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European Economic and Social Committee

INT/232 **Tourism and sport**

Brussels, 15 December 2004

OPINION

of the European Economic and Social Committee
on
Tourism and sport: the future challenges for Europe
(Own-initiative opinion)

On 29 January 2004, the European Economic and Social Committee, in accordance with Rule 29(2) of its Rules of Procedure, decided to draw up an own-initiative opinion on

Tourism and sport: the future challenges for Europe

(own-initiative opinion).

The Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 10 November 2004. The rapporteur was Mr Pesci.

At its 413th plenary session (meeting of 15 December 2004), the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 144 votes to 1 with 2 abstentions.

Preface

The development of people, towns and communities is enhanced by the exchange and sharing of positive values based on respect for others and encouraging mutual understanding, tolerance, hospitality and mutual willingness to exchange experience gained and plans for the future.

In an increasingly fast-moving society characterised by far-reaching social, geopolitical and technological change, in which material progress must be matched, at least, by the development of values, it would appear essential to seize all opportunities, both large and small, to reinforce and disseminate these values.

The tourism and sport sectors are natural vehicles for reinforcing and disseminating values. They are social and cultural activities in their own right as well as economic activities, and are closely linked, sharing a number of basic values – intellectual curiosity, openness to change and learning and the principle of a level playing field.

Tourism and sport can also contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Lisbon strategy, which seeks to make Europe the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. Indeed, the increasing economic impact of these sectors is a driving force for the economies of the EU countries.

The adoption of the draft Constitutional Treaty, which, for the first time, recognises tourism as falling within the EU's jurisdiction, should make this contribution even more important. The EESC sees this as an initial, fundamental step towards a European development, support and coordination policy for tourism and welcomes the inclusion in the aforementioned constitutional text of the article on sport.

1. Introduction

1. Tourism and sport are two sectors which are going to make an increasingly significant contribution to Europe's economic prosperity and social well-being in the future. Their key role is universally recognised throughout the world.
2. States and communities are increasingly viewing them as key channels for disseminating positive values and messages and for developing economies which are socially and environmentally sustainable.
3. Sport has always attracted great crowds of people who share a common passion, inducing them to travel constantly in order to watch sporting events, both large and small.
4. Today, tourism offers a whole range of sporting attractions which, particularly in recent years, have met with great success, sometimes helping to revive areas which are in partial or sharp decline¹.
5. Some sports destinations have thus become tourist destinations and vice versa, with the two becoming increasingly interlinked and each finding in the other new opportunities for providing services and growth.

6. This has made individual destinations more attractive not just to young (and not so young) people but also to people with disabilities, who can, at last, derive greater, hitherto-unknown enjoyment from sport-related holidays.
7. Four hundred and eleven million people visited Europe in 2002, representing over 5% of GDP and bringing Europe's share of the world tourism market to approximately 58%. However, the WTO (World Tourism Organisation) estimates that Europe's share of the world tourism market will fall to 46% by 2020, despite the fact that the number of tourists will almost double, because of competition from new competitors.
8. In the context of this opinion, the EESC supported a public hearing in Rome on Tourism and sport: the future challenges for Europe, which saw the participation of leading Italian and European representatives of the tourism and sports sector and the heads of the tourism and sport units of the European Commission. The dialogue which took place was valuable, yielding many suggestions and points for reflection².
9. On the basis of the Rome public hearing and in view of the fact that, this year, the WTO World Tourism Day (27 September 2004) has been devoted to the theme of Sport and tourism: two living forces for mutual understanding, culture and the development of society, the EESC has outlined some points for a debate on a future, more integrated policy of analysis and action in both sectors.
10. Europe, which has already hosted the European Football Championships in Portugal and the XXVIII Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games in Greece during 2004, is to host a series of world sporting events³ over the next five years, and the impact of this in terms of tourist and economic flows will be huge, providing all Europe's tourist destinations with a unique opportunity as international visitors travel across the continent.

