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Promoting a Strategic Approach to EU Sport Diplomacy

final report

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Promoting a Strategic Approach to EU Sport Diplomacy

Final Report

December 2021

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Introduction

Sports policy is somewhat of 'a new kid on the block' for the EU. It only acquired a competence in sport following the adoption of Lisbon Treaty in 2007, in force since 2009. This is not to say the EU lacks experience in sporting matters. For many years, the EU institutions have grappled with the issue of how to reconcile the specificity of sport with the demands of EU law. This debate is ongoing, but not the subject of our enquiry. Our focus is to assist the EU in considering the merits of adopting a sport diplomacy strategy, first mooted by a High-Level Group on Sport Diplomacy in 2016. Four members of that group form part of the research team for this study.[1] EU action since that report indicates enthusiasm for sport diplomacy. However, to act effectively in this relatively new field of EU activity, the EU institutions and the Member States require an evidence-base.

The aim of our project was to undertake primary research and stage a series of Multiplier Sport Events (MSE) to provide such evidence on the efficacy of sport as a diplomatic tool. During our six MSEs, we invited a wide range of actors to share their thoughts and experiences on the practice of sport diplomacy. These events reinforced our view of the value of sport in helping the EU achieve its external relations ambitions. In this study, we claim that now is the time for the EU to act more strategically in this field and adopt an *EU Sport Diplomacy Strategy*.

Our project received generous financial support under the EU's Erasmus+ Programme (Collaborative Partnerships). The Erasmus+ Programme is a great friend of sport and will be a valuable resource assisting the implementation of an EU sport diplomacy strategy. The project commenced in January 2019 and concluded in December 2021 following a 12-month Covid-19 extension. The project was led by Edge Hill University (UK) and the project partners were the TMC Asser Institute (Netherlands), the North Macedonian NGO TAKT (Together Advancing Common Trust), the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Spain), ESSCA School of Management (France), the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Law (Croatia), and the Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium). We co-operated with our associate partner, the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) from the Council of Europe and we received academic support from our academic reviewers, Associate Professor Stuart Murray (Bond University,

[1] Professors Parrish, Perez-Gonzalez, Sonntag and Zintz.

Australia, and the Academy of Sport, Edinburgh University, UK) and Dr Simon Rofe (SOAS University of London, UK). We are very grateful for this support and to the Erasmus+ Programme for facilitating their involvement in our MSEs. The views expressed in this report are those of the research team.

Our MSEs were held in Zagreb (June 2019), Madrid (September 2019), Strasbourg (November 2019), The Hague (March 2020), Skopje (November 2021) with our final flagship event held in Brussels (November 2021). Our interim report was published as a special edition of *Sport and Citizenship*. We are grateful to *Sport and Citizenship* for its support.

The study is multi-authored. Chapter 1 (*EU Sport Diplomacy: Background and Context*) is authored by Professor Richard Parrish and Professor Thierry Zintz. Chapter 2 (*Best Practice in Sport Diplomacy: National Examples*) is authored by Associate Professor Vanja Smokvina and Associate Professor Stuart Murray. Chapter 3 (*Towards an EU Organizational Culture of Sport Diplomacy*) is authored by Associate Professor Carmen Perez-Gonzalez. Chapter 4 (*Transnational Actors in Sport Diplomacy: Perspectives of Cooperation*) is authored by Professor Albrecht Sonntag. Chapter 5 (*EU Sport Diplomacy, Mega-Sporting-Events and Human Rights*) is authored by Dr Antoine Duval. Chapter 6 (*Grassroots Sport Diplomacy Initiatives*) is authored by Silvija Mitevska. The recommendations reflect the views of the authors.

Chapter One

EU Sport Diplomacy: Background and Context

1. Introduction

"*Sports diplomacy is a new term that describes an old practice: the unique power of sport to bring people, nations and communities closer together via a shared love of physical pursuits*".[2] Whereas in the above quotation, Murray refers to sports diplomacy (in the plural), our study employs the singular, reflecting the common usage in official EU documents. Regardless of the preference, the same phenomenon is being observed and is being subject to greater academic scrutiny.[3] This literature has not only strengthened our conceptual understanding of the issue,[4] it has also highlighted the success of sport in diverting conflict, assisting with peace negotiations and fostering greater cultural understanding, while at the same time revealing that sport can fuel or be a source of conflict.[5] Sport diplomacy therefore presents two faces, or "*two-halves*"[6] and whilst it generally represents a low risk and low cost method for states to achieve diplomatic objectives, the EU needs to be aware of the challenges that it faces in piecing together and implementing a sport diplomacy strategy. As discussed throughout our study, these challenges are not only organisational but also relate to questions of how to adopt a values-based approach when faced with the *realpolitik* of international affairs.

The academic literature has both reflected and encouraged a growing practice across the globe in which a number of countries are increasingly employing sport to amplify diplomatic messages. Our review of good practices, presented later, highlights examples of where sport can seek to reconcile estranged relations between states and peoples, promote the image and

[2] Murray, S. (2020) Sports Diplomacy: History, Theory, and Practice. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies.* Accessed at: https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-542 (16 December 2021).

[3] For a review of the literature see Towards an EU Sport Diplomacy (TES-D) (2021), *Sport Diplomacy: A Literature Review of Scholarly and Policy Sources*. Accessed at: https://www.tes-diplomacy.org/resources-io2/ (17 December 2021).

[4] See for example, Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, and Rofe, J. S. (2016) Sport and diplomacy: a global diplomacy framework, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 7, 212-230.

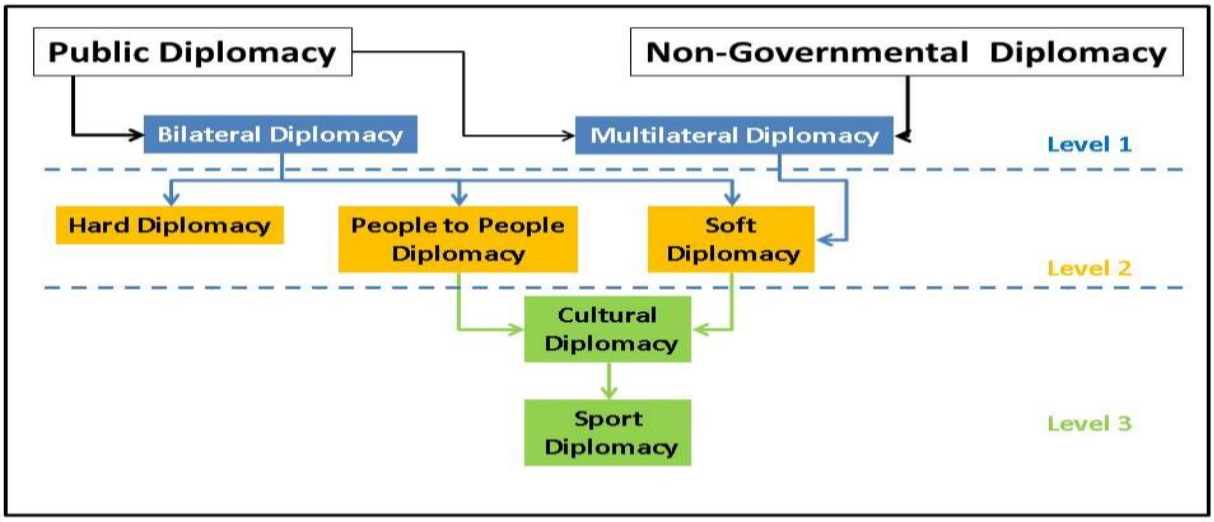
[5] Jackson. S. (2013) The contested terrain of sport diplomacy in a globalizing world, *International Area Studies Review*, 16(3), 274–284.

