



# **Framework Contract EAC/50/2009 Framework Contract for Evaluation, Evaluation Related Services and Support for Impact Assessment**

## **Specific Contract: Evaluation of Preparatory Actions and special events in the field of sport**

### **Final Report of the Evaluation**

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## 0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. *Preparatory Actions and special events in the field of sport*

Sport in the European Union context has been developing since the late 1990s. The 2000 Nice Declaration recognised the integral role of sport in European society, while through the 2004 European Year of Education through Sport the Commission co-financed about 200 sport-related projects. However, it was not until the 2007 White Paper on Sport that the EU addressed sport-related issues in a comprehensive manner. The White Paper identified three dimensions of sport (social, economic and organisational) that should be taken into account when developing the EU's approach and in the accompanying Action Plan "Pierre de Coubertin" suggested a number of actions to be implemented at EU level. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (TFEU) in December 2009 marked another milestone, conferring a direct competence to the EU in the area of sport. Article 165 stipulates that: "The Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures are based on voluntary activity and its social and education function".

Following from this, a budget line was granted for three years of Preparatory Actions (from 2009-2011) in the field of sport and special annual events, with the general objective of preparing for future EU actions in the field of sport in view of the implementation of the sport provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. The total budget for the 2009-2011 period amounts to about EUR 25.5m, with activities consisting of:

- Transnational collaborative projects, EUR 8.5m, about 40 projects, consisting of co-financing support to enable relevant actors (e.g. sport associations / federations, other sport organisations, local authorities, universities and research institutions, ministries, sport-specific businesses) to work towards EU objectives by creating sustainable networks; compiling, exchanging and generating knowledge and information; identifying, sharing and disseminating good practices; raising awareness of problems and challenges; and jointly developing / implementing solutions to such challenges;
- Non-commercial sport events of major importance, five projects, EUR 8.5m, consisting of budgetary contributions to two European Youth Olympic Festivals (Tampere 2009 and Liberec 2010), two Special Olympics Summer Games (Warsaw 2010 and Athens 2011) and the Mediterranean Games (Pescara 2009);
- Studies, surveys and conferences, 18 projects, EUR 2.1m, consisting of support to contribute to building common EU knowledge about the sport sector, the opportunities and challenges that it faces.

### 2. *The evaluation*

The main task of the evaluation was to analyse and assess the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, as well as the EU-added value, of the Preparatory Actions and special events that were carried out during 2009 and 2010, the first two years of Preparatory Action funding.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation collected data and information through a mix of primary and secondary sources, with a heavy emphasis on the former. The main data collection methods were:

- A survey of coordinators and partners for the transnational projects funded in 2009;
- A survey of coordinators for the transnational projects funded in 2010;

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the timing of the evaluation, the 2011 activities are not taken into account here. Moreover, the majority of data collected refers to projects funded in 2009, which were complete in time for the data collection phase of the evaluation.

- Case studies of seven 2009 transnational projects, one conference and three non-commercial sport events. The case studies included interviews with the project coordinators / event organisers and partners, and detailed analyses of available outputs, reporting and other documentation;
- Desk research, including analyses of relevant policy documents, programme information and budgetary data.

### **3. Summary of key findings**

#### **a. Relevance**

##### Transnational projects

The objectives and Annual Work Programmes of the Preparatory Actions were relevant and consistent with the sport provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and other EU policies, ranging from overarching policies such as the Europe 2020 Strategy to subject-specific documents such as the Together for Health White Paper.

##### Non-commercial sport events

While the support of a number of special events could be considered to be clearly linked to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, the design of the Commission's support limited what the events were able to achieve. Lack of a competitive and selective tendering process, with well articulated objectives and links to the Commission's policy agenda, meant that it was difficult to measure whether any tangible contribution had been made to high level policy objectives.

##### Studies, surveys and conferences

The studies, conferences, seminars were used to facilitate new information and exchanges of good practice and contacts between key organisations in sport across a number of high priority areas. These were relevant to developing the EU dimension in sport and, more generally, can also be linked to policies such as the Europe 2020 Strategy.

#### **b. EU added value**

##### Transnational projects

EU added value was demonstrated in a number of ways, including:

- Alleviating discrepancies between Member States;
- Spreading best practices;
- Testing the viability of networks across the subject areas supported;
- Providing policy support through knowledge generation;
- Strengthening the European dimension in sport.

Importantly, none of the projects could have been carried out successfully by organisations acting at national level, since they addressed issues with a cross-border element and / or challenges for which no one Member State had identified a complete solution. The transnational projects have facilitated the spread of innovative methods and expertise.

At the project level, the EU added value varied according to such factors as maturity of the sector in question, the composition of individual networks and the types of organisations involved, the limited duration of support (i.e. one year) and the management procedures of projects. It is also clear that, while support for long-existing networks may be more effective in the short term, promoting the establishment and expansion of networks also demonstrates

European added value. Support for transnational projects found a good balance between these two possibilities for adding value.

#### Non-commercial sport events

The EU-added value of support for special events did not realise its full potential and could have been significantly increased had the Commission been given the opportunity to set specific award criteria against which applicants could have been scored and held accountable.

#### Studies, surveys and conferences

Studies, surveys, conferences and seminars fulfilled their role of providing the Commission and other actors with policy support and developing the EU dimension in sport. They also contributed to the establishment of the Commission as an important contributor to the development of EU sport.

### **c. Effectiveness**

#### Transnational projects

At a general level, it was difficult to translate project outcomes into tangible lessons for policy makers, given the short timeframe of the projects and their experimental nature. However, the projects achieved considerable success in promoting sport issues and developing the European dimension in sport, in particular with regard to building and strengthening networks between partner organisations in different sectors, and kick-starting cooperation between organisations working on sport around Europe.

Individual projects demonstrated considerable success in achieving their own objectives. The identification and publication of printed materials were achieved to a great extent. Developing and strengthening knowledge between project partners was a key achievement, while progress in networking at a truly European level proved more difficult, unless EU umbrella-type organisations were included in the network of partners.

More specifically, networks fostering multi-lateral collaboration between partners, rather than bilateral contact between individual partners and the coordinating organisation, appear to have been the most sustainable and successful. Key factors which positively or negatively affected what the transnational projects could achieve included the size and make-up of the network (for example, projects required partnerships involving organisations with experience relevant to reaching project goals). Additionally, it was difficult for projects to claim EU-level relevance, for example when mapping activities were carried out in a limited sample of countries. Well managed projects achieved more, using resources more efficiently and drawing out the potential synergies of partners.

#### Non-commercial sport events

Aside from the Mediterranean Games, the other two special events investigated (EYOWF and European Special Olympic Summer Games) contributed to supporting the development of the European dimension in sport. These events seemed to take into account policy areas expressed in the White Paper to develop a range of side activities to support EU ideals. All events also met their specific objectives. However, the lack of specific award criteria made it difficult for the Commission to ensure that these objectives fit with the rest of objectives of the Preparatory Actions.

## Studies, surveys and conferences

These activities were useful tools for the promotion of EU sporting issues and the provision of information to the Commission and the broader EU sport community. The information is likely to be used to contribute to better policy making in the subject areas covered in addition to strengthening the European dimension in sport. Additionally, the evidence indicates that the individual activities funded were carried out successfully and achieved the objectives set for them.

### ***d. Efficiency***

#### Transnational projects

The selection procedure for the transnational projects appears adequate and robust. While the calls for proposals were sufficiently flexible and widely publicised to stimulate the formation of new networks, existing networks were also encouraged to expand or broaden in scope. However, it is evident that organisations which had not previously been awarded funding had trouble breaking through.

On the programme level, the structure set up to administer the networking projects has been efficient. However, a larger, sustainable programme would likely be more efficiently managed by an Executive Agency, leaving policy officers the chance to more strategic matters. While the Executive Agency would be expected to take charge of most administrative matters, DG EAC's policy experts could retain an advisory role for project coordinators and partners.

The budget allocated to the Preparatory Actions proved sufficient to test a limited number of network themes, types and sizes while employing a robust, but not overly restrictive selection process.

#### Non-commercial sport events

The budget allowed the Commission to test several types of support for non-commercial sport events of major importance. Despite the lack of a competitive bidding process or objective selection criteria, specific types of events (i.e. those aimed at youth and people with disabilities) and activities carried out therein (e.g. peripheral activities aimed at the local population) demonstrated their effectiveness. This can be taken into account during the planning of future incentive measures.

## ***4. Conclusions and recommendations***

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following conclusions and recommendations are made to address shortcomings and make improvements for future incentive measures in the field of sport. They are centred on responses to a set of questions posed in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation.

### **1. How can the incentive measures supporting the policy cooperation mechanisms be improved?**

Based on the evidence sourced during the evaluation, the measures could be improved in the following ways, by:

## Transnational projects

- Capturing the lessons that have been learned by EC staff and project coordinators from the testing phase (2009-2011) in a structured way to ensure that the full benefit of the Preparatory Actions is taken into account in the development of the future programme.
- Increasing the duration of projects (in line with similar projects supported through other Commission programmes) to allow for more ambitious objectives and activities, while reducing administrative burden and improving the cost-effectiveness.
- Ensuring that the programme objectives and award criteria set for future incentive measures are in line with the size and scope of the individual projects to be funded, and the programme as a whole.
- Placing greater emphasis on the make-up of networks, plans for project management, and the expected contribution that each partner will make to project activities and objectives.
- Placing greater emphasis on the ultimate use of best practice collections, guidelines and the like. Projects must achieve clear EU added value and where possible spread and support the embedding of good practice to address discrepancies between different organisations and Member States.
- Ensuring that activities organised to promote sport among the general public address programme objectives, demonstrate a clear EU added value and / or contribute to the development of the European dimension in sport.

### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that a workshop is held after the Preparatory Actions are completed to facilitate a structured approach to capturing lessons learned. The Commission should host and chair the workshop and invite all project coordinators.
- It is recommended that projects of up to three years should be supported in the future. Programme objectives and award criteria should be adjusted to reflect this increased length, and the fact that the experimental, preparatory phase for incentive measures has come to an end. In particular, project proposals should include:
  - Need / expected added value to the sector in question;
  - Strength and relevance of the network and access to additional (e.g. pan-European) networks;
  - Plans for project management, including the specific roles for each partner in the design and implementation of activities and the potential for synergies between participating organisations;
  - Plans for dissemination of best practice collections, guidelines etc. including target beneficiaries and expected outcomes;
  - SMART objectives, including clear explanations stating how progress will be recorded.
- It is recommended that an emphasis on EU added value relates to all aspects of the projects, including activities aimed at the general public at local level. These should be based on identified good practice to ensure that maximum synergies between network partners are exploited and that the network and EU brands are given adequate weight.

### Studies, surveys, conferences and seminars

- It is concluded that the current approach does not need to be modified.

#### **Recommendation**

- It is recommended that the current approach to studies, surveys, conferences and seminars is continued.

### Special events

- Using a competitive process, involving the use of transparent award criteria to select the special events that will receive EU support, would help to ensure that the events contribute to overall programme objectives.
- Support for Europe-focused special events involving young people and the disabled has been shown to produce EU added-value and contribute to the European dimension in sport. It is also broadly consistent with wider EU policies.
- Relying on traditional PR activities, such as press releases, is not highly effective at communicating the EU dimension in sport. The press tends to focus on the content of the event (for example competition results) rather than EU messages, while the presence of the EU logo is limited in what it can convey. However, the development of specific activities peripheral to the main sport competitions can be effective at making progress towards programme objectives. These activities include inter alia programmes for local schools and seminars taking place in parallel to the main event.
- The special events supported by the EU were not required to address a number of the priorities expressed in the 2007 White Paper, for example the use of the Eco Scheme, cross border volunteers and the development of good practice in the management of large events.
- It has been difficult to assess the outcomes of EU funding for special events. This stems from both a lack of specific requirements for event organisers and a lack of evidence of tangible outcomes.

#### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the selection of special events is made via an open tendering process with transparent award criteria. Inter alia, events should comprise:
  - A non-commercial European sport event involving young people and / or the disabled (events that mainstream disabled competitions are to be encouraged);
  - Activities peripheral to the main sport competition that contribute directly to programme objectives;
  - Plans for awareness raising of the European dimension in sport / EU sporting issues, integrated within the main event;
  - The use of cross-border volunteers;
  - Use of the Eco Scheme.
- A set of requirements for event outcomes should be defined, including:
  - Justification that financial support led to EU added value;
  - Tangible evidence demonstrating that objectives have been met;
  - A report highlighting lessons learned and good practice in the organisation of special events involving cross border volunteers.



## **2. How can the synergies and interaction between the different kinds of stakeholders be improved?**

- Encouraging the involvement of partners representing different types of organisations, where this adds value to project goals, could be made explicit in relevant EC documentation (e.g. Annual Work Programmes, Calls for Proposals). Feedback from partners in the 2009 projects suggests that complementary expertise provides fresh insight and adds value to project outcomes.
- Defining good practice / lessons learned in project management based on experiences from the Preparatory Actions could also help to achieve this goal. Examples from the 2009 Preparatory Actions include:
  - Partner selection processes to strengthen the make-up of networks;
  - Clearly defined practices for effective communication between network partners;
  - Project management methods that draw on the inputs of all partners and facilitate cross partner information exchange (rather than bilateral exchanges between coordinators and individual partners only).

### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that future Calls for Proposals are amended to reflect the experiences of the Preparatory Actions. Without increasing the administrative burden, during the selection process networks could be privileged that demonstrate:
  - A set of partners representing a diversity of organisation types;
  - A well reasoned rationale for selected networking partners;
  - Project management methods assigning responsibility evenly across partners according to expertise.
- It is recommended that DG EAC consider assigning financial responsibility for networking projects to more than one organisation per project.

## **3. How can the management system of the incentive measures be organised in order to be more effective and efficient?**

The Preparatory Actions and special events have been administered wholly by DG EAC staff. This ranged from purely administrative tasks (e.g. making financial transfers) to the evaluation of project proposals, and the provision of ad hoc advice to project coordinators and partners. The evaluation assessed this system as sufficiently efficient, especially in light of the experimental nature of the Preparatory Actions and the commensurate need to monitor projects closely (particularly given the proportion of networks and organisations receiving EU funding for the first time). However, the evaluation also revealed some room for improvement. Notably, formal reporting requirements, while considered onerous by project coordinators, would have been better tolerated if timely and constructive feedback had been provided.

While efficiency savings for future incentive measures will likely be achieved through outsourcing administration to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, fully handing over responsibility for a future programme will subtract from the informal, advisory role currently played by DG EAC officials vis-à-vis project coordinators and partners. Instead, the Commission could continue to fulfil this function through encouraging contact between its own policy experts and staff of the organisations responsible for implementing

transnational projects. In addition, DG EAC officials could work with the Executive Agency in order to ensure that formal reporting adds value to the projects, rather than being seen merely as a box-ticking exercise. This would achieve the sought after cost savings while involving DG EAC staff in the areas where they can add the most value.

At the level of individual projects, the evaluation found that networks functioned best when work was apportioned equally among those involved, whereas in „hub and spoke“ networks not all partners contributed fully. While some networks achieved the right balance during the Preparatory Actions, in future the Commission could encourage better working methods inter alia through allocating financial responsibility to more than one organisation per project and requiring organisations to define roles for all project partners during the proposal stage.

#### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the Commission outsource administration of future incentive measures to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. However, DG EAC officials should continue to provide project coordinators with informal and ad hoc advice in their areas of expertise. This would lead to efficiency gains, as Executive Agency staff are accustomed to and have systems set up for administering large-scale funding programmes, while DG EAC would be able to channel its own limited human resources into the provision of policy expertise.
- Calls for Proposals should be designed as to encourage project coordinators and partners to share project ownership equally among coordinators and partners. In particular, this could include assigning financial responsibility to more than one organisation per project and a requirement to describe during the proposal process how each partner will be involved in the development and implementation of activities.

#### **4. Which are the most effective and useful activities and what should be their relative weighting, considering the needs in the field of sport and the policy objectives? What should be the level of funding devoted to incentive measures in order to reach a critical mass of impacts cost-effectively?**

This evaluation has determined that an appropriate level of funding has been devoted to testing transnational projects, major sport events and studies, surveys and conferences. While the limited budget for Preparatory Actions was only able to test networks in several subjects per year, in order to achieve a critical mass of impacts cost effectively, a future programme should fund transnational projects in all relevant areas on an ongoing basis.

Taking into consideration the EUR 8.5m budget for networking projects over the three years of Preparatory Actions, the magnitude of problems in each subject area, interest and absorption capacity of relevant organisations, an annual allocation of about EUR 15m for transnational projects should be envisaged.

In light of the perceived effectiveness of support for major sport events, and the recommendations made in this evaluation for a greater focus on specific activities peripheral to the events themselves, an annual budget similar to the one available during 2009-2011 could be continued in future, with a small increase to allow for funding of more specific activities at the sport events (where the Commission can potentially achieve the greatest impact). This would amount to about EUR 4m annually and would be dedicated to events with a focus on youth and / or people with disabilities, where the Commission can realistically achieve substantial visibility.

The annual allocation of about EUR 0.65 for studies, surveys and conferences could be increased to EUR 1m. This would allow future incentive measures to consider the wider

spectrum of activities to be covered. In addition, following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, this would provide policy support measures linked to increased cooperation at EU level in the field of sport.

Therefore, in total, an annual budget of at least EUR 20m could be envisaged in line with the table below.

|  | Instruments                       |                                   |                               | Total per year |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
|  | Transnat'l collaborative projects | Support for European sport events | Studies, surveys, conferences |                |
|  | € 15m                             | € 4m                              | € 1m                          | € 20m          |

### Recommendations

- It is recommended that the majority of funding for future incentive measures be dedicated to transnational networking projects, as these have shown the greatest potential for achieving EU added value across the range of priorities reflected in EU sport policy. Substantial amounts should also be allocated to support for European sport events, which have in particular been proven effective in the fields of health-enhancing physical activity and social inclusion, while a small proportion of future funding for incentive measures could be usefully employed for studies, surveys and conferences which also add value.
- It is recommended that an annual budget of about EUR 20m is allocated as a minimum for achieving a critical mass of impacts cost effectively. This takes into account the magnitude of problems in specific subject areas, the absorption capacity of networks and the types of outcomes achieved during the years of Preparatory Action funding as well as the costs of administering incentive measures. However, it is also worth noting that a higher budget would increase the impact of future incentive measures in the field of sport. Roughly three fourths of this annual budget should be dedicated to transnational networks, while one fifth could be used to support sport events and the rest to sponsor / commission studies, surveys and conferences on topics of particular importance.

### 5. What are the actions / areas where the EU can provide most added-value?

It is not possible to make comparisons between the effectiveness of the different types of interventions because of their different operating formats. Therefore, each intervention type is addressed separately.

#### Transnational projects maximise added value when:

- Projects facilitate cooperation and exchanges of good practice between sport organisations in Europe so that discrepancies between Member States in different sport sectors can be addressed;
- Project teams are comprised of partners which add value individually to the whole project and have significant networks and / or access to organisations with significant networks to facilitate wide dissemination of value generated;

- Projects are run by coordinators with proven project management experience who have a plan to maximise the potential synergies that can be generated between the partners in their project.

**Studies and surveys** maximise added value when:

- They meet a need for data recognised by the specific sport sector, generate robust data to increase understanding of that sector, and provide information that is shared among all stakeholders.

**Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the Commission ensure that sport stakeholders are consulted on the potential topics to be addressed by studies and surveys.
- It is recommended that the Commission make efforts to share the results of studies and surveys with relevant stakeholders both inside and outside the Commission.

**Conferences and seminars** maximise added value when:

- They bring principal sport stakeholders within a sector together to discuss a specific topic that is not facilitated by another forum.

**Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the Commission continue to support conferences and seminars.
- It is recommended that the practice of involving key external stakeholders in the design and implementation of events be continued to ensure maximum relevance and applicability to participants.
- It is recommended that the objectives and desired outputs of events should be clearly identified and, where possible, events should initiate follow up activities beneficial to the sport sector.

**Special events** maximise EU added value when:

- They support European sporting events which facilitate competitive sport among young people and the disabled. These events provide additional value when they also facilitate specific activities to promote the societal benefits of sport to other stakeholders, in particular for social inclusion and youth, in addition to building a European presence at major sport events.

**Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the Commission support European special events involving young people and the disabled.
- It is recommended that the Commission split funding between support to the operating costs of the event and the financing of specific activities, which contribute specifically to programme objectives.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This **Final Report** has been prepared in response to the request for an Evaluation of Preparatory Actions and special events in the field of sport. The Final Report is submitted on 11 July 2011 to the European Commission – Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) by The Evaluation Partnership, one of a consortium of companies led by Economisti Associati s.r.l., which also included navreme Boheme, SCIENTER, Amitié and Ipsos-MORI.

As specified in the Terms of Reference (TOR), the objective of this assignment was twofold, retrospective and prospective, and involved two tasks. Task 1 was aimed at undertaking an interim evaluation of the current Preparatory Actions and special events in the field of sport (2009-2010). Task 2 was aimed at conducting an impact assessment in order to support the preparation and formulation of a future EU sport programme (2014 – 2020). This document is the Final Report on Task 1: the Evaluation.

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the evaluation of Preparatory Actions and special events supported under the 2009 and 2010 Annual Work Programmes by DG EAC. The report provides answers to the evaluation questions listed in the TOR, presents conclusions and makes recommendations to DG EAC.

The document contains 5 Chapters as follows:

- Chapter 2: Background: aims to set the scene to facilitate understanding of the evaluation. This chapter describes the policy and programme context of the request for services, the projects supported under the 2009 and 2010 Annual Work Programmes and the objectives and scope of the evaluation.
- Chapter 3: Approach to the evaluation: describes the overall framework for assessment followed by the evaluation team including choices with regards to methodology, data collection and data analysis. Chapter 3 also discusses the limitations and constraints of the evaluation exercise and their implications for the interpretation of findings.
- Chapter 4: Evaluation results: this Chapter presents answers to the evaluation questions set by DG EAC.
- Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations: describes the conclusions that were drawn as a result of this assessment. Recommendations are also made to DG EAC
- Annex A: Detailed results: provides the full findings from the two surveys carried out.
- Annex B: Technical documentation: includes the Terms of Reference, survey questionnaires, case study reporting templates and interview guides employed to gather data for the evaluation.

# 1 BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Context of the evaluation

The first EU developments in the field of sport took place in the late 90's (e.g. the recognition of non-economic aspects of sport, setting up the sport unit). The specific nature of sport and its important role were first formally recognised in the “**Nice Declaration**” (2000). The Declaration required that EU policies and decisions should take account of the specific characteristics of sport and be sport-friendly.

The **2004 European Year of Education through Sport** gave an impetus to enhance the role of sport in education and training. Around 200 projects relating to sport were co-financed by the Commission and accompanied by a communication campaign. Also in 2004, specific provisions on sport were included in the draft Constitutional Treaty and EU Sport Ministers adopted a Rolling Agenda for Sport. The Agenda defined priority themes for discussions on sport among the Member States and the Commission.

It was not until 2007 that there was a comprehensive vision for sport in the EU. For the first time, the Commission presented a complete picture on the relationships between the EU and sport in a high-profile policy document. The **White Paper on Sport** (2007) identified three dimensions of sport (social, economic and organisational) that should be taken into account when developing the EU's approach. The accompanying Action Plan (“Pierre de Coubertin”) suggested a number of actions to be implemented at EU level..

Following the White Paper and Action Plan, in 2008 the European Parliament adopted a resolution welcoming the vision presented by the Commission and requesting a special budget line for Preparatory Actions in the field of sport.