2. Tourism and sport: the future challenges for Europe

1. In the coming years, therefore, the world's media will be focusing on Europe for long periods at a time. The European Union will be at the centre of media attention on all these occasions⁴, on different channels and at different levels. Europe will therefore be discussed, at least in high places, in political and socio-cultural terms, in terms of tourism and, of course, of sport.
2. This period of major sporting events must therefore be regarded by European society not just as an economic opportunity but first and foremost as an opportunity for reflection and for dissemination of cultural and social values with a view to growth and sustainable development.
3. Clearly, these events provide huge scope for developing and implementing training and education measures for the people of the Member States and the wider world. Particular consideration must be given to young people and to those least integrated into the fabric of society, such as people with disabilities.

4. As regards the competitiveness of the tourism sector, the coming years, with this wealth of major world sporting events, could be a great opportunity for Europe, which will thus be able to develop and exploit market choices focusing on high-quality reception facilities and the provision of sustainable services.
5. The European Union is now made up of 25 states, with all the benefits that this brings for the 450 million inhabitants of the new Community. There will therefore be a greater number of accessible destinations, people wishing to travel, and athletes and events to incorporate as quickly as possible into Europe's programmes and circuits.

3. Tourism and sport: a twin strategy for Europe

1. Tourism is an industry which fosters peace, encouraging integration between peoples and thus facilitating peaceful co-existence characterised by tolerance and mutual respect.
2. Tourism has proved that it can help to enhance the standard of living of millions of people throughout the world, encouraging fairer and more inclusive economic development.
3. Its impact on employment is considerable. There are over two million businesses operating in the sector in Europe employing over 8 million people, not counting auxiliary staff.
4. Indeed, tourism is cross-sectoral in nature and has a greater capacity to generate employment than other kinds of production.
5. However, it is also a sector which suffers more from economic downturns, international crises and seasonal factors, which means that its contribution to long-term employment is limited, although it has consistently displayed a certain capacity to resist overall, thanks to the variety of products it offers, whose diversity offsets the effects of structural and contingent problems and allows the sector to absorb them.
6. In the coming years, the challenge will be to create and preserve a socially and economically stable framework throughout the 25-member Europe, eliminating all forms of social exclusion. Tourism, sport and culture must be made practically accessible for all to enjoy, with concessions provided for the most disadvantaged social groups.
7. The European Commission has already outlined this process in its Communication of November 2001 entitled Working together for the future of European tourism⁵, and in the subsequent Communication of November 2003 entitled Basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism⁶. It is now a question of giving substance to the ideas set out in these documents.
8. However, if high-quality tourism is to be achieved, tourism needs to be integrated with other production and/or entertainment sectors of society. Sport, which is characterised by a wealth of values, culture, rules and principles, is an ideal partner for promoting sustainable growth at all levels.

9. Sport, like tourism, is now an essential human leisure activity and, at the same time, a driving force for social growth and economic development with great potential.
10. The values it promotes which, as is a well-known fact, date back to the first Greek Olympics in the eighth century BC, are very relevant to and find increasing expression in training policies for young people.
11. The economic dimension of sport has grown out of all proportion in recent years. Major sporting events have become general large-scale social gatherings which send out messages and promote values to all age groups throughout the world.
12. Sporting events have also generated new forms of tourism which combine conventional holidays with the chance to practise a particular sport. In this sense, major events serve as catalysts and spur people into taking up new sports⁷.
13. Sport on the one hand takes advantage of tourist infrastructure and services and on the other generates tourism, which benefits considerably from the sporting events which take place in tourist destinations: consider the number of people who travel to watch the World Football Championships or the Olympic Games, and above all the image promotion which a country hosting such events can derive from them.
14. This opinion will consider first and foremost, although not exclusively, the major sporting events which, generally speaking, bring European destinations the greatest profits and cultural and social benefits and give them most publicity.
15. In purely general terms, "major sporting event" is here taken to mean an event capable of attracting a substantial flow of tourists who stay in the destination overnight and thus boost the destination's tourist economy.
16. Major events can be opportunities for highlighting values, forms of behaviour and practices which can then be implemented and developed in the countless events which take place at local level⁸.
17. However, the complex links between tourism and sport are part of a wider relationship which includes the social, cultural and environmental sectors too. The modern tourist is in search of increasingly comprehensive holidays which can satisfy recreational, cultural and sporting needs in one package.