[6] Murray S. (2012) The Two Halves of Sports-Diplomacy, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 23(3) 576-592.

reputation of a state, employ sport for peace and development gains, and encourage new economic opportunities. As some of the EU's main partners and competitors are employing sport diplomacy, the question should be asked, why is the EU not doing so? With such a rich sporting tradition, is it not time the EU turned its attention to this method of advancing its interests in the world? Before answering this question, it is worth reflecting on the location of sport diplomacy within the wider diplomatic field.

2. Conceptualising Sport Diplomacy

In recent years, the EU has indeed signalled its intention to make diplomacy and sport diplomacy two strong axes of its policy, both foreign and internal. The graphic below positions sport diplomacy within the wider diplomacy field and highlights, amongst other things, the connection with public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy.[7]



An attempt to position sport diplomacy in the general context of diplomacy

[7] This graphic was first published in the Erasmus+ funded study, *Grassroots Sport Diplomacy: Overview, Mapping and Definitions*. Accessed: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2wqkxi39sjm6my4/AABBGvByJV7K67L5b8bNBX1Qa?dl=0&preview=Grassroots+Sport+Diplomacy+-+Overview+Mapping+and+Definitions.pdf (17 December 2021).

Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy refers to attempts by states to manage the international environment and achieve foreign policy goals by engaging foreign publics.[8] It concerns "*the mechanisms short of war used by an international actor (state, international organization, non-governmental organization, multi-national cooperation or other player on the world stage) to manage the international environment*".[9] Within the realm of public diplomacy, a number of common traits can be highlighted: (1) it is a key mechanism through which nations foster mutual trust and productive relationships; (2) it has state centric foundations but it has evolved so that a multitude of actors and networks are now involved; (3) it aims at promoting the national interest and advancing the nation's foreign policy goals; (4) it rests on the leverage of soft power resources.[10] Coined by Nye, soft power refers to "*the nation's ability to obtain its desired outcome not through coercion or payment, but through attraction, particularly through the attraction of its culture, its political values and its domestic and foreign policies*".[11]

Cultural Diplomacy

Public diplomacy mainly refers to Government sponsored programs intended to inform or influence public opinion in other countries. Commonly employed instruments include publications, film, TV and radio. Embassies and diplomats play a major role in this one-way form of communication. Whereas public diplomacy consists of a nation's attempt to "*explain itself to the world*", cultural diplomacy refers to "*the use of creative expression and exchanges of ideas, information, and people to increase mutual understanding*".[12] It establishes a greater two-way form of communication with other countries with a greater range of actors being involved, including private institutions and NGOs. The EU is no stranger to cultural diplomacy having made progress in this field in recent years.[13] Over the years, it has also acquired

[8] Dubinsky, Y. (2019) From soft power to sports diplomacy: a theoretical and conceptual discussion, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 15, 156–164, at 156.
[9] Cull, N. J. (2009) *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*, Figueroa Press.
[10] Nye, J. (2008) Public diplomacy and soft power. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 94-109.
[11] Nye, J. (1990) Soft Power. *Foreign Policy*, 80, 153–171, and Nye J. (2004) *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, PublicAffairs Books.
[12] Schneider, C. (2006), Cultural diplomacy: hard to define, but you'd know it if you saw it, *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol.XIII, Issue 1, 2006, at 191.
[13] For political developments see: European Commission (2016), *Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*, Join/2016/029, accessed at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN%3A2016%3A29%3AFIN (17 December 2021).

considerable experience in the area of educational diplomacy with its Erasmus+ programme being the embodiment of its soft power.[14]

Sport Diplomacy

Sport diplomacy falls within the framework described above, but one needs to guard against the assumption that the world has only just discovered its potential. As already highlighted, sport diplomacy might be a relatively new term, but it has ancient roots, illustrated most prominently by the Olympic Truce in Ancient Greece in the eighth century B.C. Since then, history has been littered with countless examples of sport being used, either strategically or sporadically, as an expression of state diplomacy, thus dispelling the myth that sport and politics do not mix. A number of incidences are well known to readers such as the 'ping-pong diplomacy' between China and the United States, 'cricket diplomacy' between India and Pakistan, 'hockey diplomacy' between Canada and the USSR, and 'baseball diplomacy' between Cuba and the United States (U.S.). As Rofe observes, "*when traditional diplomacy (be it international or domestic) does not appear to provide an avenue for change, athletes and others have used the tremendous audiences at sporting events as a platform for their message*".[15]

These often-cited examples are perhaps known as the public face of sport diplomacy, but they are "*sporadic, opportunistic and, arguably, somewhat clumsy*" and tend to be associated with 'traditional sport diplomacy'.[16] Whilst this type of sport diplomacy is still practiced, in the modern era states have adopted a more nuanced and strategic approach. In this regard, our examples of good practice presented below highlight the strategic approaches adopted by Australia and the U.S., in which sport diplomacy is no longer understood as state diplomacy

For academic discussion see Carta, C. and Higgot, R. (eds.) (2020) *Cultural Diplomacy in Europe: Between the Domestic and the International*, Palgrave Macmillan.

[14] See for example Ferreira-Pereira, L and Mourato Pinto (2021), *Soft Power in the European Union's Strategic Partnership Diplomacy: The Erasmus Plus Programme*, in Ferreira-Pereira, L. and Smith, M. (eds) The European Union's Strategic Partnerships, 69-94, Palgrave Macmillan and Piros, S. and Koops, J. (2020) *Towards a sustainable approach to EU education diplomacy? The case of capacity-building in the eastern Neighbourhood*, in Carta, C. and Higgot, R. (eds.) Cultural Diplomacy in Europe: Between the Domestic and the International, 113-138, Palgrave Macmillan.

[15] Rofe, J.S. (ed.) (2018), *Sport and Diplomacy: Games within games*, Manchester University Press, at 2-3.

[16] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 61.

with a sporting backdrop, but rather an attempt to extend the appeal of a nation's people and culture to third countries through the cultivation of people-to-people links, practiced by a wider number of players. As Murray explains, from this perspective, 'modern' sport diplomacy can be understood as the "*conscious, strategic and regular*" use of sport, sportspeople, sporting events and non-state sporting actors by the state to build long-term mutually beneficial 'people-to-people' partnerships with third countries and societies, particularly where relations have become estranged.[17] The question for the EU is, which diplomatic turn does it want to take – traditional or modern?

3. The Road to EU Sport Diplomacy

The EU is an economic, as opposed to a military, power. Soft power, the "*power to persuade and attract*" is, arguably, an underused tool of the EU's external relations policies.[18] At the same time, sport is one of Europe's most appealing attractions to third-country nationals and Europe is the home of some of the world's most recognisable sporting leagues, competitions, clubs and athletes. The problem for the EU is that third country nationals tend to regard the *EU* in economic and political terms, whereas *Europe* is thought of with reference to geography, history, society, culture and sport.[19] By adopting a strategic approach to sport diplomacy, the EU can realign these perceptions amongst external audiences, thereby harnessing the power of sport to make the EU 'brand' more attractive.

In doing so, the EU will join a number of states across the globe, including some EU Member States, who routinely employ sport to amplify diplomatic messages. The question for the EU, and one to be addressed in our study, is how should the EU proceed? As a sui generis form of political association, the EU is not simply the reconstruction of the state on a larger scale. Will sport diplomacy work as well in a supranational context as it does in a national setting? What follows is a chronology of attempts made by the institutions of the EU to plot a path to the development of EU sport diplomacy. Will EU sport diplomacy become the preserve of the diplomat, civil servant, European Commissioner, minister and MEP – a reconstruction of

[17] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 94.
[18] Pigman G. A. and Rofe J. S. (2014) Sport and diplomacy: an introduction, *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics*, 17(9), 1095-1097, at 1096.
[19] For example, see: PPMI, NCRE and NFG (2015), *Analysis of the Perception of the EU and EU's Policies Abroad*.

traditional sport diplomacy at an EU level, or will its approach to sport diplomacy become imbued with a more strategic dimension, with a distinct non-state and grassroots character?