## 1.2 Preparatory Actions and special events in the field of Sport

In line with the EU Parliament's resolution, the Commission adopted three Annual Work Programmes (one in 2009, one in 2010 and another in 2011) on grants and contracts for the “**Preparatory Actions in the field of sport**” and “**Special annual events**”. The overall objective of the Preparatory Actions was to prepare future EU actions in the field of sport in view of the implementation of the sport provisions in the Lisbon Treaty (adopted in 2007). The table below outlines the specific objectives of the Annual Work Programmes and indicates the actions and events supported by the Commission between 2009 and 2011. The Call for Proposals for projects under the 2011 Annual Work Programme was open at the time of drafting this document.

*Figure 1: Preparatory Actions*

| Objectives   | 2009                       | 2010                       | 2011 (plan)                |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Preparatory Actions (share of the budget)  | 66%                        | 36%                        | 43%                        |
| 1) To identify future policy actions through studies, surveys, conferences and seminars in order to develop better knowledge of the field of sport, their problems and needs | 2 studies<br>3 conferences | 2 studies<br>3 conferences | 4 studies<br>1 conferences |
| 2) To test/support the establishment and functioning of suitable networks and exchange of best practice in policy fields already identified in the White Paper on Sport      | 18 transnational projects  | 12 transnational projects  | Call currently open        |

*Figure 2: Special Events*

| Objectives  | 2009       | 2010      | 2011     |
|---|------------|-----------|----------|
| Special Events (share of the budget)  | 44%        | 64%       | 57%      |
| 3) To promote greater European visibility at special sporting events identified by the European Parliament in the framework of the budgetary procedure. | 2 events   | 2 events  | 2 events |
| <b>Total budget Preparatory Actions and Special Events (in million euro)</b>  | <b>7.5</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>7</b> |

Transnational projects were used to support sport projects relating to different themes with a view to implementing priority actions expressed in the 2007 White Paper on Sport. The chart below provides an overview of the thematic content of projects under each year.

*Figure 3: Content of Transnational Projects 2009-2011*

| 2009  | 2010                            | 2011  |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Health and Enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA) | Fight against doping            | Prevention of and fight against violence and intolerance      |
| Education and training                        | Promoting social inclusion      | Innovative approaches to strengthen the organisation of sport |
| Encouraging sport for disabled persons        | Promoting volunteering in sport |   |
| Promoting gender equality                     |                                 |   |

### 1.3 Objectives and scope of the evaluation

The main task of the evaluation was to analyse and assess the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, as well as the EU-added value, of the Preparatory Actions and special events in the field of sport 2009 and 2010. The scope of the evaluation did not include a detailed consideration of activities supported in 2010 beyond the selection of proposals, nor did it include activities supported under the 2011 Annual Work Programme because the timing of the evaluation did not coincide with the timing of these activities. The evaluation did not include activities supported under the 2011 Annual Work Programme because at the time of writing an open call for proposals had been launched.

DG EAC developed a set of evaluation questions which were used to structure the DGs expectations and the outputs required from the evaluation process. The evaluation questions are presented overleaf and answers to the question are presented in Chapter 4. A secondary objective of the evaluation was to feed into the Impact Assessment support that was developed by other members of the evaluation team.

## **Evaluation Questions set by DG EAC**

### **Relevance**

1. To what extent are the objectives, design and implementation of the Annual Work Programmes of the Preparatory Actions and special events relevant to the objective to prepare the implementation of the new Treaty provisions in the field of sport?
2. What is the EU added value of the Preparatory Actions and special events?
3. Do the objectives and design of the Annual Work Programmes for the Preparatory Actions and special events provide proper links to other EU policy initiatives and political priorities (e.g. Europe 2020<sup>2</sup>)?

### **Effectiveness**

4. To what extent do the Preparatory Actions and special events in the field of sport contribute to the achievement of the policy objectives to promote sporting issues and to develop the European dimension in sport?
5. To what extent do the Preparatory Actions and special events in the field of sport achieve their general, specific and operational objectives? What negative and positive factors seem to be influencing outputs and results?
6. To what extent do the Preparatory Actions and special events appear satisfactory in relation to the objective of the sport contribution to the EU's horizontal policies (e.g. health, education, social inclusion, employment, etc.)?
7. Are the forms of interventions under the Preparatory Actions and special events effective for the purpose of supporting the development of the European dimension in sport?

### **Efficiency**

8. To what extent is the implementation and management structure of actions appropriate, efficient, and well-functioning? What are the areas for improvement?
9. Are the monitoring mechanisms applied by the Commission efficient? What are the areas for improvement?
10. To what extent can the administrative burden be reduced?
11. Is the size of the budget appropriate and proportionate to what the Preparatory Actions and special events are set out to achieve?
12. Are the current measures sufficiently well oriented and structured in terms of cost-effectiveness? What are the areas for improvement?
13. To what extent are the desired effects achieved at a reasonable cost/effectiveness ratio?

In addition to answering the above questions, DG EAC required conclusions and recommendations on the following:

1. How can the incentive measures supporting the policy cooperation mechanisms be improved?
2. How can the synergies and interaction between the different kinds of stakeholders be improved?
3. How can the management system of the incentive measures be organised in order to be more effective and efficient?
4. Which are the most effective and useful activities and what should be their relative weighting, considering the needs in the field of sport and the policy objectives?
5. What should be the level of funding devoted to incentive measures in order to reach a critical mass of impacts cost-effectively?
6. What are the actions / areas where the EU can provide most added value?

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<sup>2</sup> Europe 2020 Strategy, <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020>.



## **2 APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION**

### **2.1 Overview**

This Chapter provides a detailed overview of the steps undertaken to conduct the evaluation of Preparatory Actions and special events, which took place between December 2010 and May 2011. The evaluation was launched with an initial meeting of the evaluation DG EAC Steering Group on 17 December 2011. This was the first in a series of meetings between the evaluators and the Commission to discuss progress on the study and present findings as these emerged from different phases of the assessment. The evaluation comprised three main phases:

- Inception and familiarisation: this included a review of the methodological approach, initial research drawing on existing background documentation and interviews with Commission desk officers, and subsequently the development of a number of evaluation tools.
- Data collection: this was the main phase of the evaluation, which involved using the evaluation tools that were developed during the first phase of the evaluation to collect data.
- Data analysis and final reporting: this involved preparing the data for analysis, triangulation and integration of findings, and the development of conclusions and recommendations.

### **2.2 Methodology**

The evaluation methodology was developed to answer the evaluation questions set in the Terms of Reference and to identify lessons that could support the Commission in its preparations for possible future incentives. The methodology was constructed to take into account the specificities of the subject matter available for assessment, as follows:

- Only Preparatory Actions supported under the 2009 Work Programme were near completion. Preparatory Actions supported under 2010 had not started at the time of assessment;
- The special events supported under 2009 and 2010 had taken place, but experiences would be to some extent more difficult to examine given the fact that these events had limited duration and in some cases took place more than a year before the evaluation;
- There were no Final Reports available that described in a detailed way the outputs of each project.

Given the nature of the evaluation questions, the lack of documented final results, and the significant variation in the outputs achieved, it was clear that the focus of the evaluation was an investigation of the experiences and outcomes of the funded activities to date, rather than a detailed measurement and comparison of inputs and outputs. For this reason, the main focus of the methodology proposed was qualitative. Qualitative methodologies are best suited to identifying the salient attributes of a particular situation, as well as any positive and negative aspects that may influence this (Hair et al, 2007). In addition, the size of the target population was not sufficiently large to facilitate a full-scale quantitative approach to the collection of data. However, as it was possible to reach the total population of coordinators, the gathering of qualitative data was supplemented with a small amount of quantitative data on a number of key questions.

The primary target population was identified as the individuals who had experienced the different Preparatory Actions and special events, in other words: the EC desk officers who had managed activities, the coordinators of the 2009 projects and the partners of 2009 projects. In addition, it was decided to try to include the inputs of 2010 coordinators to the extent that they had feedback to provide with regards to the proposal and selection process. Taking this into account the evaluation methodology was as follows:

- Desk research of existing on- and offline documentary evidence providing important contextual information to the evaluation;
- In-depth semi-structured interviews with EC desk officers
- Mini Case Studies on a sample of 11 Preparatory Actions and special events drawing on available on- and off-line documentation, 1 interview with the project coordinator and 3 interviews with project partners;
- On-line survey of coordinators and partners from all 2009 projects
- On-line survey of coordinators from all 2010 projects.

This methodology was developed following a process of review and consultation with EC desk officers, as described in the below section on the Inception Phase of the evaluation.

## 2.3 Inception

|  |
|--|
| <b>PHASE 1: INCEPTION</b>                      |
| Familiarisation                                |
| Refining and updating approach and methodology |
| Inception Report                               |

### ***Familiarisation***

The inception phase was important for the evaluation team to further develop the baseline understanding of the assignment, in particular the current state-of-play in implementing the Preparatory Actions and special events. As highlighted above, this phase started with the kick-off meeting with the Steering Group in Brussels to exchange views regarding the expectations and needs related to the evaluation and the Impact Assessment. The meeting served primarily to:

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ introduce the evaluation team;</li> <li>✓ clarify the understanding of the work to be undertaken under both tasks;</li> <li>✓ review and validate objectives (and evaluation questions);</li> <li>✓ discuss the proposed methodologies for both tasks in detail;</li> <li>✓ discuss the proposed timetable.</li> </ul> |
|---|

Following the meeting, the evaluators conducted an initial documentation review and summary descriptive analysis of all Preparatory Actions and events funded. This involved analysis of the following sources of evidence:

- Policy documents, including the Europe 2020 Strategy, the 2007 White Paper, the 2011 Communication and accompanying Impact Assessments and action plans;
- Programming documentation, including the 2009 and 2010 Annual Work Programmes and Calls for Proposals;
- Project documentation, including all proposals, contract information and available information on the 2009 and 2010 Preparatory Actions and special events;

- Management documentation, including proposal evaluations, mission and monitoring reports.

The documentary review continued as an iterative process throughout the evaluation. As the evaluation progressed, the above list was expanded to include evidence of other complementary horizontal policies of the European Union, the web sites and specific reports of individual Preparatory Actions and so on. The review of documentation helped to identify any specific information gaps and additional questions that needed to be answered to enhance the evaluation team's understanding of the topic. These points were recorded and included in the discussion guide that was used to structure the initial fact-finding interviews with the Commission officials responsible for managing the Preparatory Actions and special events. The following interviews were conducted.

| <b>Name</b>      | <b>Mode telephone/face-to-face</b> | <b>Date</b> |
|------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Marcello Corrado | Telephone                          | 31/01/2011  |
| Susanne Hollmann | Face-to-face                       | 10/01/2011  |
| Jacob Kornbeck   | Telephone                          | 11/01/2011  |
| Gianluca Monte   | Face-to-face                       | 10/01/2011  |
| Bart Ooijen      | Telephone                          | 10/01/2011  |

The interviews followed a semi-structured format. The discussion guide was used to ensure coverage of specific points, but was used flexibly so that evaluators could probe certain aspects more fully according to the experience of the interviewee.

The discussion guide covered the following areas: objectives and policy content; management of the programme; perceived outcomes of the projects and the future sport programme. The discussion guide is available in the Annexes of this Draft Final Report. Each interview was written up to provide a record of the discussion and a short working paper was drafted presenting the key observations from the interviews. This internal working paper served a dual purpose to: inform the development of the evaluation tools; update staff members working on the Impact Assessment part of the study.

### ***Refine general approach and methodology***

The initial proposal presented to DG EAC described the general methodology that would be used to carry out the study. However, before the evidence gathering commenced it was necessary to identify the exact approach that was required based on the additional information and understanding that had been made available to the study team since the launch of the project. This process included drawing on the expertise of three experts in fields of evaluation, public policy and sport who were included in the study team. It was intended that the experts would assist by strengthening the design, analysis and outputs of the evaluation.

On 25 January 2011, a first meeting was held with the experts. The meeting was used to discuss the requirements of the evaluation and to identify the specific contributions that each individual expert would make to the study. The discussion on the evaluation methodology led to the identification of good practice and recommendations by the experts. Outputs from the expert meeting, findings from the interviews with EC staff and the review of documentation were used to develop the evaluation tools that were used to gather evidence for the evaluation. These tools (questionnaires, interview guides and case-study tool kit) are presented in Annex B of this report.

Tools were developed based on a detailed analysis of evaluation questions, which led to the identification of a set of key terms, judgment criteria and target levels. The evaluation questions matrix (presented in the Annexes) was used to support:

- The definition of questions to be answered during the interviews and surveys, allowing indicators of particular outputs to emerge;
- The subsequent analysis of data against a list of judgement criteria.

In short, the evaluation questions matrix provided the link between the evaluation questions set by the Commission and the data that could be collected by the evaluation team.

### ***Inception Report***

To present the initial progress made by the evaluation team an Inception Report was developed. The report presented a roadmap for the evaluation and four draft evaluation tools:

- Online survey questionnaire for 2009 Preparatory Actions
- Online survey questionnaire for 2010 Preparatory Actions
- EU Sport Forum Observation Sheet
- Case Study Tool Kit

The report suggested modifications to the original methodology, based on the evaluation team's initial research. The Inception Report was discussed at a meeting with DG EAC in Brussels on 18 February 2011 and a revised and final version was submitted on 3 March 2011.

## **2.4 Data Collection**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Phase 2: Data collection</b>   |
| Preparation for data collection   |
| Email questionnaire with coordinators of Preparatory Actions and events         |
| Online survey with beneficiaries/participants of Preparatory Actions and events |
| Interim Report  |

### ***Preparation for data collection***

A key feature of the preparation of the data gathering was the attendance of three members of the evaluation team (Melanie Kitchener, Bradford Rohmer and Alessandro Bortolotti) at the EU Sport Forum in Budapest on 21 and 22 February 2011. Coordinators and partners of the 2009 and 2010 projects also attended the forum, presented their projects and provided information through booths set up in the forum common areas. The forum provided the evaluators with an opportunity to introduce themselves to those involved with the Preparatory Actions and special events and to explain how their inputs would help to inform DG EAC about the usefulness of these activities. Project contractors were given a chance to ask direct questions to the evaluation team. In addition, the evaluation team gathered initial feedback on the experiences of project coordinators and partners and made contacts with the projects that had been selected for more in-depth review.

Attendance at the EU Sport Forum helped to facilitate the data collection phase of the evaluation because it helped the evaluators to establish personal contacts with project coordinators and partners. A further positive outcome was that several contractors agreed to pilot a draft version of the online survey. Testing surveys with target populations before they are launched is good practice and helps to ensure that meaningful results are achieved. The

contractors provided feedback where specific questions were unclear or repetitive and this was taken into account in a revised version. DG EAC officials were also provided with a link to a draft version of the surveys before they were launched and given the chance to provide feedback.

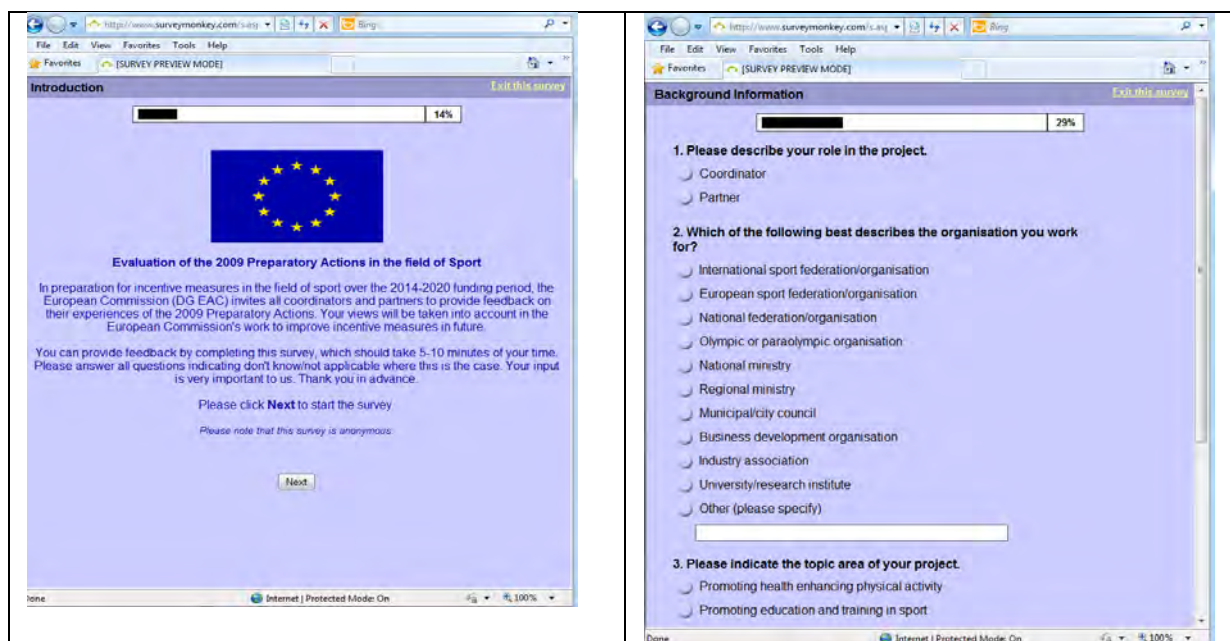
Feedback and observations from the EU forum were taken into account and revisions were made to the draft Case Study Tool Kit. A second version of the Tool Kit was developed to facilitate the gathering of data on the special events, which differed in structure and nature from the transnational projects. DG EAC provided additional background documentation to support the in-depth study of the events.

### **Online survey with beneficiaries/participants of Preparatory Actions and events**

Receiving input from the individuals who have been most intimately involved in the Preparatory Actions is crucial to a robust evaluation. However, carrying out interviews with all of those involved was neither feasible nor proportionate to the size of the intervention being evaluated. Using online surveys to reach a large number of stakeholders helped to strike a good balance, keeping the scope of the evaluation realistic while adding a quantitative element to the data collection. In this case, surveys were used to elicit information from project coordinators and partners from within their networks.

Recognising differences between the experiences of those involved with the 2009 Preparatory Actions, whose projects were nearing conclusion, and those involved with the 2010 actions, whose projects were in the early stages, the evaluation team developed two separate online surveys. The 2009 survey was extended to include partners, as well as coordinators to give a further dimension to the feedback. The surveys were put online to facilitate effective data input and collection, as illustrated in the screenshot below.

#### **Online survey of Coordinators and Partners of Preparatory Actions under 2009**



The first survey was intended to gather feedback from coordinators and partners of 2009 transnational projects and asked questions relating to:

#### The network of partners

- Creation / development of the network;
- Existence of new collaborations between different types of sport organisations,
- Usefulness of the network for achieving desired project outcomes,
- Future collaboration between partners of the network

#### Participants and beneficiaries

- Identification of target beneficiaries and participants
- Participant metrics (where relevant)

#### Project outcomes

- Achievement of objectives
- Mutual learning
- Usefulness outside the project
- Impacts

An open question was also included to collect opinions on how priorities could be set for possible future incentives

The survey gathered profile information, including relation to project (i.e. coordinator or partner), type of organisation, topic area and previous experience of EU funding, so that this could later be used to assess the relationship between respondent profiles and survey answers. The surveys focused on topics that were relatively easy to understand and did not require extensive explanation or time commitment from respondents. The inclusion of a small number of open questions allowed respondents to give more extensive feedback

As the 2010 projects had not yet started, it was decided that the second survey would only gather feedback from coordinators, on their experiences to date, and not include project partners. It was thought unlikely that partners would be able to provide useful feedback. Meanwhile, coordinators were asked to indicate their views under the same headings as for 2009 contractors (the network, potential beneficiaries and participants and project outcomes) without the emphasis on project outcomes, which would have been highly speculative at this stage.

The surveys were launched via a personalised email with a link to the appropriate survey that was sent to each project coordinator of the 2009 and 2010 projects. Coordinators of the 2009 projects were asked to forward the link to their partners because contact details were not held by DG EAC. The special events were not included in the survey because of the lack of comparability of format between the contracts and outputs of the events and the transnational projects. Although survey responses were anonymous (it is not possible to attribute responses to particular projects and coordinators), it was assumed that all of the 2009 and 2010 coordinators took part because of the number of responses received. This success was attributed, at least in part, to the contacts that the evaluators made with contractors at the EU Sport Forum. Although a large number of partners responded to the survey, the results were not considered to reflect the opinions of all partners. It was likely that some projects were more represented than others. Nonetheless, the number of project partners who completed the survey was significant.

The surveys were launched on 28 February 2011 and closed on 21 March 2011. A full survey report presenting the results of the surveys is presented in Annex A of this document.

#### ***Case Study interviews on a sample Preparatory Actions and events***

A key element of the evaluation methodology was a more in-depth review of a sample of Preparatory Actions and special events. At the DG EAC Steering Group on 18 February

2011, it was agreed that the evaluation team would make a more comprehensive assessment of 11 transnational networks and events as provided in the below table.

#### Contracts selected for Case Studies

|    | Activity   | Implementing organisation                                 | Thematic areas                      |
|----|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1  | All for sport for all: perspectives of sport for people with a disability in Europe                  | The European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE)  | Sport for persons with disabilities |
| 2  | FIFPro online Academy  | Federation internationale des footballeurs professionnels | Education and training in sport     |
| 3  | Athletes2Business  | EU Office of the European Olympic Committees              | Education and training in sport     |
| 4  | Olympia: equal opportunities via sport and within sport  | Unione Italiana Sport Per tutti (UISP)                    | Gender equality in sport            |
| 5  | Becoming the Hub: the Health and Fitness Sector and the Future of Health Enhancing Physical Activity | European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA)            | Health and physical activity        |
| 6  | ATHLE-SANTE  | French Athletic Federation                                | Health and physical activity        |
| 7  | Euro Sport Health  | Diputació de Barcelona                                    | Health and physical activity        |
| 8  | EU Conference on Licensing Systems for Club Competitions   | Conference  |                                     |
| 9  | Mediterranean Games (Pescara, IT, June 2009)   | Special event   |                                     |
| 10 | European Special Olympics Summer Games (Warsaw, PL, Sep. 2010)                                       | Special event   |                                     |
| 11 | European Youth Olympic Winter Festival (Liberec, CZ, Feb. 2011)                                      | Special event   |                                     |

The case study methodology for Preparatory Actions comprised a review and analysis of relevant background evidence and interviews with the project coordinator and 3 partners. This approach was tailored to the special events so that interviews included either key personnel involved in organising events or participants at events, where this was feasible. The sample of partners for interview was selected by the evaluators to avoid possible bias in selections made by coordinators. Coordinators provided the evaluation team with contact details of the selected partners. The selection of partners was made to include the views of different types of organisations, for example academia and national sports federations, clubs etc, as well as to ensure geographical diversity.

Interviewees were contacted by email to arrange a date and time for interview. For reasons of location, a small number of interviews were carried out face-to-face, with the majority carried out over the telephone. Interviewees were provided with a discussion guide in advance so that they were able to prepare. This allowed interviews to yield the maximum amount of relevant data. Interviewees were informed that findings from discussions related to the management of their contract by the Commission would only be presented in an anonymous format to DG EAC.

The average duration of each interview was about one hour, although some interviews with coordinators lasted 1.5 hours. A discussion guide was followed to ensure the capture of relevant data to answer the evaluation questions agreed with DG EAC. However, the evaluators probed more deeply when specific points of interest became apparent. This approach is common in qualitative research to allow richer insights to emerge than would be possible by following a strict question and answer format. The evaluators typed notes directly during the interviews and wrote these up immediately afterwards to avoid the potential for loss of data or misunderstandings. Due to the timing of the evaluation, final reports on the projects were not available to the evaluation team. For this reason, the Case Studies are largely based on the interviews carried out, as well as proposal information (particularly Annex 1 of project proposals) and information available on project web sites.

### ***Interim Report***

The initial results of data collection, including all the results from the two surveys and half of the Case Studies, were presented to DG EAC in a first Interim Report of the evaluation. The document was discussed in a Steering Group meeting with the Commission. A second version of the Interim Report was produced, taking into account DG EAC feedback and presenting the outstanding Case Study interview reports.