4. The institutional level

1. In the past, the only legal basis for a Community tourism policy was Article 3(u) of the EC Treaty, which contained a general reference to measures in the sphere of tourism. For a sector with such a strong impact on the economies of many EU countries, this was a heavy constraint on the achievement of a genuine European tourism policy.

2. Indeed, tourism is very cross-sectoral in nature: it embraces almost all production sectors and services and requires effective economies of scale both as regards regional management and the underlying decision and policy-making process.
3. However, particularly since 1999, the Community institutions have displayed renewed and increasing interest in tourism⁹. The EESC has actively monitored this new trend and enthusiastically welcomes the inclusion of an *ad hoc* provision on tourism in the European Constitution¹⁰.
4. This milestone marks the end of a long and, at times, harmful marginalisation of tourism and provides the necessary conditions for the sector to be recognised and officially integrated into the EU's policies.
5. The EESC hopes that tourism will henceforth be able to count on genuinely targeted, specific European measures, programmes and initiatives. In this connection it calls for the creation of a single governing body at Community level modelled on the European agencies for specific sectors¹¹.
6. At all events, the EESC welcomes the fact that the European Union is already working on a tourism policy promoting sustainable development of all kinds¹².
7. Turning to European policy on sport, this is underpinned by a number of key documents, including the European Sports Charter (1992), the Treaty of Amsterdam, which specified the social significance of sport, and the Declaration annexed to the Treaty of Nice, which gave sport a specific place among areas of Community competence.
8. Thanks in part to the impetus it received from the Nice Summit, sport was given its rightful place in the Constitution for Europe adopted in June 2004, where it is the subject of a specific provision¹³.
9. To highlight the social and educational importance of sport, the Commission has made 2004 the European Year of Education through Sport. This is a way of drawing attention to the sector, as well as funding training, awareness-raising and development projects in schools and educational organisations throughout the Union.
10. This initiative has also encouraged student mobility, albeit with limited funding, enabling students to visit places away from home and satisfying both their desire to travel and discover new places and their desire to practise their favourite sport.
11. How to integrate tourism, sport and culture is one of the challenges we must address in the years ahead in order to boost the European economy and help to bring about a higher quality of life for all.
12. This takes on priority status in the light of the aforementioned Lisbon objectives, which must, in any case, take into account the changing economic situation of the EU countries in order to guarantee lasting, sustainable growth and development.

13. Specific workshops could be held in the European Tourism Forum and a European Sport Forum and innovative initiatives promoted as part of the process of drawing up an innovative strategy at European level seeking to integrate the tourism, sport and culture sectors. The innovative initiatives could include student exchanges, awareness-raising campaigns to involve the "sporting" tourist in the cultural and social life of the place where an event is held, or courses designed to develop new skills. From this perspective, it is essential to involve both civil society and the private sector first and foremost.
14. The legal recognition of the two sectors – tourism and sport – in the draft Constitutional Treaty is a major step towards the achievement of these objectives, particularly as regards the promotion and development of the competitiveness of European businesses operating in the two sectors.