An early example of EU diplomacy structured around sport came in 2006 when the European Commission and FIFA signed a Memorandum of Understanding to make football a force for development in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries.[20] The President of the European Commission at the time, José Manuel Barroso said: "*Football has a great potential of building bridges between people. This is particularly important when we look forward to the first FIFA World Cup ever to take place in South Africa in 2010. Through this initiative, football will contribute to enhancing global capabilities for development*." This initiative highlighted not only the potential for the EU to employ sport to advance foreign policy goals, but it also revealed the potential for sports bodies to act in a diplomatic space in order to secure their own political objectives in terms of relations with public authorities. In recent years, the international sports movement has used this diplomatic strength to attempt to leverage concessions from the EU in relation to the protection of the autonomy and specificity of sport and as a means of seeking safeguards around the perseveration of the so-called 'European model of sport'. The 2006 initiative, repeated in later years, stands as a reminder that private actors as well as public bodies practice sport diplomacy.[21]

A year later, in the 2007 White Paper on Sport, the European Commission hinted at the potential for a more systematic deployment of sport diplomacy. The White Paper included a section on 'Sharing our values with other parts of the world' (s.2.7) in which the Commission stated it would "*promote the use of sport as a tool in its development policy*" and would "*include, wherever appropriate, sport-related issues such as… cooperation with partner countries*".[22] At the time, the section received little comment as the Lisbon Treaty, for which the White Paper had been prepared for, had not yet entered into force.

In many ways, the Lisbon Treaty was the main political and legal breakthrough for EU sport diplomacy. The Treaty included Article 165 TFEU which, amongst other things stated: "*The*

[20] European Commission (2006), *European Commission and FIFA sign a memorandum of understanding for football in Africa, in the Caribbean and Pacific Countries*, IP/06/968, Brussels, 9 July 2006. Accessed at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-06-968_en.htm?locale=en (17 December 2021).
[21] See for example, Beacom A (2012) *International Diplomacy and the Olympic Movement: The New Mediators*, Palgrave Macmillan.
[22] European Commission, *White Paper on Sport*, COM(2007), 391 final (2007).

Union shall foster co-operation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of sport". As the EU operates under the principle of conferral, it can only act within the powers conferred upon it by the Member States. Article 165 settled any political and legal doubts regarding the EU's ability to use sport as part of its external relations policies and it has acted as the basis for the EU's subsequent activity in this field.

In 2010, a Group of Independent European Sports Experts, appointed by Commissioner Vassilliou, advised the Commission on priorities in the field of sport and recommended the use of sport in the context of the EU's external relations policies. One member of the current research team (Professor Parrish) was a member of the group. In the 2011 Communication on Sport, the Commission took forward this recommendation and committed itself to "*identify the scope for international cooperation in the field of sport with a focus on European third countries, in particular candidate countries and potential candidates, and the Council of Europe*".[23] Also in 2011, sport was for the first time incorporated into the EU's Erasmus+ programme. This equipped the EU with the capacity to deliver practical sport diplomacy initiatives, although at the time, the participation of third countries was restricted within the programme and so its value could not be fully realised.[24]

In 2015, in a move signaling a personal commitment to advance EU sport diplomacy, European Commissioner Navracsics established two High Level Groups, one on Sport Diplomacy and the second on Grassroots Sport. Both groups reported their findings in 2016.[25] The Sport Diplomacy group advanced recommendations in the context of (1) EU external relations (2) promotion of EU values in the context of major sporting events and advocacy and (3) the development of an organizational culture of sport diplomacy. Four members of the current research team were members of the High-Level Group (Professors Parrish, Perez-Gonzalez, Sonntag and Zintz).

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[23] European Commission (2011), *Developing the European Dimension in Sport*, COM(2011) 12 final, Brussels, 18/1/2011. Accessed at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0012:FIN:EN:PDF (17 December 2021).

[24] In addition to a number of practice-based projects, the Erasmus+ programme has funded three studies exploring the development of EU sport diplomacy: *Grassroots Sport Diplomacy* (2018-19), *Promoting a Strategic Approach to EU Sport Diplomacy* (2019-21) and *Towards an EU Sport Diplomacy* (2020-21).

[25] European Commission (2016), *High Level Group on Sport Diplomacy*, June. Accessed at: http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/sport/policy/cooperation/documents/290616-hlg-sd-final-report_en.pdf(17 December 2021) and European Commission (2016), *High Level Group on Grassroots Sport*, June. Accessed at: http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/sport/policy/cooperation/documents/290616-hlg-gs-final-report_en.pdf (17 December 2021).

Having become established as an area of potential interest for the EU, the first political steps towards EU sport diplomacy were taken by the Member States. In May 2016, the Council of the European Union adopted Council Conclusions on '*Enhancing Integrity, Transparency and Good Governance in Major Sport Events*'.[26] Within the Conclusions, the Ministers recognised the value of hosting major sporting events for transmitting a positive image and that the potential for joint hosting of events within the EU exists.

Then in November 2016, the Council of the European Union adopted Council Conclusions on '*Sport Diplomacy'* under the Slovak Presidency.[27] The Conclusions made a series of recommendations to take forward the EU sport diplomacy agenda including, *inter alia*: raising awareness of sport diplomacy in the EU; encouraging cooperation between the EU, public authorities and the sports movement; using sport to promote positive sporting and European values; using sport diplomacy to advance economic objectives; maintaining sport diplomacy on the EU's political agenda; exploring the possibility of using Sport Ambassadors; promoting evidence base research and activities; using sport within the framework of Accession, Association, Cooperation and European Neighbourhood agreements; and funding sport diplomacy projects, including engaging third countries in the European Week of Sport.

Further 'softening up' of the issue was required and to facilitate this the European Commission staged an EU Sport Diplomacy seminar in Brussels in December 2016. The seminar brought together diplomats, politicians, civil servants and members of the sports community to discuss the recommendations of the High-Level Group.[28] A second seminar was staged in Brussels in December 2017.[29] The seminar adopted a series of conclusions on: opening the European Week of Sport to Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans states; encouraging the mobility of athletes and coaches; and how to use sport to increase the international position of a country.

[26] Council of the European Union (2016), *Council Conclusions on enhancing integrity, transparency and good governance in major sport events*, 9644/16, Brussels, 1/6/2016. Accessed at: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9644-2016-INIT/en/pdf (17 December 2021).
[27] Council of the European Union (2016), *Council Conclusions on Sport Diplomacy*, 14279/16, Brussels, 23/11/16. Accessed at: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14279-2016-INIT/en/pdf (17 December 2021).
[28] European Commission (2016), *Seminar on Sport Diplomacy*. Outcomes, 6/12/16. Accessed here: https://ec.europa.eu/sport/sites/sport/files/seminar-sport-diplomacy.pdf (17 December 2021).
[29] European Commission (2017), *Seminar on Sport Diplomacy*, 6/12/2017. Accessed at: https://ec.europa.eu/sport/sites/sport/files/report-sport-diplomacy-seminar-2017.pdf (17 December 2021).

Following the adoption of Article 165 TFEU, the EU embarked on a series of multi-annual work plans for sport. In the 2017-2020 EU Work Plan for Sport, sport diplomacy was identified as a priority theme.[30] Paragraph 8 acknowledged, "*the need to cooperate with third countries, in particular candidate countries and potential candidates to the EU, to promote European values through sport diplomacy, and with the competent international organisations in the field of sport, including the Council of Europe, WADA and the World Health Organization*".

