



ENOS

European Network
of Outdoor Sports

Manifesto for the outdoors

A RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Firstly, we recognise that there have been many individuals and communities who have been very significantly impacted by the current pandemic and we are cognisant of the tragic loss of life and also the damage to the economy.

We recognise that across Europe (and the World) there have been a variety of approaches and differences in restrictions and national factors which have affected the extent to which populations have experienced 'lockdown' and other measures to limit the spread of coronavirus. Therefore, we do not

want to promote any messages in support of outdoor sports that may be contrary to national guidance or legislation.

We recognise that governments and authorities are promoting physical activity even in the home.

We recognise that social distancing is likely to be a requirement for an unknown period of time (differing by country). As a consequence of this, outdoor sports participation may have to take a different format for a period of time to that which was done previously.

However, the outdoors can accommodate social distancing and therefore provides a low risk environment for sport and Health Enhancing Physical Activity.

We recognise that changing restrictions may be both staged and cyclic in nature with any further waves of the disease recurring and so any recommendations may need to be implemented slowly and carefully and on a number of occasions as knowledge and science progresses.

The impact of current Coronavirus restrictions and 'lockdowns' on participation rates at a European level is likely to be highly varied with some countries allowing certain levels of exercise out-with of the home while others restricting it. However, there is a view from within the outdoor sector that there will be a greater desire for access to nature and the outdoors in the period following the lockdowns. A number of ENOS members have articulated this.

It is the view of ENOS that the outdoors and natural areas can accommodate the requirements of social distancing, providing the opportunity for people to safely enjoy these areas, provided that appropriate management is in place to support safe usage. The management requirement would vary based on the area and its usage, but there is the potential to explore safe usage subject to compliance with guidelines and local policies.

In light of the issues and factors highlighted within this document, a series of broad guiding principles and recommendations are provided below. These are indicative only and need to be considered in accordance with national policy, legislation and restrictions, and guidance from local stakeholders and landowners.

1. Access to natural areas and green spaces has very significant and unique benefits to health and well-being for people of all ages

The provision of access to, and management of, the natural environment should be recognised as a low cost and low risk priority, forming part of post-lockdown and future social distancing policies.

2.

Physical activity should be strongly encouraged as lockdown measures or restrictions are eased

If practicable, activities should take place outdoors. Outdoor environments have the dual advantage of providing greater health benefits to participants and have a reduced risk of virus transmission in comparison to indoor environments.

3.

Promote positive messaging regarding outdoor sports and local opportunities to participate

This could be key to foster citizens compliance to any further restriction measures.

4.

There should be active communication between stakeholders for the use of natural spaces

Policy makers should engage effectively and ensure good communication with sports federations and agencies to see how activities can be safely re-started and re-energised. Effective communication is key to ensuring that regional regulations are adhered to and that the public know what is allowed and what is not.

5. Outdoor sports should be practiced within the personal skills boundary

There can be risks associated with outdoor recreation and sport. It is essential that everyone is aware of the risk and consider ways to mitigate these. It should be communicated that people need to take part well within their capabilities to reduce injury risks, so they do not place additional demands on emergency and healthcare services.

7. Clear guidance should be provided to outdoor sports professionals

Health regulations or guidelines should be provided to outdoor sports professionals to support the development and management of safe operating practices and allow businesses to be re-started.

6. Outdoor sports federations should be involved in policy development

European and national federations for outdoor sports should prepare policies and protocols to communicate how they plan to implement social distancing in their activities. European collaboration and the appropriate sharing of elements of good practice is recommended, although national differences will need to be factored in.

8. Provide support measures for struggling outdoor sports businesses

Outdoor sports in many areas, including vulnerable and sparsely populated territories, are a key part of the local economy and support the community. Therefore there needs to be support for the many outdoor sports businesses and jobs that are at risk in such rural communities.

9. Promote opportunities to participate at a local level

As lock downs are eased, encouraging participation at a local level may help to reduce the issue of overcrowding and recurrences of Covid-19 at popular recreation areas (“tourist” / “honeypot” sites). The re-opening of more popular and tourist sites will need to be done in conjunction with local communities and in a carefully managed manner.

10. Any Covid-19 containment exit measures should be developed with equality of opportunity in mind

There needs to be recognition that there are people facing significant health risks associated with inactive lifestyles, being older, more susceptible to disease and disabled.

11.

Promote low risk activities and areas for those most vulnerable from the disease

As containment and inactivity may be significantly extended for people at higher risk for severe illness including older people and those with a long term health condition or disability, safe and locally based outdoor activities should be promoted, and supported by risk guidance.

12.

Interventions need to be developed that can support the increase of local health enhancing physical activity in the outdoors

Outdoor activities can support lifelong and sustainable activities especially for people that are socially disadvantaged and may not currently participate.

**The combination
of physical
activity and
access to nature
will be of very
significant
importance to
many people
as the situation
eases and
will support
restoration and
mental healing**

ENOS recognises that the current situation is having enormous impacts across Europe (and the World).

We look forward to the gradual but full restoration of the range of activities, opportunities for people to #BeActive, engage with nature and for outdoor sports businesses to flourish.

The suddenness and the ruthlessness of this crisis is such as to a change in perceptions or attitudes, habits that people adopt on a more permanent basis, including greater appreciation and value of the outdoors, healthy and active lifestyle, environmental sustainability.



ENOS

European Network of Outdoor Sports

The European Network of Outdoor Sports was established in 2013 to represent the interests of outdoor sports in the broadest sense at a European level. The ENOS membership is very cross-sectoral involving national and regional sports development agencies, European and National Federations of sport, local authorities, academic institutions and grass roots sports organisations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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