## **2.5 Data Analysis and Final Reporting**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Phase 3: Analysis, Judgement and Final Reporting</b> |
| Preparation   |
| Analysis  |
| Draft Final Report                                      |
| Final Report  |

### ***Preparation for data analysis***

The evaluation gathered qualitative and quantitative data, as follows:

#### Qualitative data

- Documentary evidence (including policy and programme documentation as well as relating to individual projects)
- Interview records presenting the outcomes of each individual interview according to a structured discussion guide
- Unstructured feedback received in response to open questions in the two on-line surveys
- Case studies providing in-depth analysis on a sample of 11 projects/events

#### Quantitative data

- Primary data from the two online surveys
- Secondary data relating to volume of proposals and projects and budgetary information from the Commission and individual projects

The first task for the evaluation team was to prepare the data so that it could be analysed in an integrated format. A key standard in evaluation is that evidence must come from several sources to confirm the reliability and validity of any conclusions that are drawn.

The first step in this process had already been taken with the development of an evaluation questions matrix. The matrix defined the evaluation questions to be answered, the sources of



data, and the judgement criteria that would be used to assess this data. Developing this tool prior to data collection ensured that the evaluation activities were targeted on gathering the right type of data in a useful format. At the point of analysis, the matrix was then used as a map guiding the evaluators on which sources of data needed to be triangulated to answer the different evaluation questions.

In preparation for analysis, a document was created that captured the different sources of data to be analysed for each evaluation question. The unstructured format and the volume of qualitative data meant that it was necessary to reduce the data before analysis could be carried out. This involved identifying key points and eliminating aspects which were not considered to be relevant to the evaluation questions. Additional note was taken of findings which were considered to be important, but which were not required to answer the evaluation questions.

### **Analysis**

Background documentation was analysed in a structured way. Several templates were developed to facilitate analysis of policy and programming documentation. The outcomes of this exercise were shared between the evaluation team and the impact assessment team to ensure a common understanding. Project data was also analysed. Data was captured in a matrix format which displayed different project features including budgets, numbers and types of partners to allow the evaluators greater understanding of different trends in the whole group of projects and proposals.

The results of the two on-line surveys were downloaded into an Excel format. Bi and tri-variate analysis was undertaken of the results to allow the fullest understanding of the data. This facilitated investigation of the potential impact of different variables on the results, e.g. respondent profile, type of organisation, etc.

The Case Study projects provided the evaluators with a more in-depth view of a sample of projects. Several templates were developed to facilitate structured analysis of the data. The following parameters were taken into account and considered in terms of the extent that projects met their objectives and achieved expected impact:

- Generation of knowledge and data
- Identification and sharing of good practices
- Networking among stakeholders from different EU MS
- Raising awareness of key issues among a broader audience
- Visibility of European support
- EU-added value
- Links to other EU policies

For each evaluation question, the evaluation team compared the evidence from each of the relevant data sources identified in the EQM and noted the extent that findings were supported or not by the different data. Account was taken of potential limitations of the data that would affect its validity, with regards to:

- Proximity of the source to the evidence,
- Potential bias (this was important because of the focus on gathering data from project coordinators and partners)
- The limitations of the sample of actions (11 from 2009)
- Lack final project outcomes

On the basis of this initial analysis, findings were drawn up, which were discussed between members of the evaluation team, amended and presented to the European Commission in draft format. Based on feedback received from the Commission, the evaluation team revised its findings (presented in Chapter 4) and developed a set of conclusions in response to the

questions listed in the Terms of Reference and recommendations to address the conclusions identified.

### ***Draft Final and Final Reports***

A Draft Final Report was presented to European Commission on 27 May 2011. The report was discussed with the DG EAC Steering Group on 6 June 2011. This document is the Final Report of the evaluation, which presents final results and conclusions from the evaluation and recommendations to DG EAC for the future.

## **2.6 Limitations, constraints and implications**

Over the course of the evaluation there were a number of challenges that needed to be taken into account, as follows:

1. **Narrow focus of the evaluation:** although the Preparatory Actions and special events were foreseen to run over a period of three years (2009 – 2011), the evaluation was required to mainly focus upon the period 2009. It is likely, that if the whole period had been taken into account the findings from this evaluation would look somewhat different. It is important to note that some organisations participated in 2009 and 2010. These organisations are likely to have developed a better understanding of EC expectations and requirements and to have adapted their approaches as a result.
2. **Timing of the evaluation:** as the 2010 transnational projects had not yet started during this evaluation, the majority of data gathering focused on projects supported under the 2009 Annual Work Programme.

Timing also had an impact on the assessment of the outcomes of the projects. It was not possible to realistically identify whether projects were able to develop outcomes that would have a longer lasting effect. Therefore, it was necessary to take into account project and EC staff's perceptions on this point.

3. **Completeness of evidence:** it was not possible to make a full evaluation of project outputs because final reports from the projects had not been developed at the time of writing. This meant that the evaluators were required to analyse somewhat incomplete data relating to the information that they were able to elicit from publically available web sites, project and programme information, and interviews with coordinators and partners. It is, therefore, likely that details which could have been instrumental in answering the evaluation questions may not have been revealed in this process.
4. **Distance from the special events:** typically evaluations of events involve the attendance of members of the evaluation team, allowing them to witness firsthand how the event unfolds. When it is not feasible to attend an event being evaluated, it is common practice that the assessment takes place immediately before and after the event, This also presents an opportunity to gather feedback from those who actually took part in or attended, in addition to those who organised the event. In all cases, the assessment was undertaken some time after the event took place. This means that it is likely that some of the specific details of the event were not brought to the evaluator's attention. With the exception of the assessment of the Conference on Licensing, it was not possible to interview those who had benefited from the event taking place.
5. **Reliance on feedback from project coordinators and partners:** ideally a project type evaluation gathers feedback from those involved in organising activities and those who

took part in the activities organised; this is particularly the case where projects involve members of the general public. This allows evaluators to compare project coordinators' perceptions of their project with the experiences and perceptions of those who participated. In this case, some of the projects selected as case studies did not necessarily involve beneficiaries beyond the project team. The projects that did involve members of the public, for example in their activities, did not have ongoing contacts with the individuals who took part in their events. As a result it was not possible for the evaluators to make contacts with participants.

Although case studies involved partners and coordinators, it became clear that partners wanted to support their coordinators and were unlikely to provide feedback that may have been construed negatively, even though the evaluation team made it clear that the purpose of the evaluation was to generate lessons to help the Commission to prepare for possible future incentive measures rather than to evaluate the project per se. While feedback from project coordinators must be considered to be valuable because it allowed individuals to talk to an independent third party, it too presented a particular perception of events.

The points listed above were taken into account as the evaluation team integrated data and made judgements on the available evidence.

There were a number of positive features that enhanced the evaluation that had not been foreseen. For example, it is likely that the 100% response rate of coordinators to the online survey (which was vital to the development of meaningful findings) was achieved because the evaluation team had the chance to meet those involved in the projects at the EU Sport Forum in Budapest. Secondly, the opportunity to pilot the on-line survey with project coordinators, which also arose from these meetings, helped to ensure that questions were posed in a format that would allow maximum input from the projects.

### 3 EVALUATION RESULTS

The chapter presents the findings of the evaluation. The findings are used to answer the evaluation questions devised by DG EAC and listed in the Terms of Reference.

#### 3.1 Relevance

The following paragraphs provide answers to the evaluation questions on the relevance of the Preparatory Actions and special events. In particular, the section provides insight into the extent to which the chosen mix of activities respond to policy and programme needs.

***EQ1. To what extent are the objective and design of the Annual Work Programmes of the Preparatory Actions and special events relevant to the objective to prepare the implementation of the new Treaty provisions in the field of sport?***

The objectives of the Annual Work Programmes are clearly identifiable within each document. To answer this question, design was taken to mean the constituent parts of the Annual Work Programmes: Preparatory Actions and special events. This question is intended to identify the extent to which the Annual Work Programmes and the Lisbon Treaty are aligned.

Article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty describes how EU action will contribute to the areas of education, vocational training, youth and sport. For analytical purposes, this Article was divided into its constituent parts, which facilitated the identification of the specific elements concerned with sport, essentially three general objectives linked to a number of specific objectives:

- 1. The promotion of European sporting issues, while:**
  - Taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function.
  
- 2. Developing the European dimension in sport, by promoting:**
  - Fairness and openness in sporting competitions
  - Cooperation between bodies responsible for sports, and by
  - Protecting the physical and moral integrity of sportsmen and sportswomen, especially the youngest sportsmen and sportswomen.
  
- 3. Foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of education and sport, in particular the Council of Europe.**

Paragraph 1 of the Annual Work Programmes confirms that the Preparatory Actions are in fields of the application of the EC Treaty; in other words, the whole purpose of the actions described in the Annual Work Programmes is to prepare for future EU support of sporting issues in-line with the Treaty. Analysis of the general and specific objectives and structure of the documents described below confirms the extent that Preparatory Actions and special events were described in a way that would support Article 165.

| General objectives   | Relevance to Lisbon Treaty  | Article 165 Object. 1 | Article 165 Object. 2 | Article 165 Object. 3 |
|--|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Providing policy support for the identification of future policy actions         | Policy support underpins future policy and can be considered as <b>developing EU dimension</b> by allowing the Commission and other decision makers at all levels to be better informed and consequently better able to take account of <b>specific nature of sport</b> . | ✓                     | ✓                     |                       |
| Testing the establishment and functioning of suitable networks and good practice | Supporting networks and the exchange of good practice supports <b>cooperation between bodies responsible</b> for sport and developing EU dimension.   |                       | ✓                     |                       |
| Contributing to financing of the Mediterranean Games                             | Foster <b>cooperation with 3<sup>rd</sup> countries</b> in the sphere of education and sport.   |                       |                       | ✓                     |
| Evaluator assessment   | <b>The general objectives can be considered to be relevant to the provisions of the new Treaty.</b>   |                       |                       |                       |

### Preparatory Actions

The Preparatory Actions were organised according to a number of specific policy objectives, as highlighted below, which focused proposals on specific topic areas (four under 2009 and three under 2010).

| Specific objectives  | Relevance to Lisbon Treaty   | Article 165 Object. 1 | Article 165 Object. 2 | Article 165 Object. 3 |
|--|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Studies, surveys, conferences and seminars</b>                                    |  |                       |                       |                       |
| Good governance  | Fairness and openness/physical and moral integrity   |                       | ✓                     |                       |
| Socio economic data  | Supports taking account of the specific nature of sport  | ✓                     |                       |                       |
| Societal aspects of sport including fight against doping                             | Taking account of social function and physical/moral integrity   | ✓                     | ✓                     |                       |
| <b>Networks and good practices</b>   |  |                       |                       |                       |
| Promoting health enhancing physical activity:  | Support networking and exchange of best practices between actors = <b>cooperation</b> between sport organisations<br>Topic = <b>physical integrity</b>   |                       | ✓                     |                       |
| Promoting education and training in sport: actions will support activities aimed at: | Promoting physical activity in school environment = <b>physical integrity</b> and <b>youngest</b> sportsmen and women<br>Sharing knowledge between organisations = <b>cooperation</b> between sporting organisation<br>Topic: <b>educational function of sport</b> | ✓                     | ✓                     |                       |
| Promoting European fundamental values by encouraging sport for                       | Integration into mainstream sporting activities<br>Promoting EU dimension  | ✓                     | ✓                     |                       |

|  |   |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| <b>disabled persons:</b>   | Topic: <b>promoting of EU sporting issues</b>   |   |   |  |
| <b>Promoting gender equality in sport:</b>   | Networking and exchange of best practice = <b>cooperation</b> of sports organisations<br>Topic: <b>fairness and openness</b> in competitions, <b>moral integrity</b> , sport's <b>social function</b>                                 | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| <b>Supporting the fight against doping in sport in view of protecting the physical and moral integrity sportsmen and sportswomen</b> | Transnational anti-doping networks = <b>protecting physical and moral integrity</b><br>Structure = <b>cooperation</b> between sports organisations  |   | ✓ |  |
| <b>Promoting social inclusion in and through sport</b>   | Transnational networking and exchange of best practice in full respect of EU values = <b>cooperation</b> between sports organisations<br>Topic = <b>social function</b>   | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| <b>Promoting and supporting volunteering in sport</b>  | Trans-national projects focusing on sport structures based on voluntary activity = <b>cooperation</b> between sports organisations and aiming at the exchange of best practices<br>Topic: taking account of <b>voluntary activity</b> | ✓ | ✓ |  |

The above demonstrates how the content of the Preparatory Actions of each Annual Work Programme covered different aspects of Article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty. None of these actions related to the third objective of supporting cooperation with third countries. However, this objective was taken into account with the decision to provide support to the Mediterranean Games, which was also intended to support the development of the European dimension in sport through greater European visibility at European sport events. The organising committee of the Mediterranean Games was (in theory) required to present the European dimension of the event and its value added to the goals pursued by the EU, which can be considered supportive of the intentions of the Lisbon Treaty.

The design of the other Preparatory Actions can be considered to be in-line with the provisions in the Lisbon Treaty. However, a number of aspects may have increased the effectiveness of the outputs achieved, as follows:

**Requirements for disability proposals:** the focus of requirements for proposals on disability did not specifically refer to networks and / or good practice and it is possible that this caused some confusion.

**Greater clarification of how projects could/should support policy development:** the link between the proposals in the specific topic areas and how they could help to support EU decision making was not made explicit in the Annual Work Programme. They simply included a heading providing policy support, without clarifying what this could mean in practice. The objectives of the projects could have included a focus on providing input to strategic thinking and policy formulation. Articulating this potential could have helped to focus the minds of both EC officials and participants in terms of shaping their work to provide maximum added value to the Commission. This was a missed opportunity which could have helped projects to make the leap from undertaking a range of activities with short term outcomes to developing findings that could have helped to inform and shape policy making.

**Linking expectations to the limited time frame:** the award criteria described in the Annual Work Programmes did not appear to take into account the limited time frame for projects. For example, the projects were judged on their ability to be innovative and create long lasting impacts, while the actual outcomes of projects (examined later in this report) show such impacts have been difficult to achieve in the available time.

### **Special events**

Three special events were supported under the 2009 and 2010 Annual Work Programmes, as highlighted below:

| <b>Special event</b>                           | <b>Relevance to Lisbon Treaty</b>  | <b>Article 165 Object. 1</b> | <b>Article 165 Object. 2</b> | <b>Article 165 Object. 3</b> |
|--|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Tampere European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) | Opportunity to highlight role of <b>volunteers</b><br>Contribute to priorities: <b>education, culture, social inclusion</b> , public health, youth and mobility          | ✓                            |                              |                              |
| European Youth Olympic Winter Festival (EYOWF) | Youth sport event<br>Highlight the role of <b>volunteers</b> and sport organisations in <b>educating EU Youth</b><br><b>Clearly demonstrate role of EU in this field</b> | ✓                            | ✓                            |                              |
| European Special Olympics Summer Games         | Support an event which brings together people with intellectual disabilities – <b>physical and moral integrity</b>   |                              | ✓                            |                              |

The objectives of the special events can be considered consistent with the Lisbon Treaty. However, it is suggested that the design of these objectives and the requirements placed on coordinators of the events were not sufficient.<sup>3</sup>This made it very difficult to ensure that providing funding to special events generated tangible added value above and beyond the aspirations of supporting sporting events. The amount of funding provided was substantial, but there was no justification as to the rationale for the amount of funds that would be provided, a consequence of the political process whereby funding for these specific events was allocated by the European Parliament.

In the 2009 Annual Work Programme, the organising committee of the EYOF was required to present the EU dimension of the event and its value-added to the goals pursued by the EU in this domain. It is possible that the benefit derived from the allocation of EU funds may have been more effective if the Commission had attached more specific requirements for the receipt of funding.

This EU dimension requirement was (conspicuously) absent from the 2010 Annual Work Programme. The funding of the Special Olympics did not have any requirements in the Annual Work Programme. The description of funding to support the EYOWF suggests that funding will clearly demonstrate the role of the EU in this field and make it more visible. However, it is unclear who the target of raised visibility is. Possibilities include: the political level, event organisers, sports organisations, participants, broader public. It is suggested that the looseness of this formulation does not support achieving the Commission's objectives.

<sup>3</sup> This assertion is based on the content of the Work Programme. There may be other documents, which make the above points more explicit.

The fact that grants were awarded for these events without a competitive process confirms that the events are considered to be of high policy relevance, at least within the European Parliament. Despite this, in a time when public finances are being significantly scaled back, lack of definition and structure of the tangible outputs of support is likely to mean that the Commission's support for the events may not have achieved its full potential.

## **Findings**

### **Transnational projects**

*The objectives of the Preparatory Actions are relevant to the provisions of the Treaty. There is a clear link between the general objectives of the Preparatory Actions (providing policy support, supporting networks and contributing to the Mediterranean Games) and the three general provisions of the Lisbon Treaty (promoting EU sporting issues, developing the EU dimension in sport and fostering cooperation with 3<sup>rd</sup> countries and international organisations in fields of sport). The specific objectives described as the topic areas (HEPA, education and training, and so on) are also in line with the Treaty.*

*Regarding to the design of the Preparatory Actions, it is possible that the short duration and limited budget of the projects limited their ability to make a significant contribution in terms of outputs. It is also possible that a narrower focus in terms of EC expectations may have helped to focus projects better on the achievement of policy relevant outcomes. However, the overarching relevance of the projects was that they provided significant insights to the Commission, which could be taken into account in their preparations for possible future incentive measures in sport.*

### **Studies, conferences and seminars**

*The studies, conferences, seminars were used to facilitate new information and exchanges of good practice and contacts between key organisations in sport. The specific focus on topics identified in the 2007 White Paper on Sport and the activities and outputs generated can be considered to support the EU dimension in Sport.*

### **Special events**

*Whilst the support of a number of special events could be considered to be clearly linked to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, the design of the Commission's support limited what the events were able to achieve. Lack of a competitive and selective tendering process, with well articulated objectives and links to the Commission's policy agenda, meant that it was difficult to measure whether any tangible contribution had been made to high level policy objectives.*



**EQ2. What is the EU added value of the Preparatory Actions and special events?**

To answer this question, evidence from the survey of coordinators and partners, the case study interviews and desk research on the proposals selected by the Commission under 2009 Annual Work Programme was taken into account. The evaluators compared plans for achieving EU added value, as stated in project proposals, with actual outcomes, to the extent that these were identifiable. Analysis considered EU added value in terms of what projects were individually able to achieve and the contribution of the programme of Preparatory Actions to the creation of the EU dimension in sport.

The concept of EU added value has a number of different dimensions which were described in the work to prepare the Impact Assessment, as highlighted in the below table. However, the key criterion is that value is added at the EU level because issues cannot be addressed at national level.

| <b>EU added value</b>   |
|---|
| <b>Dimensions</b>   |
| Tackles an issue that cannot be solved at national level  |
| Pursues EU policy objectives<br><i>(competitiveness, employability, health promotion and social cohesion)</i>   |
| Supports development of EU dimension by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting fairness and openness in sporting competitions</li> <li>• promoting cooperation between bodies responsible for sports</li> <li>• protecting the physical and moral integrity of sportsmen and sportswomen, especially the youngest sportsmen and sportswomen</li> </ul> |
| Generates and shares knowledge between different actors in different Member States  |

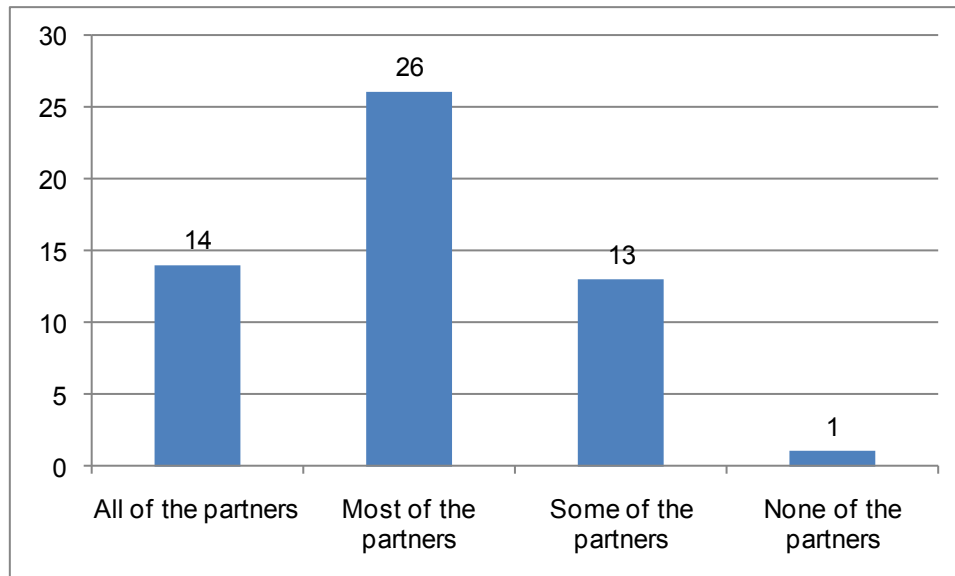
EU added value was one of the award criteria for the selection of projects. Therefore, all of the projects aimed to demonstrate EU added value in some form. In some cases, the project topic was inherently European in nature and required inputs from partners in a number of different Member States to allow project activities to take place. In others, projects reported that there were significant discrepancies between knowledge and understanding between different Member States, which meant that sharing good practice was helping to raise the bar of all involved. Other projects demonstrated how networks could be used to gather information that had the potential to advance understanding on a particular issue.

Although many factors influenced what each project could achieve (as discussed in response to Question 5), the level of organisation and establishment of different sport sectors had an impact on the extent of EU added value that could be achieved at a project level. For example, projects in areas of health enhancing physical activity were working in a well established field with infrastructure that could be accessed to facilitate their projects. This was not necessarily the case for projects developing EU level activities in mainstreaming gender and disability. For this reason, EU added value and the contribution of projects to the European dimension was achieved in different ways by different projects in all 4 intervention areas tested in 2009. In established fields, projects showed that their networks could be conducive to identifying and articulating policy recommendations. In less established fields, there was a sense that not all of the projects selected were able to test the establishment of existing networks because new networks were created when an existing network may have been a more efficient vehicle to deliver the project, or because the networks created were not suitable to achieve the goals set.

Consideration of the relevance of the EU added value of the Preparatory Actions to the preparation of future incentive measures needs to take into account the contribution that the

programme made to the establishment of the EU dimension. The actions brought together different organisations in different countries around current hot topics and established and, in some cases, strengthened networks that are likely to continue to work together, as highlighted in the results of the survey of coordinators and participants of the 2009 Preparatory Actions.

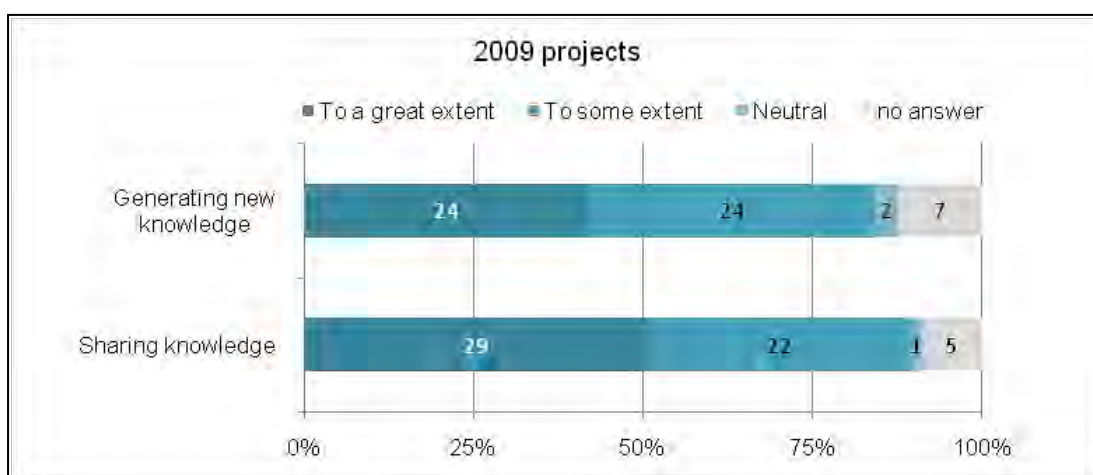
**Figure 4: Will you continue to work with your partners once the project has stopped?**



Source: TEP online survey

The survey of partners and coordinators highlighted that the majority of organisations were cooperating with types of organisations that they had not worked with before. The projects consolidated partnerships useful to develop the European dimension in sport and added value to the project partner organisations. The Preparatory Actions facilitated the generation and sharing of knowledge between different types of sport organisations in different countries, which is likely to support the development of any future sporting incentives.