In November 2017, EU sport diplomacy took one of its first practical steps with the integration of sport into EU-China High Level People to People Dialogue (HPPD) which has been taking place since 2012.[31] Commissioner Navracsics and Chinese Vice-Premier Liu Yandong met in Shanghai.

Responding to the recommendation of the High-Level Group and the Slovak Conclusions that an evidence-based approach to sport diplomacy be adopted, in 2018, the Commission published a study on '*Sport Diplomacy, Identifying Good Practices'*.[32] The study was carried out in the framework of the 2017-2020 EU Work Plan for Sport and highlighted examples of best practice. It made four recommendations: (1) that capacity building workshops be held (2) sport for development should be identified as an explicit priority in relevant EU funding instruments (3) larger scale research should be undertaken on the current state of play and (4) actions are developed to support dissemination of and knowledge sharing on good practices.

A further step at operationalising EU sport diplomacy was taken with the amendments made to the 2018 Erasmus+ funding criteria which facilitated participation from third countries. Until that change, projects whose proposal did not demonstrate that the Partner-Country participant brought specific added value to the partnership would be rejected on eligibility grounds. However, this is no longer the case as now, if the Partner Country's participation meets the

[30] Council of the European Union (2017), *Work Plan for Sport (1 July 2017 – 31 December 2020)*, 9639/17, Brussels, 24 May 2017. Accessed at: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9639-2017-INIT/en/pdf (17 December 2021).
[31] See European Commission (2017), *EU and China strength cooperation on education, culture, youth, gender equality and sport*, IP/17/4548, Brussels, 15/11/2017. Accessed at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-4548_en.htm (17 December 2021).
[32] ECORYS (2017) *Sport Diplomacy. Identifying Good Practices, a final report to the European Commission*. Accessed at: https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0efc09a6-025e-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-65111809 (17 December 2021).

criteria, they are treated in the same way as the other partners.[33] This change was also recommended by the High-Level Group on Sport Diplomacy. The internationalisation of Erasmus+ and the growing significance of EU sport diplomacy was further evidenced by changes made to the European Week of Sport programme. From 2018, this was extended to permit participation from Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership states.[34]

Further political impetus came in June 2018 with the adoption by the Council of the European Union of Council Conclusions on '*Promoting the Common Values of the EU Through Sport*'.[35] In a wide-ranging set of Conclusions, the Council highlighted the role of sport in promoting common values among Member States, and also with third countries. At paragraph 28, the Council invited the Commission to "*include sport as part of external relations, where appropriate to promote the common values of the EU, for example through including mobility and capacity building or supporting sport integrity, as well as integrating it in the discussions and High Level Dialogues with third countries*". At paragraph 38, the Council invited the sports movement to "*continue developing mutually enriching relations and exchanges between grassroots sport organisations from EU countries and third countries, sharing values and principles, and illustrating the diplomatic value of such people-to-people relations*".

EU sport diplomacy took another concrete step in February 2018 with the agreement between the European Commission and UEFA adopting the *Arrangement for Cooperation between the European Commission and the Union of the European Football Associations (UEFA)*.[36] This Arrangement for Cooperation added to that agreed between the parties in 2014.[37] The objectives of the 2019 agreement are: (1) to promote values and principles common in Europe (2) to strengthen cooperation in matters of long-term interest to football and sport and (3) to improve the overall financial health of European football. The staging of EURO 2020 was

[33] See: Erasmus+ sport goes international. Accessed at: https://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/20170724-erasmus-plus-sport-goes-international_en (17 December 2021).
[34] European Commission (2018), Press Release: *European Week of Sport, 23-30 September*. Accessed at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_AGENDA-18-5910_en.htm (17 December 2021).
[35] Council of the European Union (2018), *Promoting the Common Values of the EU Through Sport*, 2018/C196/06. Accessed at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2018:196:FULL&from=FR (17 December 2021).
[36] European Commission (2018), *Annex to the Commission Decision adopting the Arrangement for Cooperation between the European Commission and the Union of the European Football Associations (UEFA)*, C(2018) 876 final, Brussels, 19/2/2018. Accessed at: https://www.uefa.com/MultimediaFiles/Download/EuroExperience/uefaorg/EuropeanUnion/02/53/98/34/2539834_DOWNLOAD.pdf (17 December 2021).
[37] C(2014), 7378 final.

highlighted as a key vehicle for achieving the first objective. In 2018, UEFA also agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council of Europe.[38]

During the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU (January - June 2018), sport diplomacy was the focus of a high-level discussion at the EU Sport Forum in Sofia (March 2018). Sport diplomacy was retained in the EU Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024[39] and between January and June 2021, the Portuguese Presidency of the EU prioritised sport diplomacy and held a Council policy debate on the subject in May 2021[40] and staged a two-day sport diplomacy conference in Lisbon in June. At the policy debate in Brussels, the vast majority of Member States expressed a willingness to progress the development of a sport diplomacy strategy for the EU.

Finally, in 2021, a study on EU sport policy commissioned by the European Parliament highlighted the limited role of the Parliament in the development of an EU approach, although it did note the Parliament's role in extending financing instruments to third countries.[41] The subsequent Parliamentary Report, of the same name, conceded that the Parliament should play a more active role in the field of EU sport diplomacy.[42] Without expressly making the connection, the Parliament's report highlighted the potential of sport diplomacy in addressing a number of challenges including, inter alia, the achievement of the EU's strategic goals, the question of human rights and non-discrimination in sport, and the call for the Commission to establish a network of ambassadors for sport.

[38] Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). Accessed at: https://www.uefa.com/MultimediaFiles/Download/uefaorg/General/02/56/17/27/2561727_DOWNLOAD.pdf (17 December 2021).
[39] Council of the European Union (2020), *Work Plan for Sport (1 January 2021 – 30 June 2024)*, 2020/C 419/01, accessed at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:42020Y1204(01)&from=EN (17 December 2021).
[40] Council of the European Union (2021), *Sport diplomacy: Promoting Europe's interests and values in the world*, 8128/21. Accessed at: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8128-2021-INIT/en/pdf (17 December 2021).
[41] Mittag, J and Naul, R. (2021) *EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward*, European Parliament, Research for CULT Committee – Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels. Accessed at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/236742/PE652-251_Study-EU-Sport-Policy.pdf (16 December 2021).
[42] European Parliament (2021), *Report on EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward* (2021/2058(INI)). Accessed at: http://isca-web.org/files/Report_on_EU_Sports_Policy-consolidated_version.pdf (17 December 2021).

4. Conclusion

It is clear from the above review that the EU retains a desire to employ sport within its diplomatic repertoire. However, thus far, its approach has been somewhat piecemeal and lacking strategic orientation. The arguments for becoming more strategic are strong: the EU and its Member States have a strong sporting heritage; the EU has a maturing foreign policy and existing expertise and capacity to advance sports related goals; and without a more concerted effort, the EU is being left behind by some of its partners and competitors who now routinely deploy sport diplomacy. The risks are generally low, but significant. The EU needs to act in a way that complements Member States' sport diplomacy strategies; it needs to reflect on the messaging so that publics, both within and outside the EU, see this activity as legitimate; it requires investment so that 'diplomats in tracksuits' carry appropriate messages and so that the issue is mainstreamed and retained on the political agenda; it needs to balance co-operation with, and distance from, sports bodies, so that relationships do not become too cosy particularly as the Commission is the 'guardian of the Treaties'; and the impact of sport diplomacy needs measuring so that the public can be assured that expenditure represents value-for-money.

