
16. Satisfaction derived from hard work
17. Tolerance and mutual understanding
18. Joy in endeavour in physical activity
19. Multiculturalism / international understanding
20. Being the best that you can be / pursuit of excellence

During the transnational project meeting held in Varna and Biala in Bulgaria from 17 until 19 June 2023 Council conclusions on sport diplomacy adopted during the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2016 were highlighted as well and emphasised that sports people and sporting events can contribute significantly to the development of sport diplomacy.

The Council of the European Union acknowledged the values that sport can promote such as fair play, equality, respect for diversity, integrity, discipline, excellence, friendship, tolerance and mutual understanding which can bring different people and countries together. The project consortium gladly noted that all this was achieved within the Erasmus + project entitled EU Sport values Diplomacy.





EU Sport Values Diplomacy

Co-funded by
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SPORT VALUES - European Union

CHAPTER 13

Project Impact

13







Project Impact

The project comprised both national and international level and primarily focused on educational institutions and grassroots sport clubs. Regarding educational sector, it achieved that the project outcome - an innovative platform SPORT VALUES CHANNEL became popular among schools and sport clubs. In order to develop multicultural dimension, the project consortium focused on development of international cooperation within involved entities. This particular aspect was very relevant to the project objectives to develop new international cooperation and reinforce already existing networks. It was also linked to increased capacity of involved organisations to operate at transnational level.

The increased cooperation between the sport clubs and schools supported also equal opportunities in sport, physically active lifestyle, social inclusion etc. The other impacts were following:

- to learn about different EU political documents on sports,
- to understand that the EU sport policy/the EU sport work plan has impact on the grassroots level,
- to introduce the new motivating methods and appliances with PE teachers and coaches
- to increase physical activity level at schools that could support improvement of learning,
- to offer more possibilities to practise sport in sport clubs and at schools,

- to familiarize different sports cultures to implement the newly learned methods and make more interesting those sports that were not practiced among other young people.

The participants from the school environment better understood that sports involvement is linked to a number of important benefits like enhanced confidence, academic involvement and success, teamwork, and social skills.

The importance of the project on the national and international level was a new point of view to activate the children's and young people's physical activity. This project produced experiences and results of integrating good practices to maintain and increase children's and young people's physical activity. The project results were disseminated according to the dissemination plan on the local, regional and national level and achieved results vastly overcame the intended goals.

Short, medium and long-term effects of the project

The project was interlinked with the national perspective of sport policies in Bulgaria and Slovakia, while taking into account the policies developed on the international levels. It focused on both non-governmental and governmental levels, striving to foster communication and mutual discussions. Of

particular note was the recent attention governments across the world are giving to sustainability and green dimension.

Despite a fact that it was not necessary for small-scale partnerships to define indicators for measuring achievement, they belonged to project objectives and were integral part of project strategic aim, main objective as well as tangible and intangible goals. Indicators for measuring achievement facilitated a work on the project and were significant for project management, notably impact and sustainability. In this regard, the project consortium used them to define short, medium and long-term effects of the project.

Short-term effects of the project

From a perspective of short-term effects, the project outcomes were targeted and open to any type of public institutions or organisations active in the field of sport and physical activity willing to participate. Short-term effects were linked to project goals, which were divided into tangible and intangible ones. They contributed to reach the project main objective and strategic aim.



Project tangible goals were sequences of the SPORT VALUES CHANNEL as the project outcome. Short-term effects unfolded in its structure, in particular:

1. **FACES:** a sequence on sport diplomacy promoting twelve ambassadors through their testimonials, where six ambassadors per country were reached.
2. **STORIES:** a sequence on social inclusion developed through six inspirational stories highlighting social inclusion affair, where three stories per country were reached.
3. **CHALLENGE:** a sequence on sport values with a quiz for witty one, providing twelve quiz questions, where six questions per country were reached.
4. **TEST YOURSELF:** a sequence on physical and intellectual activity with one set of testing activity contest reached.
5. **FACTS:** a sequence on EU policy documents on sport with twelve European policies in the field of sport, which were basis for the project.
6. **YOUR VOICE:** a sequence on external opinion, allowing external view on relevant affairs. Based on previous experience, twelve contributions were achieved, coming from both Slovakia and Bulgaria as project consortium countries

Project intangible goals consisted of two sets. The first set of intangible goals were linked to general objectives of the call, with these short-term effects reached during a project lifetime:

- Attract and widen access for newcomers, less experienced organisations and small-scale actors to the programme. These partnerships acted as a first step for organisations into cooperation at European level.
- Support the inclusion of target groups with fewer opportunities.
- Support active European citizenship and bring the European dimension to the local level.