**Figure 5: Benefits to participant organisations of the Preparatory Actions**



Source: TEP online survey

An important benefit of the Preparatory Actions was that they helped the Commission to increase its understanding of the priorities expressed in the 2007 White Paper and consequently the needs of different types of sport organisations and publics. Furthermore,

the number of proposals received (207 in 2009 and 146 in 2010) confirmed an interest in EU incentive measures and the development of a European dimension in sport. The proposal process in itself helped the Sport Unit to get a feel for the level of understanding and quality of proposals that could be expected for future incentive measures. The management of selected projects also provided insights which increased as Commission officials took a hands-on approach to supporting the project process and interacting with a range of different organisations.

With regard to the studies, surveys, conferences and seminars, the purpose of these activities has been to provide the Commission and other actors with policy support. Due to their focus on specific issues, it appears that these activities have been useful to inform the Commission and other organisations in different sport sectors and, thereby, helped to support the creation of the European dimension in sport. In addition, they have helped to identify the European Commission as an important player in discussions on European level sport and facilitated numerous contacts between EC officials and sports organisations.

From the mission reports of staff attending the special events, it can be inferred that a number of lessons were learned from the support provided. However, providing funding without clear requirements for how funding will be used to support the development of the EU dimension in sport seems to be questionable. In addition, a lack of selection criteria meant that the Commission did not make events work for their money, as would be required by private sector sponsors.

## Findings

### Transnational projects

***The transnational collaborative projects all attempted to demonstrate EU-added value in a number of diverse ways, including:***

- ***taking steps to ameliorate discrepancies between Member States;***
- ***spreading best practices;***
- ***testing the viability of networks in given subjects;***
- ***providing policy support through research.***

***None of the projects could have been carried out successfully by organisations acting at national level because they addressed issues common to all EU Member States for which no MS could identify a complete solution. The evidence shows that there are pockets of innovation and expertise in different Member States. The synergies that can be created by working together serve to move the debate forward.***

***The extent that projects could be considered to make a difference at EU level varied for a number of reasons, including:***

- ***the maturity of the sector;***
- ***composition of networks and types of organisations involved;***
- ***limited duration of the projects;***
- ***management of the projects.***

***To raise awareness at EU level, projects need to involve or have access to EU umbrella type organisations or organisations with access to significant networks, if these exist. Despite differences in the receptiveness of different sectors (education and training, HEPA, gender, etc.) to facilitating outcomes with EU-level relevance, it is not possible to prioritise one sector over another. More established sectors may achieve greater results with EU funding today, but EU funding also adds value by strengthening the newer less developed sectors that may achieve more significant outputs tomorrow. The fact that outcomes of one project from a less established***

*sector (gender) were presented in the European Parliament highlights the importance of an inclusive approach, where EU priority themes are concerned.*

*For the individual partners involvement resulted in an increase in knowledge capacity. At project level, the networks did not in all cases prove to be suitable due to the combination of partners or because there may have been other more relevant networks in a specific sector. Despite this, the programme contributed to the establishment and strengthening of the EU dimension in sport by:*

- establishing new types of relationships between different types of organisations;*
- developing networks that look set to work together in some format in the future;*
- putting specific topics on the EU agenda;*
- helping to prepare EC officials to work better with the world of sport in the future.*

#### **Studies, surveys, conferences and seminars**

*Studies, surveys, conferences and seminars fulfilled their role of providing the Commission and other actors with policy support and developing the EU dimension in sport. They also contributed to the establishment of the Commission as an important contributor to the development of EU sport.*

#### **Special events**

*The EU added value of support for special events could have been significantly increased had the Commission been given the opportunity to set specific award criteria against which applicants could have been scored and held accountable.*

**EQ3. Do the objectives and design of the Annual Work Programmes for the Preparatory Actions and special events take into account other EU policy initiatives and political priorities (e.g. Europe 2020)? EQ6.**

**EQ6: To what extent do the Preparatory Actions and special events appear satisfactory in relation to the objective of the sport contribution to the EU's horizontal policies (e.g. health, education, social inclusion, employment, etc.?)**

A detailed description of the objectives and design of the Annual Work Programmes is provided in the answer to Evaluation Question 1 and is, therefore, not repeated here. To avoid further repetition, this question draws together Evaluation Question 3 and Evaluation Question 6, which both focus on the same content. The answer is divided first into consideration of alignment with other EU policy initiatives and secondly with alignment with EU 2020.

### **Preparatory Actions and other EU policy**

The objectives of the Preparatory Actions can be considered to take into account other EU policy initiatives inasmuch as the topics of the calls for proposals in 2009 and 2010 are also the subject of other areas of EU policy. However, the table below explores whether the content of the two Annual Work Programmes actually takes into account the priorities of these policy areas, as described in other policy documents.

| <b>Comparison between the objectives of Work Programmes and wide EU policy</b>   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Preparatory Action themes</b>   | <b>Other EU Policies</b>  | <b>Wider EU Policy taken into account?</b> |
| <b>HEPA</b><br><i>Focus on health enhancing physical activity</i>  | <b>White Paper: Together for Health</b><br><i>Health concerns integrated into all EC policies</i>   | +  |
| <b>Education and Training</b><br><i>Combined sports training and education – dual career</i><br><br><i>Promoting sport and physical activity in a school environment</i> | <b>ET 2020</b><br><i>Making life-long learning and mobility a reality</i><br><br><i>Promoting equality, social cohesion and active citizenship</i><br><br><b>Youth Strategy</b><br><i>Health and well being of young people</i> | +<br><br>+<br><br>+                        |
| <b>Gender</b><br><i>Strengthening gender equality in sport organisations</i>   | <b>Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006 – 2010</b><br><i>Equal representation in decision making</i><br><br><i>Inclusion of migrant women</i>  | +<br><br>-                                 |
| <b>Disability</b><br><i>Networks of national partners</i><br><br><i>Supporting the</i>   | <b>EU Disability Strategy</b><br><br><i>Strengthening cooperation between Member States</i><br><br><i>Increasing the participation of the disabled</i>  | +<br><br>+                                 |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <i>participation of the disabled</i>  |   |   |
| <i>Mainstreaming sports events</i>  | <i>Mainstreaming disability <u>policy</u> formulation</i>   | - |
| <b>Volunteering</b>   | <b>Youth Strategy</b>   |   |
| <i>Transnational projects re exchange of good practice on volunteering re challenges in <u>local</u> sport structures</i> | <i>Boost cooperation between organisers of voluntary activities in the MS</i><br><i>Raise awareness and develop opportunities for cross-border mobility of volunteers</i> | - |
| <b>Social Inclusion</b>   | <b>EU Inclusion Strategy</b>  |   |
| <i>Transnational networking between sports orgs and national and regional authorities</i>                                 | <i>Member States encouraged to coordinate their approach in the fight against poverty and social exclusion</i>  | + |

This analysis suggests that for the most part the priorities of the 2009 and 2010 Preparatory Actions were described in a way that could be considered to take into account other policy areas. There was no „specific focus“ on the inclusion of migrant women in the 2009 Annual Work Programme even though this priority was described in the 2007 White Paper on Sport. This topic was covered under the 2010 Annual Work Programme as part of the priority theme "social inclusion". The objectives for disability sports as expressed in the 2009 Annual Work Programme did not include a focus on the possible contribution to the development of mainstreaming policy formulation, which was an objective of the EU Disability Strategy. However, again the formulation of the Call was relatively open and as a result one of the selected projects could be considered as contributing to the more specific mainstreaming objective. The 2010 Annual Work Programme objective on volunteering was not focused on cross-border volunteering and focused on volunteering at the local level even though Youth Policy seemed to have a more EU focus. Consideration of the outputs of these activities, described in Question 4 shows that these can be considered to be satisfactory to the extent that objectives are aligned with other EU policy. It should also be noted that the limited budget available for the 2009 and 2010 Annual Work Programmes made it difficult to enlarge the number of objectives and priority areas without running the risk of having the focus of the Preparatory Actions diluted.

With regards to studies, conferences and seminars, the 2009 Annual Work Programme supported two conferences, the EU Sport Forum in Madrid and a study on the Equal Treatment of non-nationals in EU sports competitions, which could all be considered to be in-line with the EU White Paper. The four actions supported under the heading studies, surveys, conferences and seminars in the 2010 Annual Work Programme could also be seen to be relevant. The evaluation and the EU Sport Forum helped to provide further support to the development of the EU dimension in sport and the two studies clearly demonstrated the link between sport and the Europe 2020 strategy.

| <b>Special events and other EU policies</b>   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Mediterranean Games</b><br><i>Reinforce cohesion</i><br><i>Show EU dimension in sport</i>        | <b>EU Neighbourhood Policy</b><br><i>Reinforce relations between the EU and partner countries</i>      | + |
| <b>EYOF</b><br><i>Highlight the role of volunteers and sports orgs in educating and bringing up</i> | <b>Youth strategy</b><br><i>Boost cooperation between organisers of voluntary activities in the MS</i> | - |

|  |  |            |
|--|--|------------|
| youth<br><br>Contribute to policies education/culture, social inclusion, public health,<br><br>Demonstrate EU dimension of sport | <i>Raise awareness and develop opportunities for cross-border mobility of volunteers</i>   | -          |
| <b>EYOWF</b><br>Highlight the role of volunteers<br>Event for young sportsmen and women  | <b>Youth strategy</b><br><br><i>Boost cooperation between organisers of voluntary activities in the MS</i><br><br><i>Raise awareness and develop opportunities for cross-border mobility of volunteers</i> | -<br><br>- |
| <b>EU Special Olympics</b><br>Involvement of 1800 people with intellectual disabilities  | <b>EU Disability Strategy</b><br><i>Increasing the participation among disabled</i>  | +          |

Comparison between the rationale for supporting a number of special events in 2009 and 2010, and the objectives of the corresponding policy areas, highlighted that only some of the special events could be considered consistent with horizontal policy aims. By contributing to the EYOF and the EYWOF, the Commission was supporting the role of sport in education and culture, as it had supported previous youth Olympic festivals. In addition, the 2009 and 2010 Annual Work Programmes indicated that these events were an excellent opportunity to:

*‘...highlight the role of volunteers and non-profit sports organisations in educating and bringing up European youth. Support from the EU budget will clearly demonstrate the role of the EU in this field and make it more visible.’*

Despite the above, there was no stipulation to the organisers that at least some of these volunteers should come from other Member States, which would have been more in-line with EU Youth Policy. With regards to the EU Special Olympics, the event may have increased the involvement of those with disabilities in competitive sport, but it is unlikely that it contributed to the task of trying to mainstream disability sport (as described in the EU Disability Strategy) because the event focused on disabled athletes.

| Comparison between the objectives of the Annual Work Programmes and EU 2020 |   |
|---|---|
| Topic Area of Annual Work Programmes  | Europe 2020   |
| HEPA<br><br><i>Contribution of sport to healthier lifestyles</i>            | Reducing inequalities in health<br>More competitive Europe (healthier workforce)<br>Active ageing |
| Education and Training<br><br><i>Combined sports training and education</i> | Employment<br>Education   |
| Gender<br><br><i>Strengthening gender equality in organisations</i>         | Address employment for women/insufficient representation in the labour market                     |
| Disability<br><br><i>Increase participation of disabled people</i>          | Social exclusion  |
| Volunteering  | Employment<br>Social exclusion  |



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Best practice to make local sport structures more efficient</i> | Education                                   |
| Anti-Doping<br><i>Fight against anti doping</i>                    | Not specifically relevant                   |
| Social Inclusion   | Social exclusion<br>Education<br>Employment |
| Special events   | Social exclusion<br>Employment              |

It is important to note that although the evaluation question asks the extent that the Annual Work Programmes took into account political priorities such as Europe 2020, this strategy had not been adopted at the time of drafting the 2009 Annual Work Programme. Therefore, the 2009 Annual Work Programme was not intended to address the 2020 priorities. Despite this, the 2009 and 2010 Annual Work Programmes were in-line with three of the five specific targets of the 2020 strategy, on: Employment, Education and Social Exclusion. Education and Training, with its focus on dual careers, gender, disability and social inclusion seem to be the most aligned with the 2020 strategy.

The target on R&D and innovation can be considered to be somewhat outside the scope of the Preparatory Actions because although several projects carried out mapping activities, the actions were not intended to be research actions. Transnational research projects tend to be supported by DG RTD. Although projects were assessed on their innovative characteristics, realistically the duration and focus of projects on networking and the exchange of best practice did not lend itself to innovation, which is best supported by education and research<sup>4</sup>.

The other EU 2020 target that was not addressed by the Annual Work Programmes related to climate change and energy. This is a target that could have been addressed particularly as Action 36 of the Action Plan Pierre de Coubertin states that the Commission will support the promotion of the use of Eco schemes during major sport events. The Eco scheme requirement was not stipulated to event organisers in either the 2009 or the 2010 Annual Work Programmes. Any alignment to Europe 2020 is less obvious for the special events, with the exceptions of the Mediterranean Games with its theoretical (and quite peripheral) potential to support trading options and the EU economy, and the EU Special Olympics, which facilitated the participation of those with intellectual disabilities in sport, thereby combating their exclusion from sport activities.

With regard to the design of the Annual Work Programmes, the expression of specific objectives was relatively broad allowing call respondents the opportunity to define their own projects and the issues that they considered to be most import. This means that there were no specific targets for the outputs of projects, which could, for example, have been linked to the wider political agenda. If it is decided that contributing to Europe 2020 is an important priority for these projects, then it is suggested that it would be necessary to articulate this in the Annual Work Programmes and to include this aspect in the award criteria.

## Findings

### Transnational projects

#### ***The objectives of the Annual Work Programmes set for the transnational networking***

<sup>4</sup> The concept of the knowledge triangle which comprises education, research and innovation was put forward under the EU Year of Creativity and Innovation.



*projects were coherent with wider EU policy objectives, both in general (e.g. Europe 2020 Strategy) and more subject-specific (for example, Together for Health White Paper). It is noted that the text of the Calls for Proposals was general, with the advantage of allowing proposers to pinpoint the specific area for action. It is possible that proposals may have been received with links to other highly specific policy areas, for example the inclusion of migrant women if this had been specified in the Annual Work Programme. However, the design of the Annual Work Programmes and Calls can be considered to be appropriate and satisfactory because these documents resulted in projects that clearly linked with broader EU policy. With regards to volunteering, the 2010 Annual Work Programme placed a focus on volunteering to support local structures in-line with the 2007 White Paper, but did not go as far as the EU Youth Strategy with its emphasis on cross-border mobility. It should be noted that limited budgetary resources restricted the number of objectives that could possibly be set within the framework of the Annual Work Programmes.*

#### **Studies, surveys, conferences and seminars**

*The studies, surveys, conferences and seminars can be considered to be in-line with the issues faced by European sport as described in the 2007 White Paper. Alignment with other EU policy areas was satisfactory.*

#### **Special events**

*Due to the lack of competitive selection process, the Commission was constrained in its ability to set specific objectives and requirements for outcomes of the special events. Therefore, even if the objective of supporting these events could be considered to be coherent with broader EU policy, the design of the Commission's support meant that the events did not, in practice, achieve their full potential with regards to fulfilling policy objectives. For example, the potential to mandate the inclusion of cross-border volunteers in major sport events was not fulfilled. Even if, in some cases, activities were organised with broader relevance to other policy areas, for example European Youth, this was not due to the design of the intervention. It is, therefore, concluded that potential links to other policy areas could have been harnessed more effectively.*

## 3.2 Effectiveness

The following paragraphs provide answers to the evaluation questions on the effectiveness of the Preparatory Actions and special events, concentrating on the extent to which the chosen mix of activities have contributed to policy and programme objectives in the field of sport.

***EQ4. To what extent do the Preparatory Actions and special events in the field of sport contribute to the achievement of the policy objectives to promote sporting issues and to develop the European dimension in sport?***

The promotion of sport issues and the development of the EU dimension in sport are central to provisions in the Lisbon Treaty on sport. As highlighted in the response to evaluation question 1, the wording and content of the seven priorities for Preparatory Actions and the special events, under the 2009 and 2010 Work Programmes, specifically frames these actions as intended to promote sporting issues. The purpose of this question is to assess the extent to which the Preparatory Actions and special events realised this intention and contributed to the development of the European dimension in sport.

### **Preparatory Actions**

The answer to this question is restricted to the outcomes of the 2009 Annual Work Programme because the projects supported under the 2010 Annual Work Programme were in their early phases when this report was drafted.

The promotion of sport is a broad term. For the purposes of understanding the outputs and outcomes of the actions supported, promotion is considered at a number of different levels, for example:

- Project level: the promotion and targeting of activities and projects to specific groups outside the network project team;
- Partner level: the exchange of information/promotion of the content of the project between the partners;
- Sector level: the exchange of information and communication about project goals and outputs to other organisations at national, European or International level.

### **Project level**

The case study interviews provided an opportunity for the evaluation team to get first hand insight into what the projects actually managed to achieve and to compare this with project intentions stated in Annex 1 of each project proposal. This process identified that a wide range of different activities had taken place to promote sporting issues, including, for example:

- Setting up and running training courses for coaches to deliver messages about the importance of health enhancing physical activity;
- Running sport activity days and tournaments for children and other members of the public;
- Developing and distributing pedagogical kits with HEPA messages for use in schools;

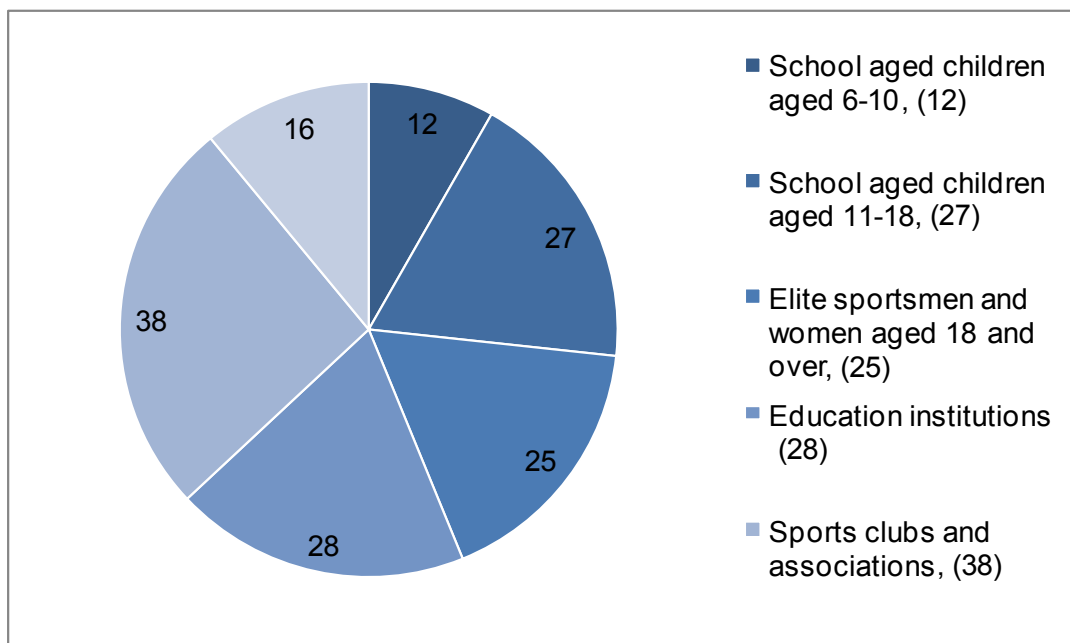
- Setting up a European on-line academy to support the development of footballers’ dual career options with a bachelor’s degree.

It is not possible to define precisely the numbers of individuals who were reached through the activities supported under 2009. However, the survey asked coordinators to estimate the number of people who actively participated in the activities organised during the project (e.g. attended events, visited associated websites, got involved in training, etc.). The following, albeit limited and partial, information was provided:

| Project              | Estimated number of participants | Project    | Estimated number of participants |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| HEPA                 | Circa 380,000                    | Disability | Circa 2,500                      |
| Education & training | Circa 1,000 – 2,000              | Gender     | Circa 750                        |

To try to identify the audiences that projects were intending to reach with their activities, project partners and coordinators were asked to provide some information about their actual or potential target beneficiaries. In some cases, projects targeted a number of different groups. Although all project coordinators completed the survey, this was not the case for all project partners. Therefore, actual numbers of responses is not statistically representative. Despite this caveat, the figure below shows that the projects were intended to reach a broad cross-section of different types of relevant publics.

*Figure 6: Who or what are the target beneficiaries who have been or could potentially be affected by the project?*



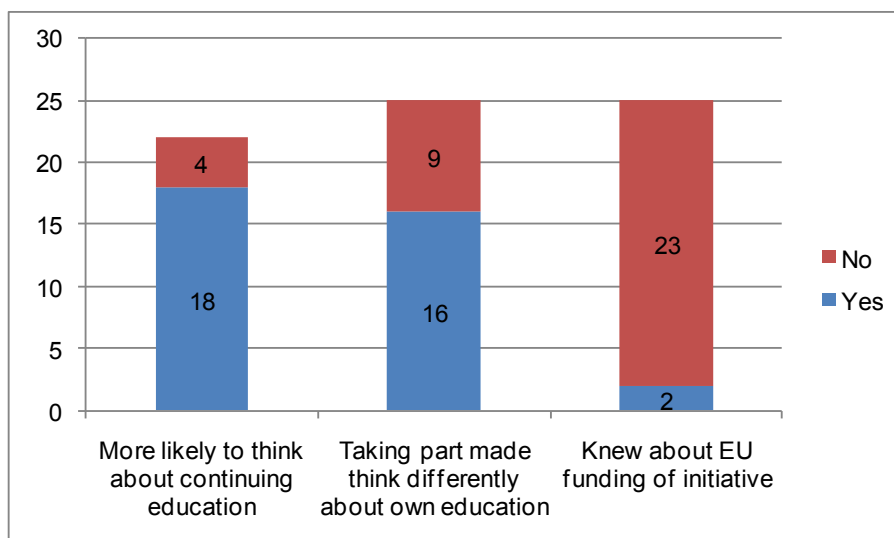
Source: TEP online survey

A number of survey respondents indicated that their projects were intended to target other groups not listed in the survey question, including: the elderly, the general public, disabled organisations, municipalities and ministries.

Within the scope of the evaluation, it was not feasible to gather structured feedback from the different target beneficiary groups because in many cases their engagement in the project

was short term (e.g. participation in a specific activity day) or because coordinators were not able to facilitate contact details for these groups. However, the evaluation team conducted a short five-question survey with professional footballers who had been engaged in the needs analysis to prepare for an online academy. Twenty-eight responses were generated. The results of the survey indicated that although participants had considered higher education before, and were aware that distance learning education options existed, the project had resulted in changing their views about education, as highlighted below. This evidence shows that despite the limitations of what the projects were able to achieve, they created some impacts in terms of influencing the thinking of some of the individuals who were reached.

