



European Youth and Sport Forum – Aarhus 2002

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# Charter & Statements

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## The Århus NGO-Forum Charter on Youth and Sports 2002

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109 young people from 23 different countries and representing a wide range of sports and sports associations met in Århus 18-23 November 2002, in order to discuss the following themes:

1. Health and sport
2. Doping
3. Education through sport

The participants have written this charter as a summary of their conclusions of their meeting, and appreciate the opportunity to present it to the Ministers responsible for sports.

For each of the three themes that they discussed, their conclusions and statements are the following:

### **1. Health and sport**

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The participants agree that good health is one of the most important consequences of doing sports. At the same time, physical well being and fitness is also an important motivational factor for young people to start doing sport.

The participants feel that participation in sport in order to have a healthy life style should be a natural choice for youths all over the world. We at the same time agree that the focus should be on general health and well being rather than exaggerated exercise with the sole purpose to shape the body in a certain way. We think that good health does not have to mean that we all should follow an unattainable physical ideal.

Observing the very large numbers of youths in Europe that do not practise sports and that have (or will have in the near future) serious problems with overweight and diseases related to overweight, the participants want to stress the importance of promoting sports as a means to promote good health. We suggest that using sports to prevent such diseases is a much better and healthier way than trying to cure them in hospitals.

They also agree that exaggerated training in order to achieve excellence can in fact be as unhealthy as not doing sports at all. We therefore suggest an understanding of sports that stresses an active and varied life style as opposed to exaggerated and monotone training schemes.

Statements:

- Make sure on what priorities we have to deal with,
- We could get experience from others countries, maybe this way we can find the best way to work with the problem,

- Partnerships with other countries which have the same kind of problem could be developed, in order to find better ideas, or even finance help,
- The campaigns could be developed internationally,
- Doctors should have more time to spend with patients (in the public health system), so that he could provide an educational attention that could help the patient stick to the treatment or the health advices. For example the healthy eating habits and physical activity,
- It is the government's responsibility to educate the parents and children in subjects like eating habits and active lifestyle. They should also help the population to access the sport facilities and family integration.
- Environmental problems have a detrimental affect on mental, social and physical health of individual's communities and countries. Pollution threatens health and does not respect boundaries; none of the health and sports related problems do. Holistically all nations must work together targeting the young to create a healthy environment.
- Cooperate to achieve results through an active exchange of experiences, because we must understand that only as a community we can solve our national and international problems.

## 2. Doping

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The participants agree that doping is one of the most serious threats to the understanding of sports the way they see it. Doping gives sports a bad image and therefore stops young people from practising sports.

They agree that doping with the purpose of achievement is a feature of elite sport that should be combated at all possible levels. Together with the commercialisation and financial corruption in some sports organisations, they fear that doping is giving elite sports a very bad image. In this way, sports men and women may become very poor role models for youths around the world.

They think that doping to achieve a certain body shape or appearance is equally threatening to the understanding of sports. They instead suggest that sports should be practised because it is fun, educational, a social activity, motivating etc.

They agree that all people should take a stand against doping, and that the countries of the European Union and the rest of the world have an important role to play in fighting doping. They therefore strongly encourage the ministers responsible for sports to work in common using all the resources necessary to fight doping.

Statements:

Free sport from Doping

- Cooperate with industry
- Mass media are responsible too

Same rules for all – worldwide

## 3. Education through sport

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The participants agree that sport serves a lot of important functions in society. They represent a number of different sport associations, and many of them take part in the life of

the associations as volunteers. They do this among other things because they feel it serves a good purpose, because they want to give back what they have received from us, and because they feel that they learn from being volunteers.

They are therefore very pleased that 2004 has been announced as the European year for education through sport. Representing many European countries and after being together in the present NGO forum, they feel that European cooperation in the field of education, sports and voluntary clubs is very relevant. They would like to stress that the exchange of young sports people as individuals or in teams and clubs etc. between the European countries is an activity that helps young people understand each other and each others' cultures. They therefore encourage the ministers responsible for sport as well as the European Union to help creating the possibilities for these exchanges and other activities for young people in the field of sports in the European Union.

Our group represents both EU countries and EU applicant countries. They do not believe that sport has boundaries. Whatever steps are taken for sports, therefore, should not have only a limited number of countries as a target. Sport is universal, and the right to participate in sport should be seen as a universal right rather than a privilege of the few!

They are also pleased that the ministers responsible for sports are discussing the importance of voluntary involvement in sport clubs. They agree that this involvement has many beneficial effects in our societies, but they would like to stress that voluntary engagement in sport clubs should not be regulated by the public sector. Only if the voluntary work is supported, but not controlled, will it grow and hopefully increase the participation in sports.

They also agree that even though sports and voluntary work in sports clubs has many beneficial effects in our societies, sports should not only be seen as an instrument. Sport, in our opinion, has value in itself! It is an activity that first and foremost should be done for fun and for the pleasure of the participants. At the same time, of course, it is often a purposeful, fun, healthy and educational. They would like to promote a view of sports as an activity that has all these elements in it!

#### Statements:

- To strengthen the status of Sport Education in all levels of schooling within the equal curriculum.
  - To integrate Sport Values into Physical Education curriculae and other subjects.
  - Continuous education for Physical Education teachers.
  - To create an international non-formal network of educational institutions on sports.
  - To set up programmes "Sport educated Adults – sport Educated children"
  - Publicity campaigns to increase awareness of people.
  - Maintain the standards within education in sports throughout the E. U. / Equal possibilities
  - Make sure that teachers are qualified as Physical Education teachers. The qualification must be recognised worldwide.
  - Create a commission within the E. U countries to evaluate situations within formal education.
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