Chapter Two

Best Practice in Sport Diplomacy: National Examples

1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of good practices in the field of sport diplomacy.[43] In the chapter, numerous models of sport diplomacy are listed. Special attention is given to the Australian model of sport diplomacy because it is regarded as the world standard in the strategic use of sport as a 'means to an end', be that policy, development or human security outcomes.[44]

As discussed in chapter one, sport diplomacy can be succinctly defined as the *conscious*, *strategic* and *regular* use of sport, sportspeople, sporting events and non-state sports actors by ministries of foreign affairs and their diplomatic staff in order to create collaborative, long term and mutually beneficial partnership which ideally 'maximise people-to-people' links, development, cultural, trade, investment, education and tourism opportunities for governments.[45] Therefore, sport diplomacy is the reification and specialisation of a familiar aspect of international relations in permanent, institutional and plural manner.[46]

The genesis of this chapter came from the first Multiplier Sport Event (MSE) of this project held in Zagreb, Croatia, on the 12th June 2019. The topic of this landmark event – which included ambassadors, politicians, academics and sports stars - was *'Best Practice in Sport Diplomacy: National Examples'*. Certain 'new' models of sport diplomacy were discussed alongside some examples that could be described as more traditional.[47]

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[43] For information on national approaches to sport diplomacy see: Towards an EU Sport Diplomacy (TES-D) (2021), *Case Studies of Non-EU Sport Diplomacy*. Accessed at: https://www.tes-diplomacy.org/resources-io2a2/ (17 December 2021). See also ECORYS (2017), *Sport Diplomacy. Identifying Good Practices, a final report to the European Commission*. Accessed at: https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0efc09a6-025e-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-65111809 (17 December 2021).

[44] Note, Australia prefers to use the plural of sport to describe its approach (sports diplomacy).

[45] Australian Government, *Australian Sports Diplomacy Strategy, 2015-2018*, at 1. Accessed at: https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/aus-sports-diplomacy-strategy-2015-18.pdf (10 Jun 2019).

[46] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 94.

[47] Agenda for the 1st MSE *"Best Practice in Sport Diplomacy: National Examples"*, Zagreb (Croatia), 12th June 2019, accessed at: https://www.pravri.uniri.hr/en/home/8-en/1689-obavijest-65.html (17 December 2021).

In this chapter, it is argued that the cliché that sport and politics don't mix is just that: a cliché (an opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought). Like it or loathe it, sport and politics have mixed since time immemorial, whether thinking of the Truce and the Ancient Olympiad, the emergence of nationalism and international sport in the late nineteenth century, or, more recently the instrumentalization of sport as a diplomatic and strategic means to policy ends. These links are illustrated by, for example, the practice of boycotts[48] against various countries whose policies are denounced, or by well-known cases such as ping-pong diplomacy between China and the U.S.), wrestling diplomacy between Russia, Iran and the U.S.,[49] cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan, hockey diplomacy between Canada and the former Soviet Union, and the intermittent episodes of baseball diplomacy between Cuba and the U.S.

In each of these cases, sport was co-opted to serve national interests or foreign policy outcomes. However, both the theory and practice of sport diplomacy is something quite different today. This chapter – which focusses on traditional sport diplomacy[50] - captures some of the changes taking place in how governments, non-state actors and representatives from the sports industry are beginning to work together, to bring strangers closer together, and advance positive, mutually reciprocal policy outcomes for the world. This chapter begins by examining the Australian case.

[48] The efficacy of which is strongly contested, see Gomez, C. (2018) *Boycotts and Diplomacy: when the talking stops*, in Rofe J. S. (ed.) Sport and Diplomacy: Games within games, 169-184, Manchester University Press; Eaton, J. (2018) *Decentring US sports diplomacy: the 1980 Moscow boycott through contemporary Asian-African perspectives*, in Rofe J. S. (ed.) Sport and Diplomacy: Games within games, 203-222, Manchester University Press; Tulli, U. (2018) *'They used Americana, all painted and polished, to make enormous impression they did': selling the Reagan revolution through the 1984 Olympic Games,* in Rofe J. S. (ed.) Sport and Diplomacy: Games within games, 223-242, Manchester University Press

[49] Abooali, S. (2017) *Wrestling with Diplomacy: The United States and Iran*, in Craig Esherick, Robert E. Baker, Steven Jackson, Michael Sam (eds.) Case Studies in Sport Diplomacy, 137-153, FiT Publishing, at 146.

[50] According to Murray, there are three other types of sport diplomacy: networked sports diplomacy, sport-as-diplomacy, and sports anti-diplomacy. See Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge.

2. Examples of good practice in sport diplomacy in the world

2.1. Australia

Australia has a remarkable international sporting pedigree and is internationally recognised as a consistent, high-performing sporting nation and a world leader in sports policy, on and off the pitch, so to speak. For the sports mad Aussies, sport diplomacy provides a practical opportunity to inform, engage and influence key demographics, particularly youth, emerging leaders and women and girls. Through the Australian diaspora in the region and Indo–Pacific communities living in Australia, the influence of sport diplomacy means policy outcomes can be conveyed to broader audiences than traditional diplomacy activities allow. Sport, in other words, amplifies diplomatic messages. Australia started to include sport in its diplomacy in 2012 and mentioning sport as a diplomatic and cultural tool first came in the *2012 Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*.[51]

Australia's sport diplomacy strategies are whole-of-government approaches that intend to maximise people-to-people links, development, cultural, trade, investment, education and tourism opportunities.[52]

A few years ago, Australia published its *Sports Diplomacy Strategy 2015-2018.*[53] Its development was guided by a working group co-chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Department of Health's Office for Sport.

This initial Strategy had four goals:

(1) *Connecting people and institutions* via the following programs:

a. Sports Exchange Australia: exchanges of administrators, coaches, officials and athletes to provide sports knowledge, leadership and skills exchange between Australia and countries in the region.

[51] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 99.
[52] Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Accessed at: https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/australian-sports-diplomacy-strategy-2015-18 (10 Jun 2019).
[53] Australian Government, Australian Sports Diplomacy Strategy, 2015-2018. Accessed at: https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/aus-sports-diplomacy-strategy-2015-18.pdf (10 Jun 2019).

b. Australian Sports Fellowship: support sporting organisations and tertiary institutions to host fellows and scholars from the region for sport-related professional development and educational placements in Australia.
c. The Sports Leaders Mentoring Program: mentoring and networking through the Australian sports network and private sector partners to develop emerging leaders in sports business, administration, and sports technical development.

(2) *Enhancing sport for development* via:

a. Pacific Sports Partnerships: partner Australian and regional sports organisations in the Pacific to deliver targeted sport for development activities.
b. Sports Volunteers Australia: provide high-quality sports volunteers to help improve the capacity of sports organisations and develop people-to-people links in developing countries across the Indo–Pacific region.

(3) *Showcasing Australia* via:

a. Match Australia: The Australian Government's international sports business program will enhance economic and bilateral relations through major sporting events. This program will be managed and implemented by the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade).
b. The Major Sporting Events Taskforce: this will coordinate Australian Government involvement in identified major international events in Australia, capitalise on an international reputation for hosting major sporting events, and leverage the economic opportunities associated with such events and the on-going legacy in areas such as trade, tourism and investment.
c. International Media Visits: this program will use sport to promote Australia's engagement with the region and generate accurate and well-informed international media reporting on Australia.
d. Sports Envoy: This program will use high-profile sports people to promote Australia through trade missions, Ministerial-led business missions, Match Australia activities, and targeted sport diplomacy initiatives.