5. Security and the Olympic Truce

1. As has been mentioned, the coming years will be full of sporting events and millions of people will flock from all over the world to watch them.
2. This period of long-distance travelling, of major sporting events and of extensive media coverage raises the urgent question of security. This question must be addressed responsibly, without sparking unnecessary alarmism but putting in place all the preventive and surveillance measures needed to ensure the smooth running of each sporting event.
3. Cooperation and prior establishment of joint action strategies are, in this respect, decisive elements in the organisation of major sporting events¹⁴.
4. Security must therefore underpin the organisation of all events in the coming years and it must be based essentially on prevention.
5. The United Nations General Assembly of 6 September 2000 adopted a Declaration, point 10 of which states: "We urge Member States to observe the Olympic Truce, individually and collectively, now and in the future, and to support the International Olympic Committee in its efforts to promote peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic Ideal".
6. Both the recent Brussels European Council (12 December 2003) and the European Parliament (1 April 2004) made similar appeals. In particular, the European Parliament welcomed the IOC (International Olympic Committee)'s creation of an International Foundation for the Olympic Truce, an organisation seeking to further promote the ideals of peace and understanding through sport.
7. In its contribution to the security debate, the EESC stresses the need to promote the Olympic Truce as a universal message relevant to all world sporting events in the coming years. Indeed, it maintains that sport can contribute to spreading the culture of dialogue and increasing the opportunities for people to meet.

6. Integrated sustainability

1. As has already been mentioned, complex links are generated between tourism and sport which have a social, economic and environmental impact. The relationship is even more complex where large-scale (major) events are concerned.
2. All the principles of sustainability – socio-cultural, economic and environmental – must therefore be taken into account in the organisation of events. The guidelines for sustainable tourism adopted by the European Commission in its aforementioned recent **Communication on basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism**^{15 /sup> and evaluated in the EESC opinion on socially sustainable tourism for everyone¹⁶ must be applied to sport and sports destinations.}
3. In social and cultural terms, sporting events should, first and foremost, be occasions for enhancing identities and for cultural exchange. It is therefore proposed that support be given to initiatives and events of a tourist/sporting character involving several regions of different European countries (on the model of the Interreg programme).
4. From a social and economic point of view, we would point out that the greatest attention should be paid to the local community in the organisation of an event. All services and infrastructure should be planned with potential future use thereof by the inhabitants in mind. The local community must also be used as the reference for the creation of jobs and the implementation of training relating to events.
5. Models have already been developed to measure the capacity of the destinations and related services in terms of environmental sustainability and other criteria. It would be appropriate to promote the dissemination of these models and their application in the field of sporting events too, advocating, as has been said, an integrated approach with three strands: society, economy and environment.
6. Planning, management and development models for these events must therefore be identified and promoted in order to maximise the profits and added value generated, especially for the host region and community, which, in any case, suffers detrimental effects from such events and only rarely enjoys any significant gain.
7. Large-scale sporting events can be opportunities to develop high-level skills and expertise, which can also be valuable to the sports/tourist destination in the medium and long term as regards developing facilities and meeting visitors' needs. They can also serve to disseminate best practice in the field of the integrated management of tourism and sport.
8. The organisation of complex events requires an initial mapping of potential conflicts between local people and short-term visitors, with regard to the use of resources, services and facilities and the quality thereof.
9. Close cooperation will be essential between promoters, organisers, local representatives, representatives of end users and representatives of social stakeholders, and between all the parties involved in general.
10. Sporting events must be included in the medium- and long-term planning of the host destination and country. In particular, consideration must be given to the impact that they will have on the overall image of the tourist/sports destination.
11. It is a well-known fact that the seasonal nature of tourism is often a barrier to its development. Sporting events also help to further a policy of developing tourism and the tourism economy all year round, maximising profits and providing stable, long-term jobs.
12. It is worth setting up ongoing monitoring of current and future experiences in order to help define a model of experiences for the planning and management of sporting events which fully takes into account the above-mentioned

social, environmental and economic factors. In particular, it would seem worthwhile to monitor the use of facilities and the subsequent use of the structures and services set up for a particular event after it has finished.