**Figure 7: Survey of online academy participants**



Source: TEP online survey

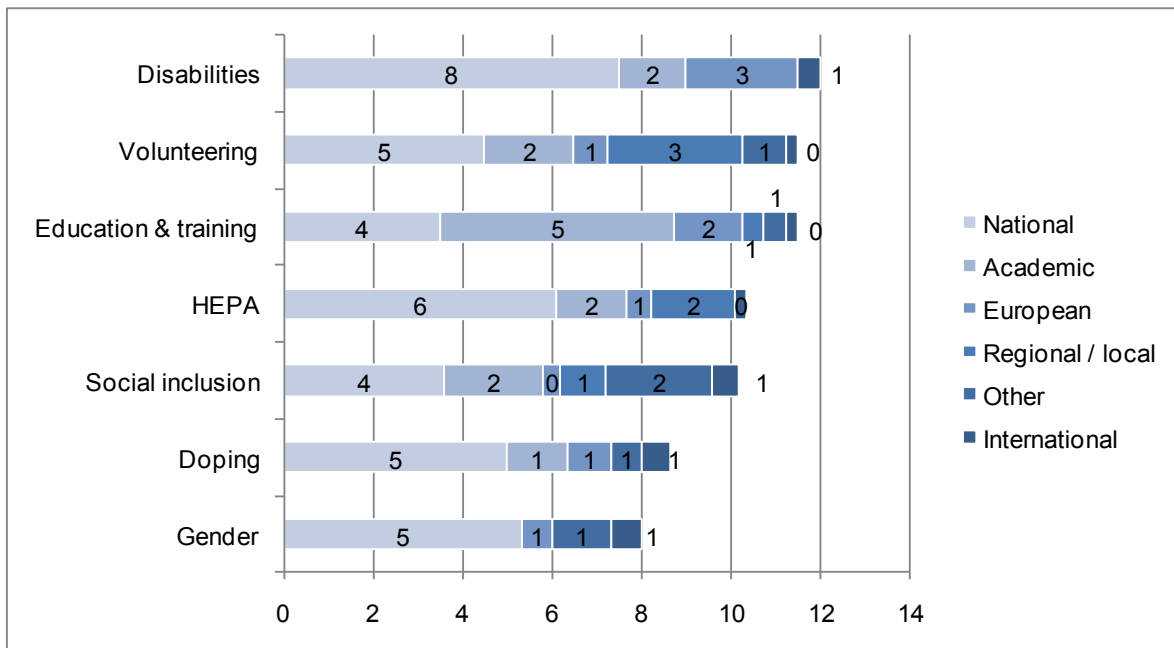
However, a key point highlighted by the above response was that participants were not aware that this had been supported by the European Commission. It is not possible to confirm whether this was the case for the other projects although there is evidence that projects have tried to brand their activities with the EU logo, for example. However, the extent that the man or woman in the street is aware or concerned about the European dimension in sport is likely to be relatively limited and this is not something that the Preparatory Action projects would have realistically been able to address. It is suggested that the EU dimension in sport has a greater chance in becoming a reality at this stage at the partner and sector level, as explained below.

### **Partner level**

According to the Lisbon Treaty, supporting cooperation between different sporting organisations across Europe is fundamental to developing the European dimension in sport. The Preparatory Actions can be considered to have made a definite contribution to this goal. Eighteen transnational projects involving 185 partner organisations were supported under 2009. Twelve transnational projects involving 123 partner organisations were supported under 2010. It was noted that several organisations were present in projects funded in both years, as well as being involved in more than one project in any given year.

The average network involved about ten different partners. The largest network in 2009 involved 29 organisations and the smallest involved four, while in 2010 the largest involved 16 and the smallest involved six.

**Figure 8: Average number of organisations involved per networking project**



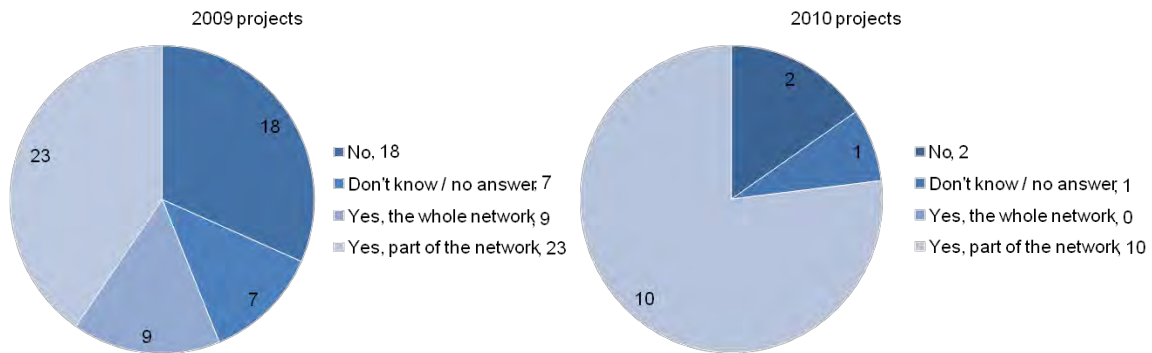
Source: European Commission data

One of the aims of the projects was to facilitate the exchange of good practice between organisations in Europe. The survey of coordinators and partners highlights the perceived benefits to the partners of being involved in the projects. As shown in the response to Evaluation Question 2, the vast majority of coordinators and partners indicated that working on the project was useful for sharing knowledge and for generating new knowledge. Involvement in the projects served to strengthen individual partner organisation's own knowledge of the topic area, because they understood that many of the problems or issues faced were similar in other countries and they were able to learn from other partners. Importantly, by working together many projects seemed to be able to achieve synergies that would not have been possible if they had worked alone.

As well as strengthening the knowledge of partners who engaged in the project networks, the other important contribution of the Preparatory Actions was that they helped to consolidate and structure the EU dimension. Coordinators and partners from projects supported under 2009 and 2010, who participated in the survey, reported that in the majority of cases only part of the network existed prior to the project (as highlighted below). This means that the Preparatory Actions facilitated the extension of a number of existing projects who brought in new partners in different countries.

In 2009, there was also a significant number of projects for which new networks were created for the purposes of carrying out the project. This may have been undesirable if there were already existing networks in particular sectors who were not engaged, but it was not possible for the evaluators to assess the extent that this was the case. However, these new networks also contributed to the structuring of the EU dimension.

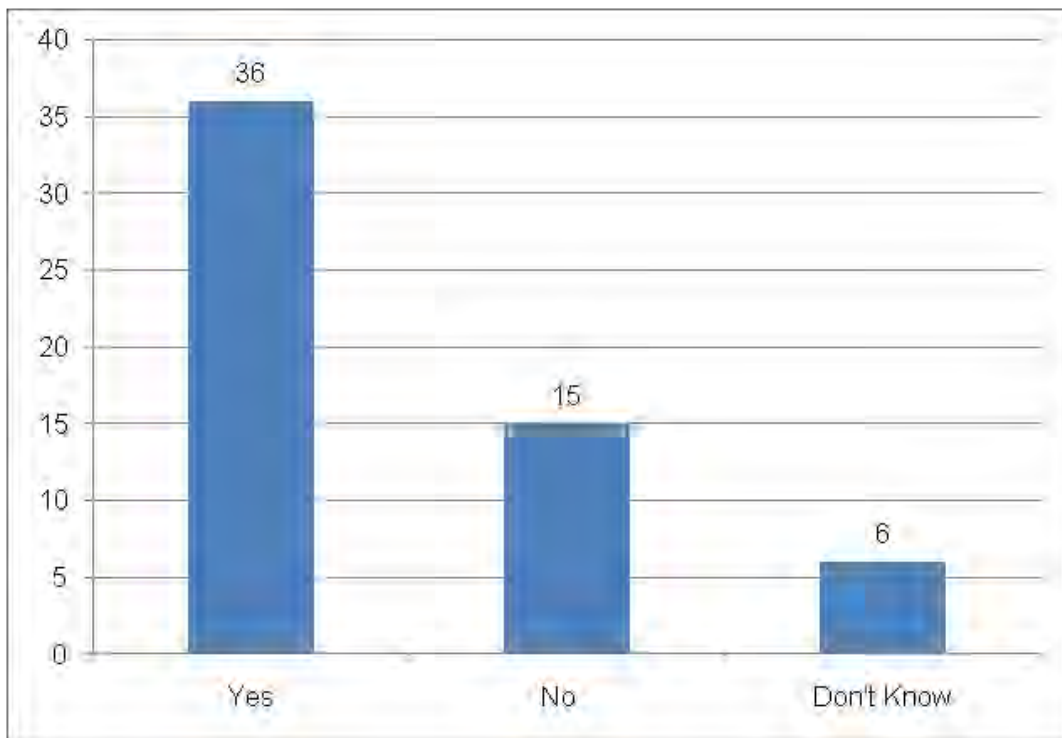
**Figure 9: Did the network of partners exist before the proposal for your project was submitted to the Commission?**



Source: TEP online survey

A key outcome for the programme is that networks brought together partners from diverse organisations and sectors. This outcome challenged existing lines of thinking, in particular across sectors, and enriched the partnerships created.

**Figure 10: Project participants who cooperated with other types of organisations for the first time**



Source: TEP online survey

### **Sector level**

At the sector level, the available evidence suggests that some projects were particularly efficient at activating their own (and other project relevant) networks at a national level. This can be considered to be a secondary level of networking, which should be encouraged by the Commission. However, stimulating EU and international level networks and organisations was more difficult unless, for example, projects involved umbrella-type

organisations with large established networks. The limited duration of projects has likely had an influence on what projects could achieve. Despite the amount of time available, some projects had far reaching goals to stimulate change as a result of their work, but in reality all of these goals could not be achieved. It is possible that increasing links/engagement with national level policy makers, would have been enriching for some projects, so that they could understand how to present final outputs in a format relevant to the needs of policy makers. This may be an area for future focus to make the link from projects to policy at national and European level.

### **Special events**

There were 4 large-scale events that took place with the support of the 2009 and 2010 Annual Work Programmes as listed below:

- Mediterranean Games
- European Youth Olympic Festival
- European Youth Olympic Winter Festival
- European Special Olympic Summer Games

There is no doubt that supporting these events clearly contributed to promoting sporting issues. Therefore, the response to this question seeks to identify the extent that EU support may have contributed to the development of the EU dimension. The three events developed as Case Studies (highlighted above) will now be considered in turn.

**Mediterranean Games:** the Games involved 4,400 athletes and 3,770 volunteers from 23 Mediterranean Countries, including 7 EU Member States. Funding of the games was stipulated by the European Parliament on the basis of promoting *„greater European visibility at sporting events’* and, as a result, there was no competitive tendering process to award the 1m contribution to the overall budget of 55m. The available evidence suggests that the Games did little to support the European dimension. The visibility of EU funding was low with media coverage focussed on the competitions. The EU’s own mission reported that EU presence was low and the presence of EU symbols at the event did little to convey any real messages. Lack of information regarding how the EU aspects of the event were promoted in the event’s final report seems to confirm the observations of the EU official. Although, in theory, the event was relevant to the policy goal of cooperating with third countries, the impact in this area can be assumed to be small. With this feedback, and given the fact that EU funds were clearly not necessary to ensure that the games went ahead, it seems that this event did little to support the EU dimension and EU funds could have been better spent elsewhere.

**European Youth Olympic Winter Festival (EYOWF):** the evidence suggests that this event supported both promoting sporting issues and the EU dimension in sport. Event organisers seemed to have been mindful of the importance of conveying messages about collaboration across Europe in sport. Several side activities and educational programmes for schools were focused on basic values such as fair play; tolerance; solidarity; mutual understanding and friendship. The event can be considered to have reflected two of the three goals of the Preparatory Actions expressed in the Annual Work Programme:

- Promoting social inclusion in and through sport – although the event was primarily aimed at „elite” young athletes, there was a strong „diversity” emphasis in the initiative.
- Promoting and supporting volunteering in sport. The target group included a significant number – 500 – of volunteers.

The European dimension of the project was implemented at two levels. The first level was the overall presence of European values within all programmes, sub-projects and elements of the Games (Olympic Village, Sports, Sport venues, Promotion, Ceremonies, Accompanying school programme). On the second level are programmes designed specifically for purposes of EU presentation and the presence of EU representatives during the event. The fact that the EU contributed circa one third of the total budget increased the need for organisers to underline the EU dimension, in an already European event.

**European Special Olympic Summer Games:** the evidence suggests that these games certainly had a European character with the number and mix of countries and athletes who took part. Aside from the recognised tremendous and longer lasting benefits for the disabled athletes who took part in the event, the significance of the event, in terms of highlighting social integration and social inclusion, had been well understood by the organisers. The organisation of initiatives addressed to pupils, students, teachers, university lecturers, medical doctors, volunteers and the general public on social integration and inclusion of disabled people can be considered to be completely in-line with policy goals expressed in the Lisbon Treaty. The Games served to strengthen the EU dimension to a certain extent because the EU character was clear and would have been carried home by those participating. EU funding was absolutely necessary and a number of activities were undertaken to support areas of EU policy (social inclusion, etc.). However, supporting the EU dimension was limited in that awareness of the games and impacts on the broader community are likely to have remained at a local or national level.

## Findings

### Transnational projects

*Given the short time frame and lack of experience in some projects, it was difficult to translate project outcomes into tangible lessons for policy makers. However, the Preparatory Actions achieved considerable success in promoting sport issues and developing the European dimension in sport, in particular with regard to building and strengthening networks between partner organisations in different sectors. Project partners improved and spread knowledge among their own networks supporting the goal of the creation of the EU dimension in sport. The involvement of EU umbrella-type organisations was required in most cases to make EU level promotion of project activities/outcomes achievable.*

*Many projects included a practical element to their work, organising events involving different publics. In most cases, networking actions rather than activities carried out at local level were the main focus of the projects. However, there is some evidence to suggest that participants in events may not have connected particular activities to the EU and / or other project partners in other Member States.*

### Studies, surveys, conferences and seminars

*These activities were useful tools for the promotion of EU sporting issues and in the provision of information to the Commission and to the broader EU sport community. They could further be used to strengthen sporting activities and understanding of their relevance to European society.*

### Special events

*Aside from the Mediterranean Games, the other two special events investigated (EYOWF and European Special Olympic Summer Games) can be considered to have*



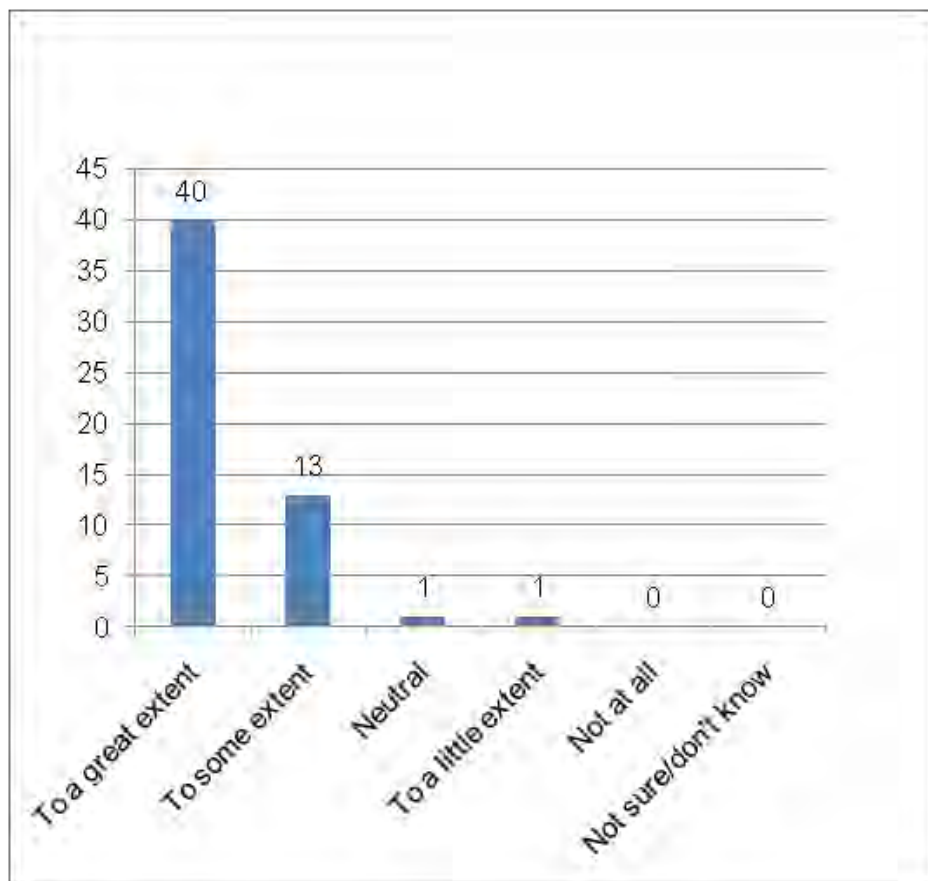
***contributed to supporting the development of the European dimension. These events seemed to taken into account policy areas expressed in the White Paper developing a range of side activities to support EU ideals.***

**EQ5. To what extent did the Preparatory Actions and special events achieve their general, specific and operational objectives? What positive and negative factors seem to be influencing their results?**

This question concerns the extent to which projects and events met the objectives as described in the 2009 and 2010 Annual Work Programmes (the general objectives), as well as their own specific objectives for actions to be achieved within the life span of the project. To answer this question the evaluation team drew from interviews with project coordinators and partners from the sample of 11 Case Study projects, the survey of partners and coordinators of all of the 2009 projects, and evidence relating to project objectives, as described in proposal documents.

In the survey, partners and coordinators were asked to indicate the extent to which their project had achieved its objectives. As highlighted below, the vast majority of respondents reported that their project had achieved its objectives to a great extent.

*Figure 11: Extent to which objectives have been achieved*



Source: TEP online survey

The evaluators noted that each project had a number of different objectives or targets to meet, which were expressed in different ways in the proposal documentation. In some cases, objectives were high level aspirations to make fundamental changes to society, while in others, they were very specific and „SMART“ with numbers of outputs expected. Given this variability, it is likely that when asked a general question, which could be interpreted as asking „was the project successful or not?“, it was likely that the those involved in the

projects wanted to convey some level of satisfaction with their work to the Commission. It was, therefore, necessary to take a more detailed look at the project outputs.

As part of the case study process, and with a view to making comparable project assessments, an assessment grid was developed and applied to each of the 11 sample projects. The assessment took the documentary evidence sourced and considered this against the feedback that was provided by each project coordinator and three partners. The evaluators then used their own judgement to assess each aspect of the project. Using this information, a more detailed view is provided of the extent that this sample of projects met their objectives.

The two general objectives expressed for the transnational grants were networking and the exchange of good practice. Globally speaking, it can be considered that all of the 2009 projects achieved these objectives to some extent. Within this framework, the evaluation team identified the specific objectives that were intended for each of the case study projects and compared these with the actual outcomes reported. The detailed assessment of each project is provided in Annex A of this document.

An assessment of the extent that the 7 case-study transnational projects met their objective to identify and share good practice revealed the following outcomes:

- 1 project fully achieved all of its objectives
- 4 projects fully achieved most of their objectives and partially achieved the others
- 2 projects only partially achieved their objectives

A sample of the types of objectives, which were fully achieved, is presented below.

| Objective   | Output  |
|---|---|
| Identify best practices from across EHFA's network in promoting HEPA through the fitness sector             | Extensive research undertaken based on a robust methodology based on desk-based research of 7 MS identified as most advanced, analysing 35 policies and campaigns, a number of international policies, 80 independent research studies and consultation with EHFA members |
| Develop and disseminate concept and teaching materials for coaches and pedagogical tools for kids and teens | Materials were developed successfully, with all partners agreeing their content<br><br>Targets for dissemination in all schools and clubs in all 5 Member States were met or exceeded, with requests for further dissemination refused due to lack of funding             |
| Develop a web site with internal and external areas   | Web site up and running and functional  |
| Production of above fact sheets based on sharing between project partners                                   | All of the listed fact sheets produced based on mapping exercise carried out  |

An assessment of the extent that the 7 case-study transnational projects met their networking objectives (the other general objective of the projects) showed the following:

- 1 project fully achieved its networking objectives
- 3 projects fully achieved some networking objectives but only partially achieved others
- 3 projects only partially achieved networking objectives

A sample of the types of networking objectives that were not fully achieved is presented below.

| Objective   | Output  |
|---|---|
| Active participation of partners in Europe                      | Active participation in relation to project partners not expanded beyond 5 partners   |
| Create a network of sport federations working together on HEPA. | Nearly all contact took place on a bilateral level between coordinating organisation and partners, limiting the formation of a sustainable or well integrated network.    |
| List of partners and no specific objective for network          | Benefited from fact network already established, but this did not ensure that all relevant sectors (mainly academia) were involved despite the HE content of the project. |

There was a number of factors that influenced what the projects were able to achieve and, to some extent, the specific details of different projects meant that these issues were particular to individual projects. However, analysis of these factors led to the identification of five more generic issues that could be considered to influence the projects positively and negatively, these were:

- The receptiveness of target audiences and the appetite of the sport sector to the content of the project and its outputs:**  
Some projects simply hit the right spot with what they were offering and this engaged the enthusiasm of target groups and other organisations that, for example, wanted to get involved in particular projects or who agreed to carry the messages delivered by projects to their networks. For example, one of the HEPA projects reported that schools were so enthusiastic about its pedagogical kits that 150% of the original print run was disseminated.
- The management and organisation of the project:**  
Different hierarchical models were applied in different projects. Some projects favoured a more top-down, hub and spoke approach, which resulted in bilateral interactions between the coordinator and partners, but limited the potential for synergies from exchanges between partners or for partners to get involved in the thinking behind the project. Other project coordinators spread responsibility for the outputs of the project with their partners and fully engaged the potential of the network, with a result that the grouping of partners functioned as a network, which was more likely to continue once the project finished. Project management decisions, with regard to how to allocate resources and which activities to engage in, had an obvious impact on what could be achieved. In some projects, it seems that different decisions could have been taken to maximise the project. An effective management decision in one project was to disseminate draft rather than final report results in order to spur discussion, which added to the potential final outputs of the project.
- The size and make-up of the network:**  
Inevitably, in most cases, the size of the network had a significant impact on the extent to which projects were able to spread their messages across different Member States. As highlighted in the answer to evaluation question 4, the average number of partners per network was about 10 both in 2009 and 2010, which may suggest that the sporting community considers that this is the correct number of partners for a project that has European ambitions. However, some projects had only four or five partners, which limited the extent to which it would be realistic to consider that their activities touched a broader EU influence. In addition to the number of partners, having the right sorts of partners was crucial. Partnerships that brought together

complementary expertise seemed to report a higher level of satisfaction with what their networks achieved. It was important to ensure that the expertise and knowledge required to deliver the project in a meaningful way was available, and this was not always the case.

The involvement or inclusion of umbrella-type organisations within networks significantly extended the reach of the project and help to give projects a certain kudos, which in turn attracted other useful partners or associates. The choice of partners was, therefore, critical. At least one project organised a competitive process for the selection of appropriate partners. This had the added vantage of allowing the coordinator to take a highly strategic approach and pick specific partners because of what they could bring to the network, meaning that partners were fully engaged because they had gone through a selection process. The vast network of members within the separate partner organisations facilitated research on and dissemination of results among stakeholders in many countries outside the small group of countries directly involved in the project.

- **The duration of the project**

The project duration of about one year is short in comparison to grants for other transnational projects awarded by the Commission. In some cases, it was necessary to scale back what could be done, whereas in others project outputs necessarily remained at a high level. Although some projects may have achieved more over a longer period of time, the benefit of the shorter timescale was that it focused the project teams on working quickly and efficiently.