(4) *Supporting innovation and integrity* via:

a. Sports Innovation Australia: will establish sports education, business and science initiatives between the Australian sports industry and countries in the Indo–Pacific region.
b. Sports Memorandums of Understanding: will establish government-to-government sports agreements to advance Australia's skills capability in sport-related fields and promote Australia's collaborative relationship with the Indo–Pacific region.
c. The Sports Integrity Program: provide oversight, monitoring and coordination to advance and protect the integrity of sport in Australia. With a particular focus on doping, match fixing and corruption, the Australian Government will work with like-minded nations to develop best practice in consistent and effective approaches to protect the integrity of sport.

The first Strategy and the programs described above were a success, particularly in integrating the various systems of sport and diplomacy at the international level. Both the sports industry and government were given a strategy, direction, and a common vision. Success came in the form of two sports for development programs – one in the Pacific and the other in Asia.

One of the key pillars of the Australia's public diplomacy strategy is to create a positive image in the pacific region, particularly among the population of small island states, and one of the most successful public-sport programmes has been *Smash Down Barriers* - an indicative to change perception of disabled people in the pacific region through table tennis. The programme is part of DFAT's Pacific Sport Partnerships (PSP) which worked with over fifty institutions to enable 1.5 million people to participate in sporting activities, while helping address inequalities experienced by women, girls and people living with disability. The *Smash Down Barriers* programme operates across Fiji, Kiribati, Vanuatu and Thailand with the support of Australian Aid, Table Tennis Australia, Oceania Badminton and Oceania Paralympic Committee and, as well, as from Diplomats-in-chef.[54]

Sporting linkages in the Asian region were also strengthened by negotiating sport cooperation arrangements with India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka. In addition, the Australian Government awarded ten sports fellowships aimed at improving the capacity of individuals

[54] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 95.

and institutions to deliver quality grassroots sport in the Indo-Pacific region. Finally, the review also described a volunteer's initiative connecting skilled Australians with regional sporting organisations to support media and communications, disability and health outcomes in Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu.[55]

A successful PSP program is the Oceania Football Confederation's *Just Play program*, which also involves Football Federation Australia. The program uses interactive football sessions to engage children with social messages integrated into all activities. Children increase their school and community engagement and learn healthy lifestyle habits while learning about gender equality and disability inclusion. The program received the Union of European Football Association Foundation for Children Award in 2016 – recognising improvements it is making to the lives of children in the Pacific.[56] Bolstered by such data, success and interest, the Government decided to renew this ground-breaking program and Strategy.

After a long period of consultation with the Australian sports 'industry', the original strategy was followed by a second – *Sports Diplomacy 2030* – which was launched by the Foreign and Sports Ministers at the Women's Rugby World Sevens tournament in Sydney, in early 2019. Again, four pillars were introduced, each of which are described below:

(1) *Empower Australian sport to represent Australia globally*:

a. enhance Australian sports leaders' knowledge, skills and connections to represent Australia on the global stage;
b. leverage Australia's strong sporting brand to enhance its global reputation and to build enduring relationships;
c. increase Australia's representation on international sporting bodies and associations; and
d. develop tools, including a digital portal, to share sport diplomacy knowledge, expertise and successes across government and with the sport industry.

(2) *Build linkages with Australia's neighbours*:

[55] Australian Government, Sports Diplomacy 2030, at 7.
[56] Australian Government, Sports Diplomacy 2030, at 9.

a. develop pathways for elite Pacific athletes and teams to participate in Australian and international sporting competitions;
b. facilitate access for emerging Pacific athletes to participate in high performance training in Australia;
c. develop pathways for Australian sporting codes to increase their presence in the Pacific; and
d. identify targeted opportunities to strengthen diplomatic and economic relationships through sport across the Indo-Pacific.

(3) *Maximise trade, tourism and investment opportunities*:

a. showcase Australia's leadership and excellence in sport governance, high performance, technology and other areas in key global markets;
b. promote Australia as a host of choice for major international sporting events and ensure to leverage the wider economic opportunities;
c. connect Australian sports through its diplomatic and trade networks to unlock the potential of global markets for a wider array of Australian businesses and companies; and
d. identify, educate and empower high-profile athletes and sports representatives to promote Australia, including through trade missions and targeted sport diplomacy initiatives.

(4) *Strengthen communities through sport in the Indo-Pacific and beyond*:

a. create leadership pathways and increase participation of women and girls in sport in the Pacific;
b. harness the power of sport to promote gender equality, disability inclusion, social cohesion and healthy lifestyles;
c. support institutional policies, practices and systems to help build safe, fair and accessible sport; and
d. support global efforts to increase awareness of the contribution of sport to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[57]

[57] Australian Government, Sports Diplomacy 2030, at 9, 15, 17, 19.

This kind of sport diplomacy is called by Murray "*Networked sports diplomacy*" since the Australian Strategy encompasses a broad network of state and non-state actors: the Department of Health, the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), the Office for Sport, the DFAT, Tourism Australia and the Australian Trade Commission together with the administrative bodies of Australia's major sporting codes (cricket, soccer, rugby and Australian rules football).[58]

2.2. The U.S.A. and *SportsUnited*

In the U.S., sport diplomacy is regarded as an important tool. Indeed, the Department of State, with its Bureau of Education and Culture Affairs (ECA) established by President Eisenhower in 1959,[59] sees sport as "*an integral part of efforts to build ever-strengthening relations between the United States and other nations. Sports diplomacy exchanges have involved tens of thousands of people from more than 100 countries to do just this*".[60]

The State Department's *SportsUnited* is a good example of such initiatives. Born after 9/11 as a way to reach disenfranchised youth in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Africa and Latin America, sport was seen as a way to reach people that were immune to tried and tested soft power vessels like the Voice of America radio station and the Fulbright Scholarship programme. *SportsUnited* focuses on four main activities: the "Sports Visitors program" (where American Ambassadors nominate sports people from their host countries to travel to the U.S. for specialised training and clinics. Through participation in sports-based programming, these visitors learn to translate success in athletics into achievements in the classroom and life), [61] "Sports Grants" (awarded to U.S. based Civil Society Organisations who propose and manage international exchange programs for underserved youth athletes, coaches and administrators of youth sports), "Sports Envoys" (where athletes and coaches, such as Michelle Kwan (figure skating) and Billie-Jean King (Tennis) are employed as 'diplomats in tracksuits').[62] These successful sportspeople lead youth clinics and team building activities

[58] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 119.
[59] *Ibid*., at 100.
[60] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Initiatives, Sports Diplomacy. Accessed at: https://eca.state.gov/sports-diplomacy (15 Aug 2019).
[61] Mitevska, S. (2019), Sport Diplomacy, Paper presented at the 1st MSE *"Best Practice in Sport Diplomacy: National Examples"*, Zagreb (Croatia).
[62] Other examples are the world famous NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal who has visited Cuba as part of the Sports Envoy program, accessed at: https://eca.state.gov/video/sports-envoy-shaquille-oneal-cuba (17 December 2021), or the case when the U.S. Department of State sponsored ultra-marathon legend Dean Karnazes as he follows the ancient Silk Road through Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan to mark the 25th anniversary of these

overseas and represent their nation in much the same way a serving diplomat does (in terms of cultural diplomacy exchanges). Fourth is the "Global Sports Mentoring Program" (where a cohort of approximately 15 foreign sport leaders are identified and hand-selected by U.S. Embassies to spend one month in a mentoring placement with a female executive in the U.S.).[63]

The programmes are organized closely with U.S. Embassies and Consulates, American universities (such as George Mason University), and leagues and federations. The *SportsUnited* initiative is an excellent example of a range of political, diplomatic and mutually beneficial partnership between diplomats, sportspeople and foreign publics.[64]

Through *SportsUnited*, the State Department is able to promote American policy, sport, culture and values abroad, enhance international understanding and friendship, and dispel U.S. stereotypes and prejudices. As Trina Bolton, the team 'captain' of the program, notes of the versatility and reach of the program, "*sport opens doors in hard-to-reach spaces, all the way from really grassroot levels and all the way up to the governmental level at home and abroad. Through our exchanges, Americans and international participants from all walks of life connect through the shared interest in sports*."[65]

The issue of employing sportspeople as envoys is common in U.S. sport diplomacy history starting in 1955 with Jesse Owens' mission to India, the Philippines and Malaysia where he led running clinics and promoted and represented American values abroad or Althea Gibson, the first African-American tennis player to break into the female circuit visiting and playing tennis on a special tour in India, Pakistan and Burma as an inspiration in the world, but also in the U.S., since as a woman of colour was representing officially the U.S delegation.[66]

To conclude, we may say that the *SportsUnited* is a great success. The numbers show that with a very few resources absorbed (U.S Sport Diplomacy Division employs only five staffers and

countries' independence from the Soviet Union from June 29 to July 10, 2016, accessed at: https://eca.state.gov/ultramarathon (15 Aug 2019).