13. In general terms, the EESC would stress the possibility of adopting the measures, actions and recommendations set out in the multiannual programme for sustainable European tourism by creating an Agenda 21 for sport and for the most popular destinations for organising and hosting sporting events.
14. Good practice and positive experiences of planning and managing sporting events with a tourist dimension must be recorded systematically, disseminated and pooled in order to make the organisation of the forthcoming major EU events as successful as possible.

7. Tourism, sport and training

1. The EESC would reiterate the need to reinforce at all levels the objective of training and education as part of sport and tourism policies.
2. This approach was also called for in the Declaration on the specific characteristics of sport annexed to the conclusions of the December 2000 Nice European Council, which stressed that “the Community must ... take account of the social, educational and cultural functions inherent in sport ... in order that the code of ethics and the solidarity essential to the preservation of its social role may be respected and nurtured”.
3. Integrating and promoting positive values common to tourism and sport can be effective ways of bringing about integration at the level of communities, destinations and states.
4. The series of events which began in 2004 therefore acquires even greater importance because of the proposed objective of using major events which will receive tremendous media coverage and attention from institutions as vehicles for disseminating training principles and guidelines.
5. As the EU expands to include 10 new countries, these opportunities will increase. The use of mass media networks will make it possible to extend and share with the new Member States educational projects to bring about familiarisation with the Union and its peoples and an exchange of values based on sportsmanship, fair play and competitiveness.
6. Key values which could be developed and conveyed include tolerance, an open, welcoming attitude and openness to exchange between different peoples and ethnic groups. The exchange of these values within the European Union will require: a) appropriate education in schools and adult education for all those employed in tourism and sport, and b) intensive sharing of experience, which needs to be promoted. When tourists travel, they have expectations with regard to the above-mentioned values.
7. There should be particular focus, where sporting and tourist events are concerned, on disseminating the principle of the right for all population groups - and in particular for the weaker groups: young people, the elderly, people with disabilities - to practise different kinds of sports and take part in events in those sports.
8. As is stated in the aforementioned Declaration on the specific characteristics of sport annexed to the conclusions of the 2000 Nice European Council, “For the physically or mentally disabled, the practice of physical and sporting activities provides a particularly favourable opening for the development of individual talent, rehabilitation, social integration and solidarity ...”.
9. These measures seeking to benefit the weakest groups of society must be implemented by central governments and local authorities, national federations, sports societies and associations, amateur clubs and schools.

10. Schools are the most fertile ground for disseminating positive values and developing mutual understanding, since the complex relationship between sport, tourism and training can be exploited to the full by starting with school-age children.
11. It is therefore proposed to continue to facilitate student mobility and exchanges by organising sporting events which include opportunities for familiarisation with local culture and life.
12. It is also proposed to increase cooperation between the Member States especially in the field of exchange of information about best practices including the involvement of sports tourists in the cultural and social life of communities hosting sports events, in order both to reduce violence and intolerance of all kinds and to generate opportunities for mutual growth.
13. It would also be worthwhile ascertaining whether there is a need for courses developing new skills necessary for organising tourist/sports events, which take into account all the aspects of social growth, integrated sustainability, communication and marketing which are relevant to tourism.

