



Synthesis

1st Nature & Sports Euro'Meet

*The French National Resources Centre for Outdoor Sports
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STAKES AND KEY DATA

With the solid experience of five previous French editions, the steering committee of the National Meetings of Tourism and of Leisure Outdoor Sports decided to organise the conference at a European level.

The **stakes** of this transformation are clearly identified:

- ☉ Participation in outdoor sports is **an emerging and important social element within societies** as half of Europeans participating in sport do so in natural parks or areas;
- ☉ The **European directives influence local, regional and national regulations**. For example, the directives pertaining to the implementation of Natura 2000 zones have a direct influence on the territorial management of outdoor sports' practice sites;
- ☉ Participants and professionals in outdoor sports are particularly mobile and do not hesitate to cross borders to enjoy famous locations and their favourite activities. The opportunities and the reality of this **mobility** should be analysed. This is a significant factor for the development of tourism activities in the European Union;
- ☉ The Lisbon treaty, in article 165, defines a new competence of the European union, aiming to "**develop the European dimension of sport**" in which leisure practises must be recognised;
- ☉ The sustainable and managed development of outdoor sports is embedded within the strategic axis of "**Europe 2020**". Outdoor sports contribute to **smart growth**, as it is a competitive sector that cannot be de-localised. They also contribute to **sustainable growth**, as their development is linked to awareness about climatic changes and of biodiversity conservation. Finally outdoor sports allow **inclusive growth**, as they create employment in the territories and are a factor of social cohesion, particularly between rural and urban territories.

From this point on the objectives of this first edition consisted in:

- ☉ building and promoting a common culture;
- ☉ sharing the successes and the difficulties;
- ☉ supporting a new organisation of a European network of outdoor sports stakeholders;
- ☉ contributing to the consideration of outdoor leisure sports in European public policies of sport, tourism and the environment.

Over four days 500 European participants from networks of sport, tourism, the environment, regional development and the outdoor industry, exchanged information about their practices, built a collective expertise and formulated recommendations for a better consideration of outdoor sports in European structural and sectorial policies.

The objective of this document is to highlight these recommendations presented at the concluding plenary session on 8th October 2011.

Key Figures:

- 145 on site experiences gathered with 24 of these chosen to be presented in 4 theme seminars
- 13 site visits illustrating the 4 theme seminars
- 12 technical conferences to convey proven tools, state the results of scientific analysis, or to share observation data
- 4 plenary conferences for creating better understanding of the European policies, sharing the vision of the outdoor sports concept in Europe, studying the case of hang gliding in the Annecy basin, and finally outlining the perspectives of an outdoor sports network in Europe
- Close to 500 participants from 19 countries, of which 16 are members of the European Union
- 7 seminars organised by professional networks were held during the Outdoor Sports Network Day (4th October 2011) and which gathered 450 participants

High-Level Speakers:

- 4 experts recognised on a European level in their respective specialities, who lead the theme seminars: Mike McClure (Sport Northern Ireland), Jean-Louis Gouju (Analysis Centre for Education, Employment of Jobs in Animation and in Sport), Eugénio Di Maria (European Decision Maker Publications), Gérard Peltre (International Association Rural Environment, Development)
- 2 European Commission representatives, Bart Ooijen (DG Education & Culture) and Joseph Van Der Stegen (DG Environment)
- 1 expert in European law, Colin Miège (Co-Director, Sport and Citizenship Scientific Committee)
- 1 Member of the European Parliament, Sophie Auconie (member, Sports Intergroup of the European Parliament) decisions reporter, Commission of the Environment, Public Health and of Food Security for the Commission of Culture and of Education on the European dimension of Sport
- 83 speakers from 15 European countries contributed to the Nature & Sports Euro'Meet Annecy 2011

Sharing Common Values

The conference on the concept of outdoor sports brought out the need to hold common values.

- Outdoor sports are characterised by the use of sites in natural areas not specifically dedicated to sports practices and activities;
- Outdoor sports contribute to health preservation, education of the young participants and the local economy notably through the creation of qualified jobs. These activities must be carried out with respect for the environment and with good safety systems and procedures;
- A proposal is made to draft an outdoor sports development charter in Europe that would constitute a common basis for the stakeholders of the outdoor sports network.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE THEME SEMINARS

COMMON RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support the agreement and adoption of good practices and the transfer of experiences.
- Identify a permanent space converging the work and the data collected on outdoor sports in Europe via a multilingual, multimedia platform. This could ease access to the information relative to outdoor sports in Europe: inventory of practices and practice sites, professional events, a reference of internet sites, as well as technical, safety and environmental protection advice...
- Request that policies relative to sport and the environment be a part of the common strategic framework of the European Commission similar to the Common Agricultural Policy and to regional development.