**Special events:** this answer considered the evidence gathered and analysed in relation to the Mediterranean Games, the European Special Olympics and the European Youth Winter Olympics. The extent that events managed to meet their objectives is highlighted below:

| Objectives  | Outputs   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Mediterranean Games</b></p> <p>Emphasise the social role of sport</p> <p>Educational and social training of youth (volunteering)</p> <p>Equal opportunities and social integration especially against racism</p> <p>EU visibility at the event</p>  | <p>Link between sport and societal role was unclear in Final Report</p> <p>3,770 volunteers recruited from 23 participating countries</p> <p>No evidence that this has been achieved</p> <p>Minimal visibility of EU for example on web site and in literature</p>      |
| <p><b>European Special Olympics</b></p> <p>Promote opportunities for people with a mental disability to participate in sports training and sporting competition in Warsaw</p> <p>Promote Social Inclusion for people with a mental disability</p> <p>Promote Active Citizenship in European societies</p> | <p>1,500 athletes took part in games that were considered the best event in Warsaw in 2010</p> <p>Side activities targeted at children and local community aimed to change perceptions</p> <p>2,200 volunteers took part in the event</p> <p>More difficult to show</p> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Create Synergies with EU policies  |  |
| <p><b>European Youth Winter Festival</b><br/>Underline the activities of the EU in the field of sport, culture and education and training</p> <p>Quality organisation of the 2011 Festival.</p> <p>Presentation of both Liberec region and the Czech Republic; promotion of Czech culture and hospitality</p> <p>Involvement of public, sport organisations and clubs and companies in preparation and organisation.</p> | <p>EU sponsored activities carried out alongside the festival</p> <p>A very well organised considered to a set the standard for this type of event</p> <p>Significant involvement from local sponsors and international agencies</p> <p>High-profile opportunity for Czech athletes but support of their subsequent careers is dependent on the national sports system</p> |

## Findings

### Transnational projects

***Project objectives relating to the identification of best practices and publication of printed materials were achieved to a great extent. Developing and strengthening knowledge between project partners was a key achievement, while progress in networking at a truly European level proved more difficult unless EU umbrella-type organisations were included in the network of partners.***

***Networks fostering multi-lateral collaboration between partners, rather than bilateral contact between individual partners and the coordinating organisation, appear to be more sustainable and successful depending on objectives of project (development collaboration, implementation more bilateral) and type of network (already existing, umbrella organisation as contractor or new different type of national organisations). The evaluation identified a number of good practices with regards to project management (competitive selection of partners, timely communication of draft results), which helped to increase any impact that could be achieved.***

***A lack of SMART objectives for many of the projects, in addition to the unavailability of final reporting information made it difficult to assess the extent to which certain objectives were achieved. In many cases, these related to the dissemination and eventual implementation of best practices among relevant stakeholders. While best practices have been made accessible, it is not possible to ascertain whether they are being used, especially outside the Member States where individual networks are active. The evidence suggests that in some cases the objectives set were too ambitious for the timeframe of the project, which meant that it was not possible to achieve all the objectives.***

***Key factors which positively or negatively impacted upon what the transnational projects could achieve included the size and make-up of the network. For example, projects required partnerships involving organisations with experience relevant to***

***reaching project goals. It was also difficult for projects to claim EU-level relevance, for example when mapping activities when the number of countries being mapped was limited. The involvement of EU umbrella-type organisations was crucial to achieving greater EU coverage. The experience and management style of the project coordinators was another key factor. Well managed projects achieved more, using resources more efficiently and drawing out the potential synergies of partners.***

***A further key factor that positively influenced what the projects were able to achieve related to the support provided by the Commission desk officers, who provided advice often in a mentor-type capacity. However, it was noted that in some cases project flaws were identified at the proposal stage, which then continued to become a problem during the project. Requiring issues to be addressed prior to contract signature would have positively enhanced those few projects that this point concerned.***

#### **Studies, surveys, conferences and seminars**

***The evaluation considered one of the EU conferences as a Case Study. This assessment confirmed that the event had met its objectives and that there were no substantial issues that impacted on what the event achieved.***

#### **Special events**

***With the exception of the Mediterranean Games, which met its operational objectives in terms of numbers of athletes and spectators, the special events seem to have met their objectives to a large extent, particularly where these focused on undertaking practical activities. High level aspirations were of course more difficult to realise.***

**EQ 7: Are the forms of interventions under the Preparatory Actions and special events effective for the purpose of supporting the development of the European dimension in sport?**

As pointed out several times in this report, Article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty states that, inter alia, Union action shall be aimed at „developing the European dimension in sport“. The three instruments funded as part of the Preparatory Actions – transnational collaborative projects, special events and studies, surveys and conferences – could plausibly contribute to this aim, and indeed have demonstrated some progress in doing so.

*1. Transnational collaborative projects*

During 2009 and 2010, the years under review, 30 transnational networking projects have been supporting through the Preparatory Actions under seven themes:

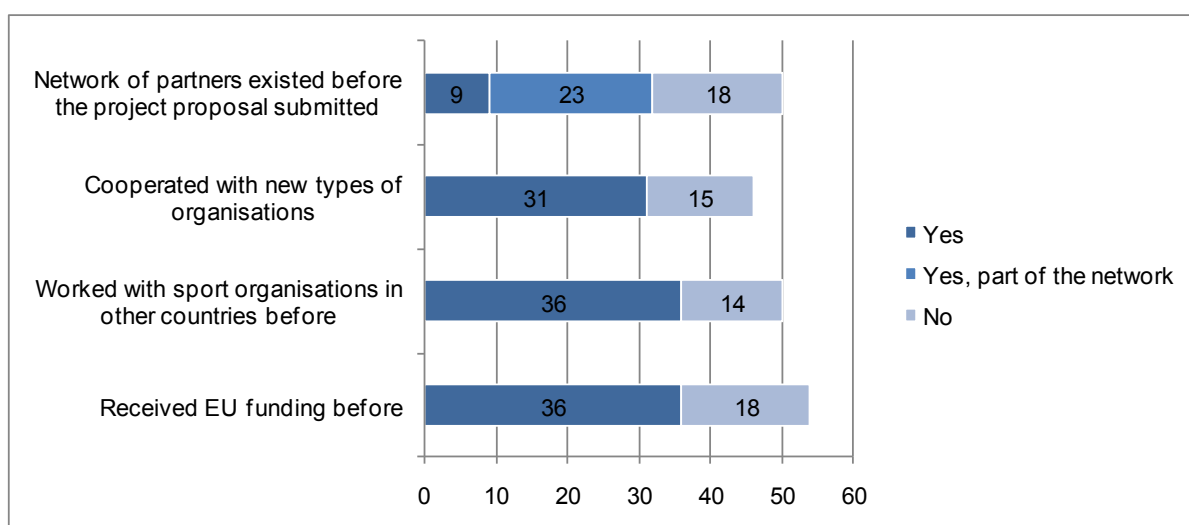
| <b>Theme</b>   | <b>Projects funded</b> |
|--|------------------------|
| <b>2009</b>  |                        |
| Promoting HEPA   | 9                      |
| Promoting education and training in sport              | 4                      |
| Promoting gender equality in sport                     | 3                      |
| Promoting European sport for persons with disabilities | 2                      |
| <b>2010</b>  |                        |
| Promoting social inclusion in and through sport        | 5                      |
| Promoting volunteering in sport                        | 4                      |
| Fight against doping                                   | 3                      |

Aside from the active pursuit of their specific objectives, the effectiveness of which has been discussed above, the networking projects were intended to develop the European dimension in sport. Despite the short duration (one year) of the projects, evidence suggests that they have made considerable progress on several fronts.

The network projects kick-started cooperation between a wide spectrum of national, regional and local sport and other organisations from around Europe. Networks were formed with members from a minimum of four Member States, while some projects brought together organisations from all 27. While many of the organisations had received European funding in the past (particularly among coordinating organisations), for others the project represented a first foray into cooperation on a European level. According to the online survey of project coordinators and partners, about three in ten respondents working on a 2009 project had neither received EU funding previously nor worked with sport organisations in other countries. Nearly 80% of the networks did not exist prior to submission of the project proposal. Through their network, about two in three respondents worked with a type of organisation they had not worked with before (most often in academia).



Figure 12: New connections, 2009 network projects



Source: TEP online survey

Moreover, the survey data indicate that collaboration between the network partners is sustainable: two in three respondents claimed that they would continue working with either *all* or *most* of the partners, while nearly all the rest felt they would continue working with *some* of the partners. Reinforcing this, it is telling that several of the 2010 projects brought together organisations with experience from working together in 2009. During interviews, coordinators and partners strongly emphasised the European element of their projects. They stated that working with organisations in other Member States helped them to realise the benefits of cooperation with counterparts elsewhere, in addition to revealing the similar problems and issues experienced across borders. Several interviewees felt that working with partners from across Europe inspired a sense of „all being in it together“.

It is clear, however, that this European aspect played a stronger role in some projects than in others. In general, the projects that fostered truly *multilateral* cooperation, whereby all partners worked together, evoked the European dimension more strongly than those relying mostly on *bilateral* cooperation between project coordinators and individual partners. While the evidence suggests that such projects were in the minority, it is worth noting that future calls for proposals should emphasise group work to the extent possible. The identification and dissemination of best practices, carried out by the majority of projects with a view to informing policy making and eventual implementation, is also inherently European, exposing network partners (and often other stakeholders) to policies and activities being carried out in other Member States and envisaging how they could be employed successfully in other settings. Some projects took this one step further, using best practices to forge policy recommendations for use in dialogue with decision makers at European and national levels.

The capacity for the networking projects to promote a European dimension at an organisational level is clear: due to their involvement in the Preparatory Actions, sport and other organisations have developed a „European“ outlook. For projects involving the distribution of materials or events aimed at the general public and / or other stakeholders, the results have been mixed. While some projects emphasised the EU role on projects websites and materials, for others the EU and transnational aspects were often far from evident. A survey of participants in one project aimed at former professional footballers, for example, asked them to state whether they knew that the European Commission supported the initiative. Of 25 respondents, only two were previously aware of the Commission’s involvement. Other projects produced thousands of copies of publications, aimed at teachers and students, with very little mention of the EU; while feedback from end users is not available, it is difficult to imagine that a strong EU message was transmitted.

## 2. *Special events*

The special events supported through the Preparatory Actions were aimed at „increasing European visibility at European sport events“ and, therefore, link directly to developing the European dimension in sport. EU support has generally been provided through direct budgetary support ranging from EUR 1-3m and has, thus far, had considerable but not unmitigated success in increasing the visibility of the EU.

While hard evidence (media monitoring reports, website hits, television ratings, etc.) is lacking, it appears that events with an EU-wide focus, taking place outside the realm of mainstream spectator sport, and for which EU support provides a critical share of the budget, have achieved the greatest level of visibility. These have consisted in particular of events aimed at youth or the disabled. Grander events (with an EU grant making up 2-5% of the total budget) tend to attract large audiences, but media coverage typically centres only on competition results, while event organisers, less dependent on EU funding, are not compelled to ensure EU visibility; for such events the EU role has been conspicuously lacking at opening ceremonies, in event literature and on websites, etc.

Aside from increasing visibility, the European dimension in sport has been developed through bringing together event participants from around the EU. Apart from one event, athletes and coaches hailed from all 27 Member States, helping to foster a European identity. It is worth noting that this level of cultural exchange could have been supported further through the use of cross-border volunteers, given the cooperation and teamwork volunteering entails and the fact that each event made use of over 500 volunteers. However, cross-border volunteering for the events supported appears to have been limited.

While the EU visibility at sport events has been suboptimal, it is important to mention that, within the framework of the Preparatory Actions, funding for specific sport events has been mandated in each Annual Work Programme, thus precluding any attempts from the Commission to ensure the prevalence of an EU role. In future, an open tendering process could secure a role for the Commission in event organisation and ensure the selection of events aiming to secure a high degree of EU visibility; further progress in this regard could then be foreseen.

## 3. *Studies, surveys and conferences*

The objective of studies, surveys and conferences supported through the Preparatory Actions was aimed at „supporting the Commission’s structured dialogue with sport stakeholders and identifying future actions in the field of sport on the basis of priorities identified in the 2007 White Paper“. Studies that were funded by the Commission in recent years also covered the treatment of non-nationals in sport competitions, volunteering in sport, and the training of young sportspeople in Europe, as well as regular Eurobarometer surveys on sport and physical activity. Conferences were / will be organised on the functioning and merits of licensing systems and on the role of sport agents. While data on the ultimate impacts of the activities carried out so far is lacking, tackling these transnational issues at European level provides policy makers with the information needed to develop effective and coherent policies. Bringing stakeholders from around Europe together also reinforces the European dimension of the issues at hand.

### **Findings**

***Transnational projects succeeded in contributing to the development of a European dimension in sport in several ways, namely through kick-starting cooperation between organisations working on sport from around Europe, creating sustainable partnerships, and, in general, through fostering a European outlook among relevant stakeholders. However, given this does not appear to be the case for the broader public, despite some activities aimed at this group.***

***Support for major sport events has achieved the most success when funds were also used to support specific activities to communicate European supporting issues, in addition to supporting the running of the event.***

***The lack of an open tendering process or specific award criteria for event sponsorship acted a sharp brake on the capacity for such events to work towards the Commission's objectives.***

### 3.3 Efficiency

The following paragraphs provide answers to the evaluation questions on the efficiency of the Preparatory Actions and special events. They focus in particular on financial and administrative issues, and are intended to help shape the Commission's approach to the funding and management of future incentive measures.

**EQ 8, 9 & 13: To what extent is the implementation structure of actions appropriate, efficient and well functioning, and what are the main areas for improvement, in relation to:**

- **The selection procedure for the actions**
- **Management of the actions**
- **Monitoring mechanisms**
- **Reducing the administrative burden**

In the framework of the 2009 and 2010 Preparatory Actions and special events, essentially three types of activity have been funded, all with separate financial and administrative structures:

- Transnational collaborative projects;
- Non-commercial sport events of major importance;
- Studies, surveys and conferences.

Given the significant differences between these activities, each will be treated separately.

#### 1. *Transnational collaborative projects*

##### a) *Selection*

Transnational collaborative projects accounted for the lion's share of funding in both 2009 and 2010, a trend that is set to continue in 2011 and, most likely, beyond. This makes clear the need for effective and efficient systems for selecting and managing the projects. This is no simple task for established programmes; for Preparatory Actions, which are experimental by nature and seek to foster links between previously unconnected organisations, this task is even more difficult.

Prospective coordinating organisations need to be alerted to the possibility for funding through a Call for Proposals. Award criteria must be clearly articulated and comprehensible. Commission officials must be prepared to answer questions in a clear and unbiased fashion. Coordinating organisations require a sufficient amount of time to assemble a group of network partners with which they are potentially making first contact. Financial guarantees and other requirements must be sufficiently stringent as to protect the Commission from unforeseen circumstances, while allowing the flexibility to encourage applicants which may not have received EU funding previously. Applicants sometimes need the scope to amend their proposals for budgetary or other reasons.

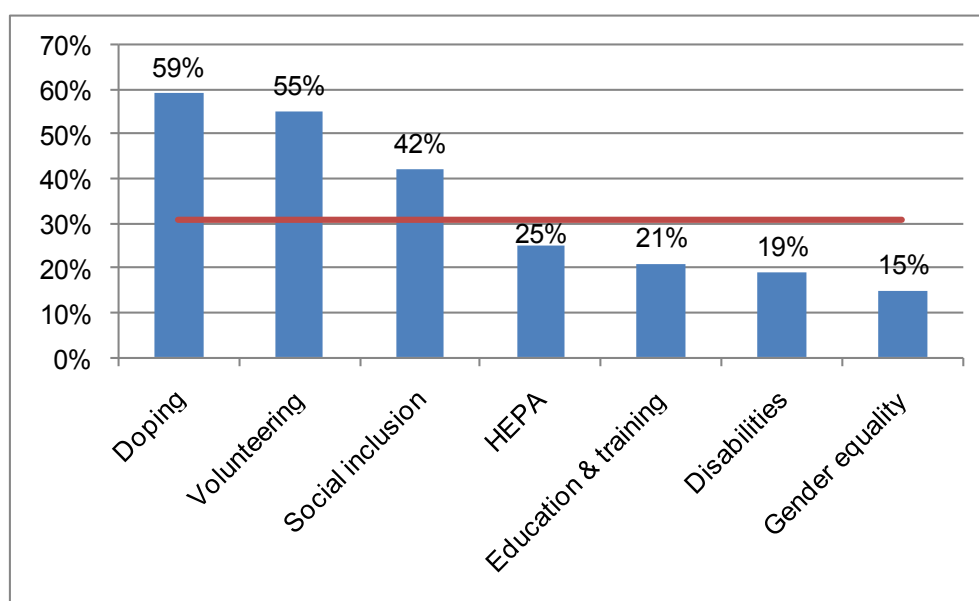
Once proposals have been received, they must be evaluated robustly by an evaluation committee against objective award criteria. While the best proposals should be chosen, the experimental nature of the Preparatory Actions must also be taken into account; the Preparatory Actions are intended to foster new and / or expanding networks across Member States and sectors.

Project coordinators and partners expressed overall satisfaction with the level application process. While they voiced a number of minor complaints relating to tight deadlines (e.g. difficulty in submitting a proposal at the end of August, insufficient time allocated to amend a proposal after the first submission, etc.), the majority of interviewees were satisfied with the responsiveness of DG EAC officials and raised no concerns with the award criteria or other aspects of the application.

It is almost needless to point out that all interviewees had submitted successful applications. The favourable results could be expected to predispose positive opinions and should, therefore, be received with some caution. Perhaps more importantly, the satisfaction of successful applicants offers no evidence as to the adequacy of the content and communication of the calls for proposals, or the rigorousness of the selection process. Here, insight requires more examination of the application process and outcomes.

The 2009 and 2010 Calls for Proposals attracted a high degree of interest, with 401 proposals submitted over the two years. However, the extent to which the individual proposals fitted with the programme objectives varied considerably according to subject area, indicating that the call information and / or award criteria were, in some disciplines, poorly understood. In addition to scoring each proposal that met a set of basic criteria, the Commission tracked the number of applications achieving 50% of the maximum score (the minimum threshold for funding to be awarded). As shown in the chart below, applicants in particular in gender equality, disabilities and education and training had trouble shaping their proposals to DG EAC's specifications. The substantially higher proportion of 2010 proposals (doping, volunteering and social inclusion) meeting the minimum criteria indicates considerable improvement in the process after the first year.

**Figure 13: Proportion of proposals meeting minimum criteria for funding**



Source: DG EAC

An analysis of the project networks also indicated that successful applicants did not have trouble meeting the minimum network size. The average network was made up of just over 10 organisations, far larger than Commission requirements. While national-level organisations were by far the most represented within the networks, there was important cross-sector collaboration, with many academic and regional partners also participating.

The application process appears to have facilitated the formation of new networks while also encouraging existing networks to expand or broaden in scope. Only nine of the 57

representatives of 2009 projects responding to the online survey claimed that their networks had already existed in full before submitting the project proposal. Twenty-three respondents claimed their networks were expanded to accommodate new partners (most often in academia). Eighteen respondents stated that their networks had not existed at all prior to the Preparatory Actions.

Survey respondents demonstrated, however, the difficulty in gaining access to EU funds for the first time. Two in three respondents from the 2009 projects had received EU funding previously, a figure that increased slightly for 2010 (9/13).

In summary, the application process for transnational projects succeeded in attracting interest from a wide variety of organisations and sectors, while higher quality proposals in 2010 demonstrated the capacity both of the Commission to adapt to stakeholders' needs and applicants' capacity to better tailor its proposals to the Commission's requirements. The calls for proposals encouraged the formation and expansion of many networks, but it is evident that organisations which had not previously been awarded EU funding, experienced difficulty breaking through.

#### *b) Management*

Broadly, network coordinators were satisfied with the Commission's management of their projects. Interviewees described programme officers from DG EAC as particularly „hands on“ and very interested in the individual projects. Coordinators considered informal contact with the Commission, in the form of telephone calls and emails, to be particularly helpful and offered the opportunity for the sharing of suggestions or concerns.

Formal contact, however, met far less enthusiasm, mostly in relation to concerns about the utility of the quarterly monitoring reports. While the *principle* of reporting on progress in a punctual manner was not disputed, project coordinators expressed frustration at the *content* of the reports, which they did not feel were adequately tailored to their projects. Moreover, feedback from the Commission subsequent to submission of the reports was described as „non-existent“; this reinforced coordinators' views that the exercise was purely bureaucratic. In order to improve the process, it was suggested that the reports take a freer structure, allowing project coordinators to expand on their accomplishments and reflect on their concerns. The need to report to the Commission four times was also perceived as too onerous. However, given the novelty of the themes, network types and organisations involved, DG EAC found the frequent updates provided in the reports to be indispensable and indeed curtailed the reporting requirements once it ground expectations firmly and infer progress through less formal means; from the 2010 Preparatory Actions onwards, coordinators need only report on a biannual basis.

Coordinators lauded the kick-off meeting in Brussels, during which they all gathered in Brussels to discuss their plans and share insights. This provided an opportunity to disseminate ideas and make contacts, especially between representatives of networks working in the same subject area. However, several coordinators also lamented the lack of follow-up, and recommended that the Commission make an attempt to foster more contact between coordinators, potentially through a similar meeting halfway through the projects.

As the only party contractually engaged with the Commission, coordinators bore absolute financial responsibility for the projects, a fact about which they expressed misgivings. While a high degree of trust between the project coordinator and partners is desirable, concerns about partner outputs acted as a brake on building new relationships. It also emphasised the coordinator role as „first among equals“, whereby a number of networks took on „hub and

spoke" structure, whereby coordinators fed materials, templates and instructions to partners while inhibiting between partners in a multilateral fashion.

## 2. *Non-commercial sport events of major importance*

The European Parliament channelled about EUR 10.5m for the organisation of four non-commercial sport events through the 2009 and 2010 Preparatory Actions. Due to this stipulation, there was no selection procedure as such and the approval of funding proposals was essentially a formality. This had significant repercussions for the effectiveness of these events, discussed elsewhere in this report. Here, it is important to emphasise how the lack of a robust, competitive selection procedure undermined the potential for the special events to achieve DG EAC's objectives.

Unlike transnational network coordinators, the organisers of special events were not required to identify specific objectives that coincided with the general aims of the Preparatory Actions, but rather emphasised how their (already written) work plans would achieve „greater European visibility at sport events". A prominent role for the Commission was not guaranteed; linked activities consistent with the Commission's Annual Work Programmes and taking place before, alongside and / or after the events were not required. Final Reports for the events highlight that many objectives had little bearing on the European dimension in sport. Similarly, the Commission had no scope to release competitive calls for tender. With a de facto monopoly of their own selection, event organisers had little incentive to ensure their plans demonstrated EU added value.

Subsequent to the signature of the contracts, neither the Commission nor event organisers noted major problems with the efficient disbursement of EU funds or contract management. Given the lack of Commission involvement in setting event objectives or selecting specific events, and the general reputability of the organisers, a more active management approach would not have been practicable. This will be worth revisiting if, as part of future incentive measures, major sport events are supported under an open tender process.

## 3. *Studies, seminars and conferences*

Studies, seminars and conferences have been contracted using both framework contracts and invitations to tender. These are the methods usually employed by the Commission for such activities and no evidence collected during the evaluation has indicated that such structures were inappropriate. It is worth noting the efficiency gains through using framework contracts, which impose a less onerous administrative burden on Commission officials and contractors alike.

