



## Grassroots sport and volunteering in sport play an important role in society which should be more recognised in Europe

“There is a need to bring the European Union closer to its citizens and ENGSO believes that sport as the biggest civil movement in Europe can contribute to this aim. We think that the legal recognition of sport as well as the future EU funding programme for sport is something to celebrate.” - said Birgitta Kervinen, ENGSO President in her welcoming speech at the European Parliament today, on 26 November 2012 at the ENGSO Hearing on the Sport Chapter of the Erasmus for All Programme and the ENGSO initiative on “European Year of Sport”. She also stated that “the world around us is changing fast and, to be able to survive in this changing environment, we need to be more proactive and start to build partnerships. This is one of the reasons why ENGSO has taken lead in the initiative on a European Year of Sport.”

ENGSO is a respected voice for grassroots sport in Europe with the aim to be a credible partner in European sport policy and to promote the interest of its Member Organisations, which are National Sport Confederations and National Olympic Committees from 40 European countries ([www.engso.eu](http://www.engso.eu) / [www.facebook.com/engso.eu](https://www.facebook.com/engso.eu)).

The Hearing, hosted by MEP Emma McClarkin (ECR, UK), was organised shortly before the start of the European Parliament’s Culture and Education Committee meeting, on which the voting on the amendments of the Erasmus for All Programme will take place on 27 November 2012.

The Erasmus for All Programme is the proposed name by the European Commission for the future EU funding programme for education, training, youth and sport, and it is a sector-specific programme of the next Multiannual Financial Framework for the period of 2014-2020. In the Erasmus for All Programme, a whole chapter is dedicated to sport.

ENGSO organised the Hearing on the Sport Chapter in order to raise awareness about the importance of the Programme for the future of sport in Europe. To provide a real benefit to citizens, [ENGSO’s position](#) is that objectives such as volunteering, social inclusion, equal opportunities, health enhancing physical activity and dual career should be highlighted to a greater extent in the Programme. Moreover, the activities supported should take place at grassroots level as much as possible with the involvement and active participation of European citizens.

After MEP Emma McClarkin’s update on the position of the Parliament, where she highlighted that the Programme should focus on grassroots level, there were lively discussions about the Programme’s objectives and activities. Especially, there were concerns about the budget of the Programme and the third party partnership for supplementary funding. First of all, MEP Emma McClarkin and the participants of the Hearing agreed that the budget of the Programme should be the utmost minimum to have at least some impact at European level to implement the sports provisions of Article 165 of the TFEU. Any cuts would endanger the European Added Value in the field of sport.



Secondly, they urged to safeguard the opportunity for grassroots level actors to participate in and be beneficiaries of the Sport Chapter, it is crucial that private funding is not compulsory.

ENGSO believes that the European Union should use its new competence in the field of sport, obtained in 2009 with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, to promote sport and its important contribution to the European society. “In order to attract the attention of European citizens and local, regional and national governments alike on the social benefits of sport, a long-term awareness campaign both at European and national level is needed in the context of the European Year of Sport.” – Jan Bohac ENGSO Vice-President addressed the second main topic of the ENGSO Hearing.

The European Year of Sport is an ENGSO initiative with the objectives to raise awareness of and disseminate information on the positive social effects of sport, to educate the widest possible audience about the contributions of sport to society, to encourage people to regularly participate in sport at grassroots level, to launch debate about who shall promote the social challenges in the field of sport in the EU Member States and what meanings sport has in European society as well as to attract the attention of governments at all levels on the importance and benefits of investing in grassroots sport.

Jan Bohac added that “the proposal is in its initial phase. ENGSO is building partnership with non-governmental sports organisations in order to establish an alliance. At the same time, we need support from other civil society organisations and the governmental side, from the European Commission and from the Members of the European Parliament.”