THEME SEMINAR 1: OUTDOOR SPORTS SITES AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The management of Natura 2000 sites is an issue that is shared by all European countries. Partnerships and consultation are essential in the development and implementation of management strategies, and such partnerships engage a sense of ownership by the stakeholders. One of the essential questions is to identify what constitutes "significant disturbance" of a species or habitat. This is highlighted in the application of the "precautionary principle", which can be essential for the management of activities in natural areas.

The partnerships between ecologists and those practising outdoor sports is essential to build understanding of each others needs, priorities and aspirations so that those practising sports understand why the management of the environment is essential and on the other those managing natural areas have a knowledge of outdoor sports.

It would be of use to closely examine those zones that are on the urban fringe where the pressure on the natural environment is greatest.

Recommendations: Mike McClure (reporter expert theme seminar 1)

Management of designated and sensitive areas along with the participants using them

- Develop an "evidence/knowledge based management approach" by involving all the stakeholders and carrying out or sharing research into the actual rather than perceived impacts of outdoor sports;
- Clarify the notions of "disturbance" and "significant damage" based on specific research of outdoor sports activities and the environment;
- Develop management systems integrating the recreational activities and the protection of nature;
- Develop an European generic guide for the management of outdoor sports in Natura 2000 zones.

Environmental Education Through Outdoor Sports

- Involve those participating in outdoor sports, so that they become concerned citizens, or even ambassadors for the protection of habitats and eco-systems, The involvement of high profile instructors and performers can have a very positive impact as role models Promote programs and actions such as "Leave no Trace";

- Develop mechanisms to communicate the importance and fragility of Natura 2000 and other designated sites to independent and users who are visiting the site from another area or country;
- Training and education for leaders and instructors into environmental responsibility is built into a number of national federations training programmes – but a consistent approach is needed.

THEME SEMINAR 2: PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND WORKERS' MOBILITY ALL OVER EUROPE, WHAT SUCCESSES ARE WE HEADING ARE WE HEADING TOWARDS?

Initial Observations:

- diversity of practices (family, well-being, technical...) in potentially dangerous environments;
- diversity of qualifications, necessary to guarantee quality training & supervising of those practising. The means of qualification and of access to employment being different from one country to another in Europe, the overall legibility is low;
- the legibility of the means of qualifications on a European level are particularly missing in outdoor sports, for two essential reasons: the high mobility of those practising and those training & supervising throughout Europe and professionally, work that is not only sports but is also touristic.

Recommendations: Jean-Louis Gouju (reporter expert theme seminar 2)

-  **Produce a synthesis document to allow the outdoor sports stakeholders to situate the European tools pertaining to employment and to education, to favour the emergence of initiatives**

The European stakeholders who wish to initiate European work on the questions of employment and on education currently encounter difficulties to advance with their project: overlapping of legal or voluntarist frameworks, differences in European references (directive 2005/36/CE, European Qualifications Framework, European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, different types of European projects...).

-  **Lead European work favouring the mobility of instructors at a first level of practice (discovery, initiation)**

It is at this level that the educational, environmental, health and personal development benefits come into play. It is also a key level for the economic perspectives and the development of the practices concerned. It is a question of better defining the skills allowing professionals to both reach the objectives above and to ensure the security of those practising, in respect with the environment.

-  **Defining the Elements Constituting a Common Area of Exchange**

The absence of definition in the perimeter of activities pertaining to the outdoors constitutes a slowing on the one hand to the implementation of clear policies, including by the European Commission, and on the other, to the institution of a climate of trust between the stakeholders of the field.

THEME SEMINAR 3: STUDYING PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR SPORTS AN RELATED CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

The knowledge of those practising outdoor sports is central for all the operators who want to adapt their activities or to measure the pertinence of their actions.

Profile of the public: it is necessary to have better knowledge about practitioners, and those who do not, to favour the practice of the largest numbers in Europe;

Observation of those practising: to better respond to their expectations, accompany trends, et especially to take into consideration the specifics of a younger public. An observatory of practices is required;

Sharing and exchange of good practices: based on the diversity of practices and on the trends in the European countries, get inspiration from each other and mutualise the experiences to optimise the sustainable and managed development of outdoor sports, in each country and in each type of activity;

Priorities: priorities in the actions must be clearly established to avoid wasting human and financial resources.

Recommendations: Eugénio Di Maria (reporter expert theme seminar 3)

Define and Share the Notion of Outdoor Sports

- a hard core of activities must be defined, based on the practice of sports, recognising the important benefits on physical as well as on mental health;
- while also accepting a "variable" definition, to also take into consideration other complementary segments relating to leisure and to tourism or relating to the diversity of perceptions and of territorial and economic interests in the different European countries.

Survey those Practising and the Consumers on a European Level

- exploit the data from surveys already done, both quantitatively and qualitatively in the different countries: inventory and compare the existing studies and the methodological processes, measure the national and regional trends, identify the motivations and the practices;
- launch an important study in the European Union, including the motivating factors and giving a special place to the young, on the basis of a common methodology, agreed upon, optimised and reproducible.