Foreseen short-term effects were measured through indicator for measuring achievement, which depended on external factors and were narrative, with either positive or negative statement. Reached indicators were three positive statements based on questionnaire feedback after monitoring phase.

Medium-term effects of the project

Medium-term effects of the project unfolded in line with the second set of intangible goals, which were linked to additional general objectives of the call, notably:

- Increasing quality in the work and practices of the organisations and institutions involved, opening up to new actors not naturally included within one sector.
- Building capacity of organisations to work transnationally and across sectors.
- Addressing common needs and priorities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport.
- Enabling transformation and change - at individual and organisational level, leading to improvements, in proportion to the context of each organisation.

Medium-term effects of the project were, similarly to the first set of indicators, measured through indicator for measuring achievement, which depended on external factors and were narrative, with either positive or negative statement. Reached indicators were four positive statements based on questionnaire feedback after evaluation phase. Medium-term effects of the project had an impact on involved entities and will be monitored also after the project lifetime.

Moreover, medium-term effects were linked to the project main objective, which was to create an effective tool for raising awareness and dissemination of information in three interconnected areas: sport values, social inclusion and sport diplomacy.

The reached core project outcome was the SPORT VALUES CHANNEL. It had medium-term effects and served to all the target groups defined within the project. An integral part of the SPORT VALUES CHANNEL was TEST YOURSELF sequence, which was open to a general public and accessible free of charge. Reached indicator was a new digital platform as a practical mechanism integrating relevant affairs, legal acts and documents on EU level.

Long-term effects of the project

Long-term effects of the project highlighted project strategic aim, which was to promote a recent work of the EU in sport sector. It was achieved through several channels linked to project main objective and goals. Indicator for measuring achievement was number of people involved in project activities and number of media outcomes addressing general public. Target value of a thousand people involved in project activities was vastly overwhelmed with an astonishing number of 3589 active responders who entered the project activities.

Target value of nine

media outcomes addressing general public was achieved. These values served as multiplicities for the next period.

The following areas were essential for the impact and ambition of the project:

- benchmarking of the know-how between the project partners in order to promote project outcomes in the children's and young people's sports activities,
- developing new ideas and methods of education in and through sport,
- evaluation of the realisation of the project aims during the project lifetime,
- statement of the conclusions and further cooperation on the European level,
- information on the activities of the project, realisation of the goals and further planning.

Target groups

The project target groups, which were notably impacted by the project entitled EU Sport Values Diplomacy were especially

end-users, such as schools and sport clubs on the grassroots level. In addition, they included partner organisation's staff, stakeholders and experts in the field of sport-specific genres, national and regional sport federations, decision makers on the regional and local level, the press and media reached by the project partners on the local, regional and national level and the general public, and finally, existing contacts and networks.

The project produced tangible outputs and disseminated the results of activities in a way that was proportional to the aim and scope of the project. The proposed small-scale partnership had an impact on various organisations including in particular public authorities at local, regional and national levels, sport organisations, sport-related organisations and educational bodies.

The project consortium is grateful to the European Union for support and stakeholders for their contribution and collaboration in favour of developing this project.



CHAPTER 14

Behind the scenes

14





BEHIND THE SCENES



kristiana
kazandzhieva

A social entrepreneur, a grant writer of European projects which support sports organizations through education. A passionate participant in the planning and organization of major sporting events, tournaments, trainings, and conferences. Excellent knowledge of the EU policy in different areas, such as regional development, territorial co-operation, cross-border cooperation, education and training, employment and labour market, social entrepreneurship, and dual careers for elite athletes.



yanka
dimitrova

Extensive experience and knowledge in event management and public relations, excellent communication skills. Extensive experience and knowledge in networking and collaborating with stakeholders and local authorities, including significant municipalities. Master degree in public relations and marketing from Varna Free University.



elena
malíková

Chair of the Slovak Olympic Academy. Multiple World Cup finalist and national champion in modern pentathlon. Represented Czechoslovakia, later Slovakia at major sport events, including the World and European Championships. Passionate for foreign languages, sports diplomacy, marathons, writing and photography, with demonstrated long-term voluntary activities in sports. Trophy of the International Olympic Committee "Sport and Literature" in 2001.



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Photos and Pictures:

- Archives of members of the project consortium and private archives of authors.

Lined area for writing.







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