8. Conclusions

1. Tourism and sport can become laboratories for the development, exchange and sharing of positive values, inspired by respect for others and directed towards mutual understanding, tolerance and reciprocal acceptance. These sectors are naturally suited to this task and their role takes on special importance in the context of a society which is increasingly dynamic and marked by profound socio-cultural, geopolitical and technological changes.
2. Tourism and sport can also contribute a great deal to achieving the objectives set in the Lisbon strategy. Indeed, their growing economic impact could become a real driving force for the economy of the European Union, especially if all the opportunities for developing and spreading the skills linked to these two sectors were used to the full.
3. The inclusion of tourism and sport in the final version of the European Constitution represents a historic turning point for the two sectors. The EESC now hopes for significant activity at Community level in these two areas and suggests using the open method of coordination to guarantee the interchange of skills and knowledge and comparison at European level.
4. Sport and tourism are two complex, distinct sectors; it is very difficult to study them together and make economic and social comparisons between them. The EESC therefore proposes that a **joint European monitoring agency** and a data bank be set up to collect and classify knowledge and best practice and disseminate them in the Member States in order to promote development in the two sectors.
5. The EESC also hopes that the European Union will promote **studies and research** to make possible a comparative analysis at European level of the social, economic and environmental impact of the tourism-sport combination.
6. The spread of a culture of access for all to tourism and sport, and the formulation of policies to support that culture, must be a priority for all development measures in the two sectors, considering the needs of weaker population groups – young people, the elderly and the disabled – and of those with not much money to spend. To this end, the EESC would like to see a campaign to promote awareness of the fact that accessibility and sustainability are necessary characteristics which make market players more competitive.
7. It is proposed that a **European tourism agency** be set up with the role of safeguarding the specific characteristics of this sector, analysing its problems, setting out potential lines for development and identifying innovative instruments for sustainable growth to be incorporated into the EU's structural measures.

8. Tourism and sport are many-sided, complex phenomena with a high potential for development. This opinion maintains the need for horizontal integration of these sectors at European level, so that this potential can be realised in both the socio-economic and the cultural fields. Moreover, the EESC emphasises the need, when implementing the proposed measures, to give constant attention to their sustainability both in those fields and in environmental terms.
9. The EESC named this opinion the *Declaration of Rome on tourism and sport* so as to give it a higher profile and improve its dissemination at all important tourist and sporting events at European level.

Brussels, 15 December 2004.

The President
of the
European Economic and Social Committee

The Secretary-General
of the
European Economic and Social Committee

Anne-Marie Sigmund

Patrick Venturini

¹ A good example of this process is the city of Turin, which, thanks to the forthcoming 2006 Winter Olympics and Paralympics, is reviving abandoned industrial areas and exploiting new suburban areas, boosting the local economy in all sectors.

² Public hearing on Tourism and sport: the future challenges for Europe held at the CNEL (National Economic and Labour Council) in Rome on 22 April 2004.

³ These include the Mediterranean Games in Almeria (2005), the World Athletics Championships in Helsinki (2005), the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Turin (2006), the FIFA World Cup in Germany (2006), the America's Cup in Valencia (2007), the European Football Championships in Switzerland and Austria (2008) and the Mediterranean Games, which will probably be held in Pescara in 2009, but also other major annual events such as the Champions' League and UEFA Cup, Formula One Grand Prix and cycling races (the *Tour de France*, the *Vuelta* and the *Giro d'Italia*).

⁴ See footnote 3.

⁵ COM(2001) 665 final

⁶ COM(2003) 716 final

7 For instance, after the New Zealand America's Cup in 2001, the number of people enrolling on European sailing courses increased dramatically.

8 Local competitions, inter-school and amateur tournaments, regional sporting events, world university games etc.

9 Including the 1999 European action plan for employment in tourism, the Commission Communication of 13 November 2001 on Working together for the future of European tourism, the European Parliament Resolution of 14 May 2002, the Council Resolution of 21 May 2002 on the future of European tourism, and the Communication from the Commission of November 2003 on basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism.

10 Article I-17 and Article III-281 (Section 4).

11 For example, the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the European Food Safety Authority, the European Environment Agency etc.

12 The EESC has participated in this process by producing an own-initiative opinion on Socially sustainable tourism for everyone (OJ C 32 of 5.2.2004), intended as a contribution to future measures.

13 Article I-17 and Article III-282 (Section 5).

14 The European Football Championships in Portugal and the Olympic Games in Athens were an excellent example of organisation, cooperation and integration of security and prevention policies.

15 COM(2003) 716 final.

16 OJ C 32 of 5.2.2004.

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