Implement a European Internet Platform on Outdoor sports

- favour the distribution of technical and practical information to the widest number of those practising, both regular and potential ones, by sharing information on a European level on the sites, the moments and the resources;
- provide a tool to promote outdoor sports.

Immediate Stakes: ease access to the practice and give greater importance to the practice of the young

- utilising outdoor sports to improve the daily life of young Europeans: links between the time spent in school and out of school and between the urban and outer-urban environments, (peri-urban and / or rural), incite in-school practice in countries where it is not mandatory, favour the exchanges and the accompanying cultural or linguistic aspects to promote the educational benefits of outdoor sports.

THEME SEMINAR 4: OUTDOOR SPORTS PROVISION, A FACTOR IN REGIONAL GROWTH

Outdoor sports represent an important lever of development in territories working within the Europe 2020 strategy. The challenge of territorial development policies is to open the different approaches and to bring them together, in coherence with the integrated, territorial initiatives.

In France, the legislative definition of "outdoor sports" has meant working toward a common objective and with a leader. Having a European definition of the concept of outdoor sports is a first step toward favouring the integrated territorial development of outdoor sports.

Recommendations : Gérard Peltre (reporter expert theme seminar 4)

Favouring the Integrated Territorial Development of Outdoor Sports

- define the notion of "project territory" based on a comparative study in specifying the governing mode of these projects;
- integrate in the regulations of European funds (ESF, ERDF, EAFRD) à "outdoor sports as a factor of intelligent growth, sustainable and inclusive", ensuring that the subsidised projects are integrated into a more global policy of the territory;
- ease the public-private partnership in territorial projects, based on the example in the UK;
- implement an evaluation of the efficiency of the financing;
- work on an evaluation model of the global impact of outdoor sports in a territory, in order to propose evaluation indicators recognised by all.

Professionalise the stakeholders and accompany the integrated territorial development engineering

- develop initial and continuing education on the integrated territorial development of outdoor sports, supported by the territories, the state and the sports movement and the universities;
- develop educational programs with all the actors of a territory, all sectors (elected officials, local government technicians, the state, associations...) and ensure the accompanying of those trained in the implementation of their project;
- integrate a line of educational support into the European programmes INTERREG, ESF, ERDF, EAFRD, to provide training for the carriers of projects and the partners;
- make an inventory of the research on the territorial development of outdoor sports in Europe, in view of identifying the issues not yet treated and to finance university research on these subjects.

Mobilise and Raise Awareness of the Stakeholders

- always be aware of working within a shared action and making it be known;
- in each country, put into place a resource centre on the territorial development of outdoor sports that documents the good practices and initiatives, builds tools with and for the stakeholders in the development outdoor sports. The French example of the National Resources Centre for Outdoor Sports is of interest and should be developed on a European scale, which requires capitalisation and animation;
- following the example of the European network of rural development, implement a European network of outdoor sports, based on a network of national resource centres.

TOWARD A EUROPEAN NETWORK OF OUTDOOR SPORTS

Mutualise Experiences

The need to share significant experiences between stakeholders developing outdoor sports in Europe, arose upon the preparation of the 1st Nature & Sports Euro'Meet.

The recommendations emanating from this work emphasized the necessity to create a tool.

Subsequently the French National Resources Centre for Outdoor Sports (PRNSN) presented the "ENOS Experiences", a tool for collecting and sharing experiences. It will open at the end of October in French and in English at www.nature-sports.eu. Access to this tool is open and is free.

Already 120 experiences are referenced! They are from the call for experiences, in preparation of the 2011 Nature & Sports Euro'Meet.

2012 will be the year deploying this collection tool throughout the European Union countries. The objective is clear: **collect 500 quality experiences before the second edition of the Nature & Sports Euro'Meet 2013**, to ensure a permanent exchange between the outdoor sports stakeholders in all of Europe.

Similarly, the PRNSN will open a forum in November so that the exchanges between the European stakeholders of outdoor sports continue.

<https://www.forum.nature-sports.eu>

European Network of Outdoor Sports (ENOS)

Within the preparatory work in the sports domain the PRNSN (FR) and six of their European partners, the University of Cologne (GER), El Anillo (SP), the University of Prague (CZ), Skills Active (UK), Sport Northern Ireland (UK), Vuokatti National Institute of Sports (FI), have submitted a project with the aim of "structuring the network for the sustainable and managed development of outdoor sports for all" (cf synthesis enclosed).

Nature & Sports Euro'Meet 2013

The 6th September 2011 in Brussels, the European Steering Committee selected the city of **Liptovsky Mikulas** (Slovakia) to organise the 2nd Nature & Sports Euro'Meet 2013.

Meet you in **Slovakia**,
from the 2nd to 5th of October 2013!