### **Findings**

***Given the experimental nature of the Preparatory Actions, the selection procedure for the transnational projects appears adequate and robust. While the calls were sufficiently flexible and widely publicised to stimulate the formation of new networks, existing networks were also encouraged to expand or broaden in scope. However, it is evident that organisations which had not previously been awarded funding had trouble breaking through. This was especially the case for international sport federations which could not often reach the required quality standards in their***

***applications.***

***Network management was considered satisfactory by network coordinators, in particular with relation to informal contact and advice offered by project officers in the Commission. While the quarterly reports were perceived as burdensome and of questionable utility by the coordinators, the Commission found them extremely valuable during the first year of Preparatory Action funding.***

***Evidence indicates that the lack of a robust selection procedure for the special events sharply limited their capacity to work towards the Commission's objectives.***



**EQ 10 & 12: Are the current measures sufficiently well oriented and structured in terms of cost effectiveness? What are the areas for improvement / cost savings?**

Many fully fledged European Commission programmes are administered through Executive Agencies. This presents an efficient solution, providing policy experts at the Commission the opportunity to play a role in strategic planning and goal-setting, while contracts, funding disbursement and reporting are handled through desk officers trained especially in their tasks. Despite the potential for long-term cost savings, Preparatory Actions, experimental and ephemeral (lasting a maximum of three years), constantly under review and being refined on a yearly basis, cannot be handled in such a fashion.

Instead, a relatively simple structure was followed, whereby individual projects were administered by subject experts (e.g. HEPA, doping, etc.) within DG EAC E3. This allowed policy / project officers in the Commission to develop close relationships with project coordinators, proffering advice and providing feedback when necessary on an informal basis. These relations, doubtlessly fostered at considerable cost in terms of DG EAC's human resources, were greatly appreciated by project coordinators, some of whom were working on a pan-European scale for the first time. However, once incentive measures are established as part of a long-standing programme, sponsoring a greater number of projects and replete with multi-annual financial plans, it is likely that the Commission will consider it cost-efficient to assign responsibility for the programme to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

Such a move would certainly bring efficiency savings, as officials at the Executive Agency are better equipped to process large numbers of proposals, administer EU funding and keep track of networks' progress. However, feedback received during the evaluation has revealed that project coordinators and partners highly value the advisor role provided through frequent contact with policy officers at DG EAC. In some cases, a great deal of project success was attributed to this contact. DG EAC would jettison this function were it to fully outsource administration of future incentive measures to the Executive Agency, leaving networks weaker and potentially unable to work towards programme objectives with maximum effectiveness. Instead, the Commission could leave ample scope in its internal work programme to continue in its advisory role vis-a-vis network coordinators and partners. This would capture the lion's share of potential efficiency gains from use of the Executive Agency while retaining an important role for DG EAC in the area where it can add the most value: policy expertise.

Cost efficiency has also been examined at the level of individual projects. Although final reporting, including spend figures, was not available at the time of writing, project coordinators interviewed for case studies indicated that all allocated funding would be spent. While a small number of project coordinators reporting supplementing the Commission grant with other funding, this appeared to reflect small increases in network ambitions (e.g. print a greater than foreseen number of publications) rather than overall shortcomings; no coordinators reported significant underspend.

The working methods of individual networks were not mandated by the Commission, but the basic structure, in which a coordinating organisation bore sole contractual and administrative responsibility for each project, indirectly resulted in several shortcomings in terms of cost efficiency. Such a structure widened the gap, almost impossible to avoid altogether, between the coordinating organisation and partners, and sometimes resulted in an unequal and inefficient distribution of tasks. The lack of shared liability led some partner organisations, in the eyes of coordinators, to shirk responsibility and play a smaller role in projects than would have been the case under a structure apportioning responsibility equally.

The travel budget for travel was discussed with many project coordinators as a potential area for cost savings. However, interviewees were nearly unanimous in their view that the number of face-to-face meetings, usually limited to three or four over the year-long projects, could not be further reduced. Given the fact that many network partners were collaborating for the first time, it would likely be counterproductive to identify travel as an area for cost savings.

For the networking projects, the only widely identified inefficiency related to the quarterly monitoring reports. Most coordinators felt that they spent more than their contracted working time on their projects, and that the quarterly reports added to the administrative burden without bringing any tangible benefits. Given that most interviewees never received feedback on the reports, it was often suggested that they be either scrapped or cut back. That being said, it is also important to note that, especially during the first year of Preparatory Action funding, the quarterly reports facilitated DG EAC's efforts to keep track of the progress of the various networks and identify problems in a timely and efficient fashion. In the second year of Preparatory Actions, when such frequent monitoring was no longer necessary, DG EAC curtailed the frequency of such reports.

### **Findings**

***On the programme level, it can be concluded that the structure set up to administer the networking projects has been efficient for carrying out Preparatory Actions. However, a larger, sustainable programme would likely be more efficiently managed by an Executive Agency, leaving policy officers the chance to head up more strategic matters. While the Executive Agency would be expected to take charge of most administrative matters, DG EAC's policy experts could retain an advisory role for project coordinators and partners.***

***Individual networks functioned best when work was apportioned more or less equally among network partners, whereas 'hub and spoke'-type networks (in which the coordinating organisation took charge of most of the work) did not allow all partners to contribute fully and reduced the potential for the creation of synergies.***

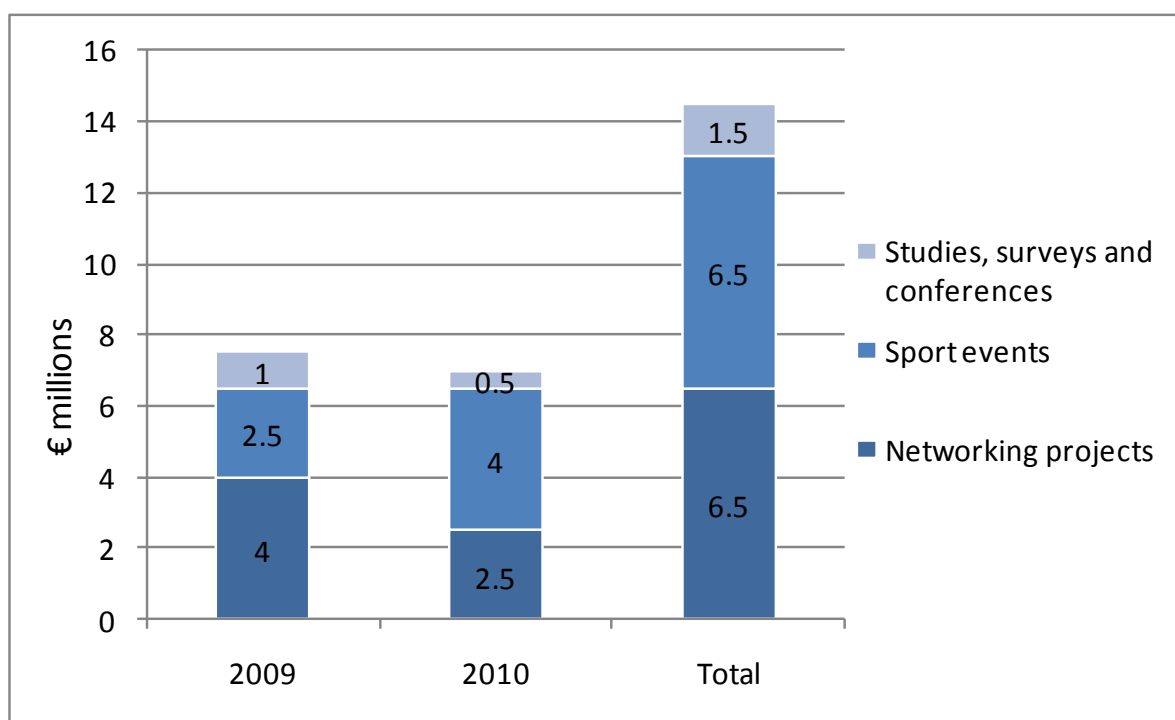
**EQ 11 & 13: Is the size of the budget appropriate and proportionate for what the Preparatory Actions and special events set out to achieve, in terms of:**

- The size of the budget?
- Allocation of the budget among the different actions?

1) Overall budget review

The total budget for the 2009 and 2010 Preparatory Actions and special events amounted to EUR 18.5m. Support for transnational collaborative projects and special events each accounted for about 45% of the budget, at EUR 6.5m each, while a further 10% (EUR 1.5m) was devoted to studies, surveys and conferences, as shown in the chart below. For 2011, the final year of Preparatory Actions (outside the scope of this evaluation), a further EUR 11m is envisaged, bringing the total budget for the three years to EUR 25.5m.

*Figure 14: Preparatory Actions budget, 2009 & 2010*



*Source: Annual Work Programmes 2009 and 2010*

The Preparatory Actions are experimental in nature and as a general objective are intended to lay the foundation for future incentive measures in the field of sport. A retrospective analysis of the efficiency of the Preparatory Actions purely as function of their achievement of the specific objectives through the three instruments (networking projects, support for sport events and studies, conferences and surveys) would not ascertain their contribution to the general objective.

Instead, it is instructive to examine the extent to which the budget for the Preparatory Actions has been appropriate and proportionate to the preparation of future incentive measures. The funding available for the 2009-2011 period was (or, in the case of 2011 activities, is being) channelled into support for a wide variety of projects, types of activities and subject areas.

| Instrument                    | Subject areas covered  | Average cost per activity (EUR) | Number sponsored |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Transnational networks        | HEPA, Education & training, disabilities, gender equality, doping, social inclusion, volunteering, violence & intolerance, and organisation of sport | 220,000                         | 30               |
| Major sport events            | Disabilities, youth, volunteering, HEPA  | 1,250,000                       | 5                |
| Studies, surveys, conferences | Organisation of sport, doping, statistics  | 190,000                         | 12               |

The overall budget for the Preparatory Actions and special events (EUR 25.5m over three years) is considerably smaller than that allocated to most fully fledged Commission programmes, especially if one considers that EUR 10.5m was allocated to support for special events through a mechanism that allowed DG EAC little room for manoeuvre.

Regarding the transnational networking projects in particular, ideally the budget would provide the Commission with the scope to test the viability of networks in terms of both subject matter and organisational structure. In turn, results of this testing phase would allow the Commission to set priorities for future incentive measures on the basis of sound evidence.

While over the three years of Preparatory Actions the Commission was able to fund projects across a wide range of themes, it is clear that the Commission faced considerable constraints. In some areas, most notably HEPA and social inclusion, the Commission funded a relatively large number of projects (nine and five, respectively), while only two projects could be funded in gender equality. This doubtless reflects the enormity of HEPA and social inclusion-related problems and commensurate interest, which led to a large number of (high quality) proposals. In general, indicative and actual spend did not diverge heavily.

| Subject              | Indicative budget (EUR) | Actual budget (EUR) | Difference (EUR) | Indicative projects supported | Projects supported |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| HEPA                 | 1,200,000               | 1,969,185           | 769,185          | 5                             | 9                  |
| Disabilities         | 1,000,000               | 597,120             | -402,880         | 3                             | 2                  |
| Education & training | 900,000                 | 747,839             | -152,161         | 5                             | 4                  |
| Gender equality      | 900,000                 | 668,852             | -231,149         | 2                             | 3                  |
| Doping               | 1,000,000               | 728,369             | -271,631         | 5                             | 3                  |
| Social inclusion     | 1,000,000               | 1,081,545           | 81,545           | 5                             | 5                  |
| Volunteering         | 500,000                 | 688,324             | 188,324          | 3                             | 4                  |

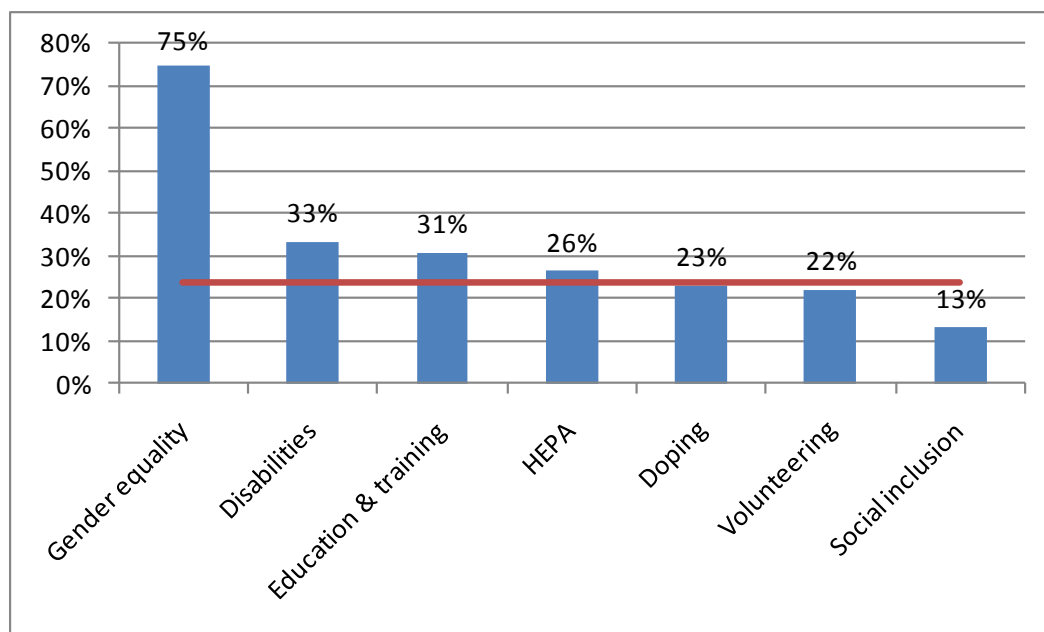
The average success rate of funding awarded to about 24% of high quality proposals<sup>5</sup> is broadly in line with other programmes.<sup>6</sup> However, the required degree of selectivity obliged

<sup>5</sup> „High quality“ proposals refer those that the Commission’s evaluation committee assessed as eligible for funding, i.e. scoring above 50% against the published award criteria.

<sup>6</sup> The EU Health Programme, for example, awarded funding to approximately 19% of proposals in 2009.

DG EAC to reject a considerable proportion of worthy proposals. Though a fully fledged programme potentially allows for funding of a greater proportion of proposals, the 2009 and 2010 Preparatory Actions allowed the Commission to respond realistically to the level of interest in the limited number of subject areas supported and organisations' capacity to absorb funding and carry out networking projects successfully.

*Figure 15: Proportion of high quality proposals awarded funding, by subject*



Source: DG EAC

Nonetheless, given the large number (both in absolute terms and as a proportion of quality proposals received), significant impacts could likely have been achieved were more funding available in certain subjects, most notably social inclusion and volunteering, for which the Commission was unable to award funding to a large proportion of high quality proposals.

Moreover, data for the projects funded in 2009 (data is not available for 2010) indicates that the Commission has been able to test networks of varying sizes, covering all Member States, implicating several types of organisations and promoting a wide range of activities. While the majority of networks concentrated on identifying and disseminating best practice and building / cementing the relationships between partners, other activities were also tested, including sport participation events aimed at the wider public and the organisation of local sport competitions

| Subject                | Project name                          | MS involved                                    | Organisation types  | Activity types   |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| HEPA                   | Sports Clubs for Health               | FI, IT, ES, PL, EE, (HR)                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National sport organisations</li> <li>University / research institute</li> <li>National ministry university</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>Kick start pan-European network</li> </ul>   |
|                        | Euro Sport Health                     | ES, UK, HU, IT, CY                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal authorities</li> <li>University / research institute</li> <li>Sport federation</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>Kick-start pan European network</li> <li>Implement Day of Sport</li> </ul>                       |
|                        | Athlé Santé                           | FR, IT, ES, HU, DE, (CH)                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National athletics federation</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and disseminate common educational and coaching materials</li> <li>Set up Nordic walking parks</li> <li>Implement fitness days</li> </ul> |
|                        | Healthy Children in Sound Communities | DE, UK, CZ, NL, BE, PL, SE, (EU)               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sport and youth organisations</li> <li>Regional sport organisations</li> <li>University / research institute</li> <li>European sport organisation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement PE/PA programme for children</li> </ul>   |
|                        | Net Sport Health                      | All  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National WHO chapters</li> <li>University / research institute</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and disseminate best practices</li> <li>Build network capacity</li> </ul>   |
|                        | SANTE                                 | CZ, DK, DE, BE, IT, PT, LV, LT, NL, UK, SI, ES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National sport organisations</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>Kick start pan-European network</li> </ul>   |
|                        | You Need Exercise                     | GR, DK, AT, NL, DE                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal authorities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>Kick start pan-European network</li> </ul>   |
|                        | S <sup>2</sup> -Port                  | ES, UK, FI, DK, GR, IT, NL                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional ministry</li> <li>University / research institutes</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>Kick start pan-European network</li> </ul>   |
|                        | Becoming the Hub                      | FR, DE, UK, (EU)                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>European sport organisations</li> <li>Industry associations</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>Build capacity within network</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Education &amp;</b> | FIFPro online Academy                 | DK, FI, FR, IE, IT, NL, RO,                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional sport</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement e-course</li> </ul>   |

|                        |                            |                                  |  |   |
|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>training</b>        |                            | SI, SE, UK, (NO)                 | organisations  |   |
|                        | Athletes2Business          | FI, FR, DE, HU, SE, (EU), (CH)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Olympic committees</li> <li>• National sport organisations</li> <li>• Universities / research institutes</li> <li>• European sport organisations</li> <li>• Company</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>• Kick start pan-European network</li> </ul>  |
|                        | DC-Sport                   | LV, HU, ES, UK, GR, FI, CY       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport education academies</li> <li>• Universities / research institutes</li> <li>• European sport organisation</li> <li>• European industry organisation</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>• Kick start pan-European network</li> </ul>  |
|                        | INTEC Network Building     | AT, EE, IT, PL, RO, SK, SI, SE   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Universities / research institutes</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>• Kick start pan-European network</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Gender equality</b> | WILD                       | CZ, DK, FI, FR, IT, SE, UK       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Olympic committees</li> <li>• National sport organisations</li> <li>• Universities / research institutes</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>• Kick start pan-European network</li> <li>• Develop and implement training courses</li> <li>• Hold conferences and seminars</li> </ul> |
|                        | Closing the Leadership Gap | DK, AT, SI, MT, EE, ES, SE, (CH) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National sport organisations</li> <li>• University / research institute</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>• Kick start pan-European network</li> </ul>  |
|                        | Olympia                    | IT, FR, AT, DK, (international)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-sport focused NGOs</li> <li>• International sport organisation</li> <li>• University / research institute</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>• Kick start pan-European network</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Disabilities</b>    | Youth Unified Sports       | BE, DK, PT, ES, FI, PL, IT,      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Olympic</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation of local sport competitions</li> </ul>  |

|  |                       |  |   |   |
|--|-----------------------|--|---|---|
|  |                       | LT, DE, RO   | organisations   |   |
|  | All for Sport for All | BE, DE, AT, UK, IT, EL, FR, SI, LT, PT, (HR), (EU) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Olympic committees</li> <li>• National Paralympic committees</li> <li>• National sport organisations</li> <li>• European sport organisations</li> <li>• Universities / research institutes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and disseminate best practices</li> <li>• Build network capacity</li> </ul> |



Through the available budget of about EUR 6.5m over the 2009-2010 Preparatory Actions, the Commission has supported four events, with a further EUR 4m and support for one further event planned for 2011. This has accounted for roughly 45% of total funding. The evaluation has assessed the effectiveness of these events, concluding that there is a potential for achieving significant impacts through ongoing sponsoring of sport competitions. While the positive impacts of events aimed at youth and people with disabilities (i.e. European Youth Olympic Festivals, Special Olympics) were particularly evident, the case was weaker for sponsoring more conventional events (i.e. Mediterranean Games). The evaluation of event effectiveness also revealed that EU funding for event support was most effective when channelled into activities peripheral to the main sport competitions, such as outreach to local schools.

A considerable proportion of the funding was not used to support the types of activities and events assessed as the most effective, a fact that was exacerbated by the fact that the lack of a competitive procurement procedure or specific objectives for each event. While it is strongly recommended that the Commission enact such a procedure in future, it was constrained from doing so in this first instance.

Nonetheless, it is again important to highlight the experimental nature of the Preparatory Actions. Despite the shortcomings present in the procurement procedures, and the lack of EU value in one of the five events supported, the Preparatory Actions provided scope for a variety of event types to be tested, which led to a clear set of recommendations for improving the effectiveness of event support in future. It can therefore be concluded that the overall budget for events was necessary.

The budget of EUR 1.5m for studies, surveys and conferences, with another EUR 0.6m planned for 2011, has made up about 10% of the total available for Preparatory Actions and special events. This has (or is being used for) a total of six studies, one survey and five conferences (including two EU Sport Forums), with an average cost of EUR 0.175 per activity. This allowed the Commission to amass a wealth of evidence on a diverse range of sport-related topics, in addition to bringing together key stakeholders to discuss issues with a strong European component (e.g. licensing systems, the situation for sport agents). While the overall budget for studies, surveys and conferences has allowed the Commission to test a variety of instruments and subjects, the Annual Work Plans are rather vague, stating the activities „will be organised in order to support the Commission’s structured dialogue with sport stakeholders“. It is clear that available budget has enabled the Commission to do this, but without a more explicit rationale explaining why specific activities were chosen it is not possible to make a confident statement as to the adequacy of the budget for this task. Therefore, in future a concrete set of objectives should be developed in order to demonstrate how each instrument to be used fits into the programme as a whole.

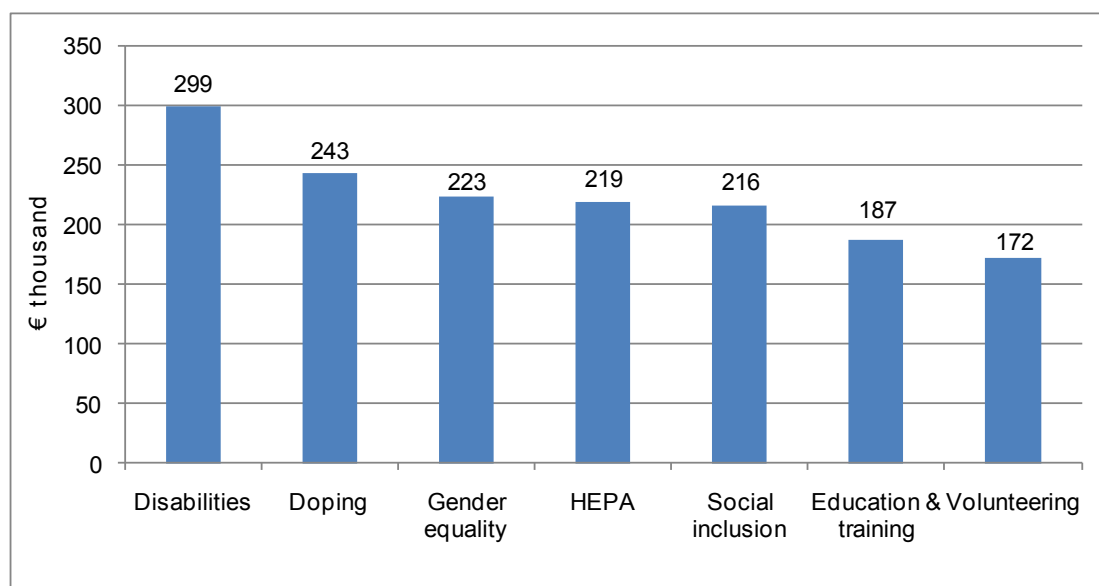
Evidence gathered during the evaluation indicates that considerable efforts were made in order to carry out the activities efficiently, employing when possible simple procurement procedures (e.g. working through existing framework contracts) and holding events jointly with other organisations (e.g. EU Sport Forums with the European Presidency).

## *2) Budget allocation for individual projects and activities*

The size of individual grants for network projects can be assessed in relation to the achievement of specific objectives and feedback from project coordinators and other participants in the projects. During the period under review, transnational networks typically received just under EUR 220,000 for a year-long project with maximum Commission co-financing of 80%. As shown in the chart, projects on disabilities were awarded over 135% of average funding per project, while networks on volunteering received about 20% less than the average. Given that most project coordinators interviewed felt the budget satisfied their

requirements, flexibility regarding the precise size of network grants does not appear problematic.