[63] Lecrom C. and Ferry, M. (2017) *The United States Government's Role in Sport Diplomacy*, in Craig Esherick, Robert E. Baker, Steven Jackson, Michael Sam (eds), Case Studies in Sport Diplomacy, 19-37, FiT Publishing, at 22-28.

[64] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 101.

[65] Alvarez, A. (2017) Sports Diplomacy in the Age of Trump, *VICE* Accessed at: https://sports.vice.com/en_au/article/mbj4bv/sports-diplomacy-in-the-age-of-trump, (16 Sep 2019).

[66] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 103-104.

spend only 0.0001% of the Department Budget)[67] the results are impressive. Between 2010 and 2013, Sports Visitor programs were held in ninety-two countries with a total of 911 foreign participants. In terms of Sports Envoy, 317 athletes and coaches represented U.S in fifty-four different countries from 2005 to 2013. During the same period, the rate of participation for foreign participants in a Sports Grant program also increased with approximately 1,830 individuals from over thirty-five different countries visiting the U.S.[68]

Again, the power of sport to augment the perception of a nation, transcend entrenched foreign policy positions, or generate informal diplomatic networks (that, if strategized, can often usually open formal doors) is self-evident.

2.3. Japan

Japan has a long history of using sport to advance diplomatic and foreign policy goals. The J1 professional football League, for example, was established in 1992 to overcome imperial stereotypes, as well as to improve the performance of the national team to reflect "*a level worthy of its [Japan's] economic power and overall achievements after 40 years of post-war peace and prosperity"*.[69] In the twenty-first century, the Japanese teamed up with old foes the Republic of Korea to co-host the 2002 FIFA World Cup, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has employed football to "*secure a peaceful environment for Japanese troops in Iraq",* to bridge divides between Balkan states, and frequently invites "*Israeli and Palestinian youth players to participate in training camps in Japan*" as a way of getting to know the 'other'.[70] Such activities are directly aimed at changing the way outsiders think about Japan.[71]

Beyond these examples, MOFA is following a similar path to the French and the European Commission (including the clumsy sounding moniker). In 2014, a 'Panel of Experts on Strengthening Sport Diplomacy' was convened, followed by the appointment Mr. Jun

[67] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 102.
[68] ECA 2013 in Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 101.
[69] Manzenreiter, W. (2008) Football diplomacy, post-colonialism and Japan's quest for normal state status, *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics*, 11(4), 414-428, at 417.
[70] *Ibid*, at 422.
[71] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 68.

Shimmi[72] as an 'Ambassador in Charge of Sport Diplomacy' in 2015, as well as a final report submitted to Mr. Minoru Kiuchi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs.[73] Of further significance, is Japan's *Sport for Tomorrow* program, an initiative to promote sport to more than 10 million people in over 100 nations until 2020.[74]

It should be mentioned, however, that Japan seems reactive rather than proactive. The Strategy emerged *after* the Land of the Rising Sun won bids to host two major mega-events: the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. In addition, the Japanese approach is one of caution, low-risk and repetition. These two events have been employed by Japan to further banish old, unhelpful and inaccurate stereotypes, and cement its reputation as a truly sporting nation. No doubt that, especially taking into consideration that the COVID-19 pandemic strongly affected the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, both these tournaments have been impeccably hosted. The research also threw up two interesting asides: first, that most of the organization and legacy work for the Rugby World Cup is being driven by World Rugby,[75] rather than the Japanese government or any explicit strategy tied to this specific event. The *Sport for Tomorrow program*, on the other hand, is being driven exclusively by the Japanese government and many national sporting partners. As such, this program gives a clearer window into the nature, character and depth of Japan's ongoing engagement with sport diplomacy.

2.4. North Korea and South Korea

Taken apart, the sport diplomacy activities of the Republic of Korea (the South) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the North) can be described as normative. The North uses sport as a policy tool in the international arena to reinforce and reflect *Juche*, the official

[72] Mr Shimmi is a career diplomat. At the time of writing, he has since moved on from the post of Ambassador of Sport Diplomacy and now serves as the Japanese Ambassador to the Republic of Slovakia. It is unclear who occupies the Sport role.
[73] The report describes the policies and measures that should be implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in coordination with the relevant ministries, agencies and organizations for the themes of development, peace building and relationship between sports and socially vulnerable persons, under the three pillars of "Diplomacy by Sports," which utilizes the influence and attractiveness of sports for the enhancement of diplomacy; "Diplomacy for sports," by which diplomatic authorities implement various efforts for the development of sports; and the establishment of a foundation to promote sport diplomacy. See appendix C, or access https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000639.html (15 Sep 2019).
[74] Sport For Tomorrow. Accessed at: https://www.sport4tomorrow.jpnsport.go.jp (10 Mar 2020).
[75] See the 'glossy' brochure accessed at: https://www.asiarugby.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Impact-Beyond-RWC-2019-Brochure.pdf (10 Sep 2019).

state ideology which roughly translates as 'self-reliance', while the South folds sport into its broader public diplomacy strategy.

Considered together, however, it is clear that sport creates the faintest, positive channel between the two fundamentally estranged nations. The 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games provides a good example of random meetings between representatives from adversarial states that can lead to significant, temporary (in this case), changes in diplomatic relations.

As with the meeting between Glenn Cowan and Zhuang Zedong at the 1971 Table Tennis World Championships in Japan, the thaw began with a seemingly insignificant event: an invitation to participate in the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics by a South Korean, Mr. Choi Moon-soon, the governor of Gangwon province, to a north Korean, Mun Ung, head of the North Korean Athletic Committee. A few weeks later, Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un announced that the Hermit Kingdom would send a large delegation to the PyeongChang Games.

The story of North Korea's appearance at the Games provides yet more evidence of the Mandelaesque "power of sport" to overcome political division.[76] The North Korean leader sent his sister, Kim Yo-jong, to the opening ceremony, where she shook hands and chatted with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. Kim Yo-jong's appearance marked the first time since the Korean War ended in 1953 that a member of the ruling Kim dynasty had visited South Korea. As the world's media scrambled to capture the rare moment, athletes from both nations marched into the PyeongChang Olympic Stadium under the Korean Unification Flag, a picture which was not so common but was also seen at the World Table Tennis Championship in 1991 in Chiba, Japan and at the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games. North and South Korean female ice hockey players also formed a joint team and were cheered on by a squadron of enthusiastic, well-drilled North Korean cheerleaders (a public diplomacy coup in its own right).

To sport diplomacy watchers, it soon became obvious that both countries were using sport as a vehicle to test whether their respective publics would be accepting of a more formal diplomatic opening of frozen relations. It worked, and a few months later President Moon and

[76] Mandela, N (2000) Address to the 1st Laureus World Sports Award, *Laureus*, 21st June 2000. Accessed at: http://www.laureus.com/content/nelson-mandela-speech-changed-world, (16 Sep 2019).

