

The outcomes from European Youth and Sport Forums 2005 – 2008

The European Youth and Sport Forum 2005 took place in the UK.

The Forum brought together young people from 28 European countries to discuss the issues of volunteering in sport, combating discrimination, and health and sport under the general theme of “creating a culture of volunteering and citizenship throughout Europe”.

The recommendations related to health issue are following:

“Sport can help to improve people’s social, physical and mental health. Investment in sport can lead to lower health care costs and a healthier Europe. We challenge you to recognize the role of sport as a tool for health promotion, therapy and active lifestyles. Physical activity is essential to the methodology of prevention vs. prescription and pro-action vs. reaction.

We believe the following recommendations will assist governments in achieving its responsibility of creating a healthier Europe:

- Reinstatement of compulsory daily Physical Education in primary schools taught by qualified Physical Education staff.
- Enhance cooperation between sport clubs and schools as well as sport clubs and medical professionals.
- Improving the environment to encourage physical activity as a part of everyday life: more cycling lanes, safer sidewalks, more open park space, playing grounds, and public access facilities.
- Promote incentives for companies who encourage employee participation in physical activity.
- Restructuring of taxation to promote healthy lifestyle: reduced taxes for volunteer sports clubs, reduced taxes on healthy food, and increased taxes on food with high fat and/or sugar content.
- Increased number of government sponsored meetings and forums to promote healthy lifestyles.

Sport and physical activity are cheap and effective ways to promote healthier lifestyles. We hope that You take into consideration the above recommendations to build an active Europe for the future. “

The European Youth and Sport Forum 2006 took place in Finland.

The Forum brought together young people from 32 European countries to discuss and exchange ideas on health, equality and active citizenship. The themes of the EYSF 2006 were chosen to compliment the Finnish EU-presidency themes.

“Health is a key concern for young people in Europe. At this Forum we have had the opportunity to try a variety of sports and activities that are not only fun, but have also benefited our fitness and taught us new activities and ways in which to live healthy lives. It is important to young people that they are given the information, knowledge and facilities that will empower them to make their own choices concerning their health, and that society supports their desire to follow healthier lifestyles.

1. Every European country to introduce free “physical activity on prescription”

- doctors to check and monitor patients’ weight and health
- doctors to refer overweight patients to a sport co-ordinator in their local area who will advise on correct activities and clubs for each patient
- doctors’ surgeries and other public buildings to display leaflets on healthy eating choices, physical activities, and local sports clubs and fitness centres

2. Improve food labelling in European countries

- all food labelling to contain information on calories, salt, sugar, fat, chemicals used in production and daily nutrition recommendation figures
- introduce a unified European system for labelling and information charts, which will be colour coded, simple and easy to understand
- all food labels to provide a website link to where there is detailed information on the food and it’s ingredients

3. Make healthy food cheaper in European countries

- increase taxes on unhealthy foods
- offer subsidies to producers of healthier food

4. Encourage schools and workplaces to become healthier environments

- only provide healthy foods and drinks in canteens and vending machines
- offer corporate rates in sports clubs, gyms or sports facilities
- encourage employers to offer 1 hour per week during work time for physical exercise and reward participating organisations
- create a European kite mark for healthy schools and workplaces
- include the topic of healthy lifestyles in physical education lessons”

The European Youth and Sport Forum 2008 took place in France

The Forum gathered over 100 European young people from 32 different countries. The Forum used the principles and practice of non-formal education as means to reach its aims of bringing youth from diverse backgrounds together to network and engage in the exchange of ideas. EYSF 2008 aimed to demonstrate how young people put the words of the White Paper on Sport, the European Commission's policy document, into practice.

"Public health includes all social actions and measures to achieve a healthy and active lifestyle for all ages and to prevent all diseases through the reduction of their risk factors.

Messages on the importance of physical activity with respect to a healthy lifestyle to be spread through a co-ordinated campaign.

- Young people to be educated about health from an early age.
- Make 5 hours of physical activity compulsory per week in education. This will be achieved through a combination of curriculum time and after school practice.
- Families to be given information on family activities for healthy lifestyles.

Health professionals to be responsible for emphasizing the prevention of common diseases through physical activity and healthy lifestyle, instead of treatments.

- The curricula of health professionals and fitness professionals to include education on the preventative benefits of physical activity.
- Doctors to be able to prescribe physical activity as part of the prevention and treatment process.

A healthy balanced and varied diet has to be accessible to everyone in terms of availability and cost.

- Healthier foods to be made cheaper by government intervention.
- Healthy meals to be provided in educational institutions.
- Educational campaign on nutrition.

Active lifestyles to be promoted by governments, society and individuals.

- Resources should be allocated to encourage people to be more physically active.
- Employers should provide access to sports facilities and encourage their employees to be physically active with rewards such as bonuses funded by the reduction in work days lost to health related absence from work.
- Local authorities should fund centres for the elderly to provide them with a socially and physically active lifestyle."