Figure 16: Transnational networking funding, by subject area



Source: DG EAC

As pointed out elsewhere in this report, many of the project objectives were not SMART or short-term enough to make a straightforward assessment of the extent to which the objectives were achieved. However, even taking a conservative view it is clear that most of the projects have resulted in positive outcomes closely related to their objectives. According to the online survey, recipients of 2009 and 2010 grants were overwhelmingly positive, with three in four respondents claiming that the project objectives had been achieved *to a great extent*. Project coordinators recalling their experiences in interviews pointed out that, while larger grants would have enabled more ambitious projects, the available funding was adequate to carry out the planned activities. In some cases, coordinating organisations were required to supplement the Commission grant with funding from other sources, but only a small minority of interviewees reported that the scope or scale of activities planned had to be substantially curtailed.

Similarly, event organisers expressed satisfaction with the scale of the EU subsidy, and the evidence does not indicate any shortcomings in *absolute* terms. However, in terms of achieving „greater EU visibility at European sport events“ (the stated objective of EU involvement) the *relative* size of the EU grant, in relation to the total event budget, appears to be of tantamount importance. In general, it is clear the inability of the Commission to carry out a competitive tendering process and set specific objectives for each event acted as a brake on achieving visibility. Despite this shortcoming, it is also clear that a high degree of visibility was achieved for events in which EU funding formed a substantial (i.e. crucial) proportion of the total. The contrast was especially clear between the Mediterranean Games, for which the EUR 1m contribution made up less than 2% of total funding, and the European Youth Olympic Winter Festival, for which EU funding accounted for about one third of event expenditure.

In summary, it can be concluded that the budget of the Preparatory Actions has been limited to laying the foundation for future incentive measures in the field of sport. Although testing support for a wider variety of major sport events may have been beneficial, in light of the

restraints imposed by the European Parliament, the evidence collected during the evaluation indicates that the mix of networking projects, special events and studies, surveys and conferences is appropriate. At the level of individual activities, budgets for networking projects and special events were adequate. However, with regard to the latter, it is worth noting that visibility for the EU is closely linked to the use of EU support for specific activities carried out alongside the events receiving support.

### 3) *Level of funding for critical mass of impacts*

The budget and work programmes for future incentive measures will be set on a multi-annual basis as a result of political and other considerations outside the scope of this evaluation. Despite this, it is worth using the evidence collected to establish a *minimum* level of funding that will lead to progress towards future programme objectives in a cost-effective fashion. This evaluation has determined that an appropriate level of funding has been devoted to testing transnational projects, major sport events and studies, surveys and conferences.

With regard to the networking projects, the budget constraints of the Preparatory Actions did not allow all subject areas to be funded concomitantly. While doing so may lead to a degree of overlap and capacity issues in some organisations (some of the same organisations, for example, received funding for networking projects in 2009 and 2010), the evidence indicates that there is sufficient interest in each subject area to allocate funding for all of them at once. In addition, future networking projects could potentially run for longer than the current limit of one year. (While this was ideal for the Preparatory Actions, experimental in nature, networks would gain in effectiveness and efficiency from longer funding periods.).

At the same time, the evaluation has judged the amount of funding dedicated to each *subject area* to be about right. After considering the unavoidable „teething problems“ inherent in Preparatory Actions, the available budget allowed the Commission to employ a robust (but not overly restrictive) selection process (about in line with other programmes funding networking projects, e.g. the European Health Programme) while achieving considerable progress towards the specific objectives. It is unlikely that in most subject areas (e.g. doping), significantly more funding could have been absorbed successfully without sacrifices in project quality (i.e. awarding funding to more projects would have entailed support for projects of sub-optimal quality), while in others (e.g. social inclusion) the high proportion of quality proposals that the Commission was obliged to reject indicates that a larger budget could have been absorbed effectively and efficiently. Taking into consideration the EUR 8.5m budget for networking projects over the three years of Preparatory Actions, an annual allocation of about EUR 15m could be put forward as a minimum for achieving a critical mass of impacts cost effectively. This would entail several assumptions:

- General improvement in the quality of proposals as a result of continued institutional learning and modifications to the Commission’s procurement processes in line with the recommendations in this report;
- Greater effectiveness and efficiency of individual projects due to longer funding periods;
- Awarding of funding to about 25% of high quality proposals (i.e. those meeting the eligibility criteria for funding) in each subject area;
- Covering additional areas in line with priorities established at political level;
- Supporting larger (potentially EU-wide) projects for a longer duration.

In light of the perceived effectiveness of support for major sport events, and the recommendations made in this evaluation for a greater focus on specific activities peripheral

to the event themselves, an annual budget similar to the one available during 2009-2011 could be continued in future, with a small increase to allow for funding of more specific activities at the sport events (where the Commission can potentially achieve the greatest impact). This would amount to about EUR 4m annually and be dedicated to events aimed at events with a focus on youth and / or sport for people with disabilities, where the Commission can realistically achieve substantial visibility.

The annual allocation of about EUR 0.65 for studies, surveys and conferences could be increased to EUR 1m. This would allow future incentive measures to take into account the wider spectrum of activities to be covered. In addition, following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, this would provide policy support measures linked to increased cooperation at EU level in the field of sport.

Therefore, in total, an annual budget of about EUR 20m is envisaged.

| Area of intervention | Instruments                       |                                   |                               | Total per intervention area |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                      | Transnat'l collaborative projects | Support for European sport events | Studies, surveys, conferences |                             |
| Total per year       | € 15m                             | € 4m                              | € 1m                          | € 20m                       |

### Findings

***The budget allocated to the Preparatory Actions proved sufficient to test a considerable, but limited number of network themes, types and sizes while employing a robust, but not overly restrictive selection process. Although the Commission was able to support networks in some subject areas more than others, this reflects overall interest and competence in the subject areas for which funding was allocated. Likewise, the Commission was able to test several types of support for non-commercial sport events of major importance. Despite constraints from the European Parliament, which prevented the Commission from implementing an competitive bidding process or objective selection criteria, the effectiveness of specific types of events (i.e. those aimed at youth and people with disabilities) and activities carried out therein (e.g. peripheral activities aimed at the local population) was revealed in time to shape future policy.***

***Budgets for individual transnational projects appeared adequate, given positive feedback from coordinators and the widespread sentiment that the projects were able to achieve their objectives.***

***An overall budget of about EUR 20m will be necessary in order to achieve a minimum critical mass of impacts for future incentive measures. This takes into account the network project themes funded during the years of Preparatory Actions, in addition to special events and studies, surveys and conferences.***

## 4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. A brief section outlining key findings relating to main evaluation criteria is presented, followed by conclusions and recommendations, structured around the questions posed in the TOR.

### Summary of key findings

#### *a. Relevance*

##### Transnational projects

The objectives and Annual Work Programmes of the Preparatory Actions were relevant and consistent with the sport provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and other EU policies, ranging from overarching policies such as the Europe 2020 Strategy to subject-specific documents such as the Together for Health White Paper.

##### Non-commercial sport events

While the support of a number of special events could be considered to be clearly linked to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, the design of the Commission's support limited what the events were able to achieve. Lack of a competitive and selective tendering process, with well articulated objectives and links to the Commission's policy agenda, meant that it was difficult to measure whether any tangible contribution had been made to high level policy objectives.

##### Studies, surveys and conferences

The studies, conferences, seminars were used to facilitate new information and exchanges of good practice and contacts between key organisations in sport across a number of high priority areas. These were relevant to developing the EU dimension in sport and, more generally, can also be linked to policies such as the Europe 2020 Strategy.

#### *b. EU added value*

##### Transnational projects

EU added value was demonstrated in a number of ways, including:

- Alleviating discrepancies between Member States;
- Spreading best practices;
- Testing the viability of networks across the subject areas supported;
- Providing policy support through knowledge generation;
- Strengthening the European dimension in sport.

Importantly, none of the projects could have been carried out successfully by organisations acting at national level, since they addressed issues with a cross-border element and / or challenges for which no one Member State had identified a complete solution. The transnational projects have facilitated the spread of innovative methods and expertise.

At the project level, the EU added value varied according to such factors as maturity of the sector in question, the composition of individual networks and the types of organisations involved, the limited duration of support (i.e. one year) and the management procedures of projects. It is also clear that, while support for long-existing networks may be more effective in the short term, promoting the establishment and expansion of networks also demonstrates

European added value. Support for transnational projects found a good balance between these two possibilities for adding value.

#### Non-commercial sport events

The EU-added value of support for special events did not realise its full potential and could have been significantly increased had the Commission been given the opportunity to set specific award criteria against which applicants could have been scored and held accountable.

#### Studies, surveys and conferences

Studies, survey, conferences and seminars fulfilled their role of providing the Commission and other actors with policy support and developing the EU dimension in sport. They also contributed to the establishment of the Commission as an important contributor to the development of EU sport.

### ***c. Effectiveness***

#### Transnational projects

At a general level, it was difficult to translate project outcomes into tangible lessons for policy makers, given the short timeframe of the projects and their experimental nature. However, the projects achieved considerable success in promoting sport issues and developing the European dimension in sport, in particular with regard to building and strengthening networks between partner organisations in different sectors, and kick-starting cooperation between organisations working on sport around Europe.

Individual projects demonstrated considerable success in achieving their own objectives. The identification and publication of printed materials were achieved to a great extent. Developing and strengthening knowledge between project partners was a key achievement, while progress in networking at a truly European level proved more difficult, unless EU umbrella-type organisations were included in the network of partners.

More specifically, networks fostering multi-lateral collaboration between partners, rather than bilateral contact between individual partners and the coordinating organisation, appear to be the most sustainable and successful. Key factors which positively or negatively affected what the transnational projects could achieve included the size and make-up of the network (for example, projects required partnerships involving organisations with experience relevant to reaching project goals). Additionally, it was difficult for projects to claim EU-level relevance, for example when mapping activities were carried out in a limited sample of countries. Well managed projects achieved more, using resources more efficiently and drawing out the potential synergies of partners.

#### Non-commercial sport events

Aside from the Mediterranean Games, the other two special events investigated (EYOWF and European Special Olympic Summer Games) contributed to supporting the development of the European dimension. These events seemed to take into account policy areas expressed in the White Paper to develop a range of side activities to support EU ideals. All events also met their specific objectives. However, the lack of specific award criteria made it difficult for the Commission to ensure that these objectives fit with the rest of objectives of the Preparatory Actions

## Studies, surveys and conferences

These activities were useful tools for the promotion of EU sporting issues and the provision of information to the Commission and the broader EU sport community. The information is likely to be used to contribute to better policy making in the subject areas covered in addition to strengthening the European dimension in sport. Additionally, the evidence indicates that the individual activities funded were carried out successfully and achieved the objectives set for them.

### ***d. Efficiency***

#### Transnational projects

The selection procedure for the transnational projects appears adequate and robust. While the calls for proposals were sufficiently flexible and widely publicised to stimulate the formation of new networks, existing networks were also encouraged to expand or broaden in scope. However, it is evident that organisations which had not previously been awarded funding had trouble breaking through.

On the programme level, the structure set up to administer the networking projects has been efficient. However, a larger, sustainable programme would likely be more efficiently managed by an Executive Agency, leaving policy officers the chance to drive more strategic matters. While the Executive Agency would be expected to take charge of most administrative matters, DG EAC's policy experts could retain an advisory role for project coordinators and partners.

The budget allocated to the Preparatory Actions proved sufficient to test a limited number of network themes, types and sizes while employing a robust, but not overly restrictive selection process.

#### Non-commercial sport events

The budget allowed the Commission to test several types of support for non-commercial sport events of major importance. Despite the lack of a competitive bidding process or objective selection criteria, specific types of events (i.e. those aimed at youth and people with disabilities) and activities carried out therein (e.g. peripheral activities aimed at the local population) demonstrated their effectiveness. This can be taken into account during the planning of future incentive measures.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following conclusions and recommendations are made to address shortcomings and make improvements for future incentive measures in the field of sport. They are centred around responses to a set of questions posed in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation.

#### **1. How can the incentive measures supporting the policy cooperation mechanisms be improved?**

Based on the evidence sourced during the evaluation, the measures could be improved in the following ways, by:

## Transnational projects

- Capturing the lessons that have been learned by EC staff and project coordinators from the testing phase (2009-2011) in a structured way to ensure that the full benefit of the Preparatory Actions is taken into account in the development of the future programme.
- Increasing the duration of projects (in line with similar projects supported through other Commission programmes) to allow for more ambitious objectives and activities, while reducing administrative burden and improving the cost-effectiveness.
- Ensuring that the programme objectives and award criteria set for future incentive measures are in line with the size and scope of the individual projects to be funded, and the programme as a whole.
- Placing greater emphasis on the make-up of networks, plans for project management, and the expected contribution that each partner will make to project activities and objectives.
- Placing greater emphasis on the ultimate use of best practice collections, guidelines and the like. Projects must achieve clear EU added value and where possible spread and support the embedding of good practice to address discrepancies between different organisations and Member States.
- Ensuring that activities organised to promote sport among the general public address programme objectives, demonstrate a clear EU added value and / or contribute to the development of the European dimension in sport.

### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that a workshop is held after the Preparatory Actions are completed to facilitate a structured approach to capturing lessons learned. The Commission should host and chair the workshop and invite all project coordinators.
- It is recommended that projects of up to three years should be supported in the future. Programme objectives and award criteria should be adjusted to reflect this increased length, and the fact that the experimental, preparatory phase for incentive measures has come to an end. In particular, project proposals should include:
  - Need / expected added value to the sector in question;
  - Strength and relevance of the network and access to additional (e.g. pan-European) networks;
  - Plans for project management, including the specific roles for each partner in the design and implementation of activities and the potential for synergies between participating organisations;
  - Plans for dissemination of best practice collections, guidelines etc. including target beneficiaries and expected outcomes;
  - SMART objectives, including clear explanations stating how progress will be recorded.
- It is recommended that an emphasis on EU added value relates to all aspects of the projects, including activities aimed at the general public at local level. These should be based on identified good practice to ensure that maximum synergies between network partners are exploited and that the network and EU brands are given adequate weight.

## Studies, surveys, conferences and seminars



- It is concluded that the current approach does not need to be modified.

#### **Recommendation**

- It is recommended that the current approach to studies, surveys, conferences and seminars is continued.

#### Special events

- Using a competitive process, involving the use of transparent award criteria to select the special events that will receive EU support, would help to ensure that the events contribute to overall programme objectives.
- Support for Europe-focused special events involving young people and the disabled has been shown to produce EU added-value and contribute to the European dimension in sport. It is also broadly consistent with wider EU policies.
- Relying on traditional PR activities, such as press releases, is not highly effective at communicating the EU dimension in sport. The press tends to focus on the content of the event (for example competition results) rather than EU messages, while the presence of the EU logo is limited in what it can convey. However, the development of specific activities peripheral to the main sport competitions can be effective at making progress towards programme objectives. These activities include inter alia programmes for local schools and seminars taking place in parallel to the main event.
- The special events supported by the EU were not required to address a number of the priorities expressed in the 2007 White Paper, for example the use of the Eco Scheme, cross border volunteers and the development of good practice in the management of large events.
- It has been difficult to assess the outcomes of EU funding for special events. This stems from both a lack of specific requirements for event organisers and a lack of evidence of tangible outcomes.

#### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the selection of special events is made via an open tendering process with transparent award criteria. Inter alia, events should comprise:
  - A non-commercial European sport event involving young people and / or the disabled (events that mainstream disabled competitions are to be encouraged);
  - Activities peripheral to the main sport competition that contribute directly to programme objectives;
  - Plans for awareness raising of the European dimension in sport / EU sporting issues, integrated within the main event;
  - The use of cross-border volunteers;
  - Use of the Eco Scheme.
- A set of requirements for event outcomes should be defined, including:
  - Justification that financial support led to EU added value;
  - Tangible evidence demonstrating that objectives have been met;
  - A report highlighting lessons learned and good practice in the organisation of special events involving cross border volunteers.

## **2. How can the synergies and interaction between the different kinds of stakeholders be improved?**

- Encouraging the involvement of partners representing different types of organisations, where this adds value to project goals, could be made explicit in relevant EC documentation (e.g. Annual Work Programmes, Calls for Proposals). Feedback from partners in the 2009 projects suggests that complementary expertise provides fresh insight and adds value to project outcomes.
- Defining good practice / lessons learned in project management based on experiences from the Preparatory Actions could also help to achieve this goal. Examples from the 2009 Preparatory Actions include:
  - Partner selection processes to strengthen the make-up of networks;
  - Clearly defined practices for effective communication between network partners;
  - Project management methods that draw on the inputs of all partners and facilitate cross partner information exchange (rather than bilateral exchanges between coordinators and individual partners only).

#### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that future Calls for Proposals are amended to reflect the experiences of the Preparatory Actions. Without increasing the administrative burden, during the selection process networks could be privileged that demonstrate:
  - A set of partners representing a diversity of organisation types;
  - A well reasoned rationale for selected networking partners;
  - Project management methods assigning responsibility evenly across partners according to expertise.
- It is recommended that DG EAC consider assigning financial responsibility for networking projects to more than one organisation per project.

### **3. How can the management system of the incentive measures be organised in order to be more effective and efficient?**

The Preparatory Actions and special events have been administered wholly by DG EAC staff. This ranged from purely administrative tasks (e.g. making financial transfers) to the evaluation of project proposals, and the provision of ad hoc advice to project coordinators and partners. The evaluation assessed this system as sufficiently efficient, especially in light of the experimental nature of the Preparatory Actions and the commensurate need to monitor projects closely (particularly given the proportion of networks and organisations receiving EU funding for the first time). However, the evaluation also revealed some room for improvement. Notably, formal reporting requirements, while considered onerous by project coordinators, would have been better tolerated if timely and constructive feedback had been provided.

While efficiency savings for future incentive measures will likely be achieved through outsourcing administration to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, fully handing over responsibility for a future programme will subtract from the informal, advisory role currently played by DG EAC officials vis-à-vis project coordinators and partners. Instead, the Commission could continue to fulfil this function through encouraging contact between its own policy experts and staff of the organisations responsible for implementing transnational projects. In addition, DG EAC officials could work with the Executive Agency in order to ensure that formal reporting adds value to the projects, rather than being seen merely as a box-ticking exercise. This would achieve the sought after cost savings while involving DG EAC staff in the areas where they can add the most value.

At the level of individual projects, the evaluation found that networks functioned best when work was apportioned equally among those involved, whereas in „hub and spoke“ networks not all partners contributed fully. While some networks achieved the right balance during the Preparatory Actions, in future the Commission could encourage better working methods inter alia through allocating financial responsibility to more than one organisation per project and requiring organisations to define roles for all project partners during the proposal stage.

#### Recommendations

- It is recommended that the Commission outsource administration of future incentive measures to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. However, DG EAC officials should continue to provide project coordinators with informal and ad hoc advice in their areas of expertise. This would lead to efficiency gains, as Executive Agency staff are accustomed to and have systems set up for administering large-scale funding programmes, while DG EAC would be able to channel its own limited human resources into the provision of policy expertise.
- Calls for Proposals should be designed as to encourage project coordinators and partners to share project ownership equally among coordinators and partners. In particular, this could include assigning financial responsibility to more than one organisation per project and a requirement to describe during the proposal process how each partner will be involved in the development and implementation of activities.

#### **4. Which are the most effective and useful activities and what should be their relative weighting, considering the needs in the field of sport and the policy objectives? What should be the level of funding devoted to incentive measures in order to reach a critical mass of impacts cost-effectively?**

This evaluation has determined that an appropriate level of funding has been devoted to testing transnational projects, major sport events and studies, surveys and conferences. While the limited budget for Preparatory Actions was only able to test networks in several subjects per year, in order to achieve a critical mass of impacts cost effectively, a future programme should fund transnational projects in all relevant areas on an ongoing basis.

Taking into consideration the EUR 8.5m budget for networking projects over the three years of Preparatory Actions, the magnitude of problems in each subject area, interest and absorption capacity of relevant organisations, an annual allocation of about EUR 15m for transnational projects should be envisaged.

In light of the perceived effectiveness of support for major sport events, and the recommendations made in this evaluation for a greater focus on specific activities peripheral to the events themselves, an annual budget similar to the one available during 2009-2011 could be continued in future, with a small increase to allow for funding of more specific activities at the sport events (where the Commission can potentially achieve the greatest impact). This would amount to about EUR 4m annually and would be dedicated to events with a focus on youth and / or people with disabilities, where the Commission can realistically achieve substantial visibility.

The annual allocation of about EUR 0.65 for studies, surveys and conferences could be increased to EUR 1m. This would allow future incentive measures to consider the wider spectrum of activities to be covered. In addition, following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, this would provide policy support measures linked to increased cooperation at EU level in the field of sport.

Therefore, in total, an annual budget of at least EUR 20m could be envisaged, as presented below.

|  | Instruments                       |                                   |                               | Total per year |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
|  | Transnat'l collaborative projects | Support for European sport events | Studies, surveys, conferences |                |
|  | € 15m                             | € 4m                              | € 1m                          | € 20m          |

### Recommendations

- It is recommended that the majority of funding for future incentive measures be dedicated to transnational networking projects, as these have shown the greatest potential for achieving EU added value across the range of priorities reflected in EU sport policy. Substantial amounts should also be allocated to support for European sport events, which have in particular been proven effective in the fields of health-enhancing physical activity and social inclusion, while a small proportion of future funding for incentive measures could be usefully employed for studies, surveys and conferences which also add value.
- It is recommended that an annual budget of about EUR 20m is allocated as a minimum for achieving a critical mass of impacts cost effectively. This takes into account the magnitude of problems in specific subject areas, the absorption capacity of networks and the types of outcomes achieved during the years of Preparatory Action funding as well as the costs of administering incentive measures. However, it is also worth noting that a higher budget would increase the impact of future incentive measures in the field of sport. Roughly three fourths of this annual budget should be dedicated to transnational networks, while one fifth could be used to support sport events and the rest to sponsor / commission studies, surveys and conferences on topics of particular importance.

## 5. What are the actions / areas where the EU can provide most added-value?

It is not possible to make comparisons between the effectiveness of the different types of interventions because of their different operating formats. Therefore, each intervention type is addressed separately.

### Transnational projects maximise added value when:

- Projects facilitate cooperation and exchanges of good practice between sport organisations in Europe so that discrepancies between Member States in different sport sectors can be addressed;
- Project teams are comprised of partners which add value individually to the whole project and have significant networks and / or access to organisations with significant networks to facilitate wide dissemination of value generated;
- Projects are run by coordinators with proven project management experience who have a plan to maximise the potential synergies that can be generated between the partners in their project.

### Studies and surveys maximise added value when:

- They meet a need for data recognised by the specific sport sector, generate robust data to increase understanding of that sector, and provide information that is shared among all stakeholders.

#### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the Commission ensure that sport stakeholders are consulted on the potential topics to be addressed by studies and surveys.
- It is recommended that the Commission make efforts to share the results of studies and surveys with relevant stakeholders both inside and outside the Commission.

#### **Conferences and seminars** maximise added value when:

- They bring principal sport stakeholders within a sector together to discuss a specific topic that is not facilitated by another forum.

#### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the Commission continue to support conferences and seminars.
- It is recommended that the practice of involving key external stakeholders in the design and implementation of events be continued to ensure maximum relevance and applicability to participants.
- It is recommended that the objectives and desired outputs of events should be clearly identified and, where possible, events should initiate follow up activities beneficial to the sport sector.

#### **Special events** maximise EU added value when:

- They support European sporting events which facilitate competitive sport among young people and the disabled. These events provide additional value when they also facilitate specific activities to promote the societal benefits of sport to other stakeholders, in particular for social inclusion and youth, in addition to building a European presence at major sport events.

#### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the Commission support European special events involving young people and the disabled.
- It is recommended that the Commission split funding between support to the operating costs of the event and the financing of specific activities, which contribute specifically to programme objectives.