Supreme Leader Kim met in the demilitarized zone, the first of three summits aimed at denuclearizing the peninsula, building closer relations, and ending over sixty years of war.

Hawks remain critical of North Korea, for they are still a kleptocratic dictatorship, a poor international citizen, and have a dreadful human rights record, not to mention that their nuclear weapons program is in clear violation of the global moratorium against nuclear weapons and its concomitant treaties. A more nuanced, ideal understanding of international affairs suggests otherwise: faint sporting channels with an adversarial, isolated state are better than no channels at all.

2.5. China

China was the first to use international sport for its broader foreign and domestic policy goals, and its ping-pong[77] diplomacy was used not just for the relationship with the U.S., but also to foster its diplomatic, economic and political goals in several African countries. It is important to note that with its African tour in Guinea, Mali and Sudan, female ping-pong players from China were promoting the slogan "men and women are equal" in countries where women were not fully free.[78]

China implemented an effective Olympic strategy enabling it to evolve from an average position on the Olympic medal table to the top of the medal table at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Following that success, China further strategic aim was to move from "*a country of major sporting events to a sports world power*". To attain this ambition, China invested heavily in order to become a football superpower, although in recent years, this investment has been considerably reduced.[79]

[77] The reason why table tennis or ping-pong was used was because Rong Guotuan was the first Chinese athlete to win any major world championship – men's single title at the 1959 Table Tennis World Championship and the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) was one of the few international sports organization that consistently recognized the People's Republic of China giving them the title of host of the 1961 Table Tennis World Championship.

[78] Shuman, A. (2018) *Friendship is solidarity: the Chinese ping-pong team visits Africa in 1962*, in Rofe J. S. (ed.) Sport and Diplomacy: Games within games, 110-112, Manchester University Press.

[79] *Grassroots Sport Diplomacy, Overview, Mapping and Definitions*, at 7. Accessed at: http://isca-web.org/files/Grassroots_Sport_Diplomacy/Grassroots_Sport_Diplomacy_-_Overview_mapping_definitions[1].pdf (10 Mar 2020).

In April 2016, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), a macroeconomic management agency under the State Council of the People's Republic of China, announced a new reform programme called The Medium and Long-Term Development Plan of Chinese Football (2016-2050). This reform programme was jointly prepared by the NDRC, the Office of the Inter-Ministerial Joint Conference on Football Reform and Development of the State Council (China Football Association), the General Administration of Sport, and the Ministry of Education and was approved by the State Council.[80] By developing grassroots football, the plan seeks to grow elite players who will qualify for another FIFA World Cup, play at a hosted FIFA World Cup and in the end eventually form a competitive team to win the FIFA World Cup by 2050.[81]

China, with its huge investments in football in line to fulfil "*the Great Chines Soccer Dream*"[82] also points on the Mega-Events sport diplomacy and achieved that target by hosting the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. But like Russia, for its 2008 Olympic Games, China also faced huge criticism because of violations of human rights and minority rights,[83] so the Games brought also huge international attention on topics which were not planned to be in focus. Another dimension of sport diplomacy was observed through so called "*stadium diplomacy*". Stadium diplomacy can be understood as the construction of sporting facilities, in particularly in developing countries.[84] For more than 60 years, China has practiced the so-called "*stadium diplomacy*" by providing support, for more than 85 indoor and outdoor stadiums (from 1,000 seats to 60,000 seats) across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the South Pacific. It was mostly used as means for geopolitical strategy and international strategy (for a diplomatic and political fight against Taiwan, for formation of strategic political alliances), access to valuable natural resources like oil, economic growth and entry into emerging markets mostly for its companies etc.[85]

[80] China Football 8. Accessed at: http://china-football-8.com/reform-programme-2016/ (15 Mar 2020).
[81] *Grassroots Sport Diplomacy, Overview, Mapping and Definitions*, at 7. Accessed at: http://isca-web.org/files/Grassroots_Sport_Diplomacy/Grassroots_Sport_Diplomacy_-_Overview_mapping_definitions[1].pdf (10 Mar 2020).
[82] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 116.
[83] Rocha, C. and Grix, J. (2017) *From "Diplomatic Dwarf" to Gulliver Unbound? Brazil and the Use of Sports Mega-Events*, in Craig Esherick, Robert E. Baker, Steven Jackson, Michael Sam (eds), Case Studies in Sport Diplomacy, 87-100, FiT Publishing, at 93.
[84] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 117.
[85] Kellison, T. and Cintron, A. (2017) *Building Stadiums, Building Bridges: Geopolitical Strategy in China*, in Craig Esherick, Robert E. Baker, Steven Jackson, Michael Sam (eds), Case Studies in Sport Diplomacy, 121-135, FiT Publishing.

2.6. Other interesting models

South Africa after decades of isolation used Mega Sports Events as a political tool and as a form of presenting the 'new face of the state'. It started with the 1995 Rugby World Cup and had its grand finale with the 2010 FIFA World Cup presented also as the 'African World Cup'.[86]

Brazil is an interesting example of how bidding for and hosting Mega Events such as the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro helped that big country (fifth-largest landmass, fifth-largest population and seventh-largest economy in the world) to foster its aims together with diverse political motivations to improve public diplomacy.[87] Although hosting such mega events helped Brazil to have an international focus, in the end they faced huge organisational, environmental and corruption problems.[88]

However, although hosting Mega Events seems important from the promotion of a state point of view, construction of sports infrastructure and the huge support for the home Olympic team to achieve as more medals as possible, it is not a guarantee of growing diplomatic power if we take for instance Russia or China, see *supra*. Russia invested huge amounts of money for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, precisely around $50 billion total cost which are far much more than $12 billion cost for 2012 London Summer Olympic or $7 billion for 2012 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games.[89] Russian efforts resulted also in its special governance strategy to host the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics and later in 2016 FIFA World Cup, but with its controversial law on intolerance towards the LGBT community and the Annexation of Crimea during the preparation or just after the closing ceremony of the 2016 Winter Olympics have not resulted in a complete success, just the opposite.[90] Speaking about sport diplomacy we must note the U.S. Government employed three openly gay athletes Billie Jean King (a

[86] Dowse, S. (2018), *Mega sports events as political tools: a case study of South Africa's hosting of the 2010 FIFA Football World Cup*, in Rofe J. S. (ed.) Sport and Diplomacy: Games within games, 70-86, Manchester University Press.
[87] Rocha, C. and Grix, J. (2017) *From "Diplomatic Dwarf" to Gulliver Unbound? Brazil and the Use of Sports Mega-Events*, in Craig Esherick, Robert E. Baker, Steven Jackson, Michael Sam (eds), Case Studies in Sport Diplomacy, 87-100, FiT Publishing.
[88] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 124-125.
[89] *Ibid*., at 249, 258.
[90] Zhemukhov, S. and Orttung, R. (2017) *Putin and the 2014 Sochi Olympics: Russia's Authoritarian Sports Diplomacy*, in Craig Esherick, Robert E. Baker, Steven Jackson, Michael Sam (eds), Case Studies in Sport Diplomacy, 101-120, FiT Publishing.

retired tennis champion), Brian Boitano (a retired world champion figure skater) and Caitlin Cahow (a retired ice hockey player) as sports envoys during the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games as a response to the Russian discriminatory policy towards LGBT community.[91]

Compared to Russia, Canada "scored" on a diplomatic and political level with opening the first Pride House pavilions for the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games and 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games in Toronto and highlighting the protection of human rights of LGBTQ-identified persons.[92]

3. Examples of good practice in sport diplomacy in Europe

3.1. France: l'équipe qui gagne[93]

The gold medal for sport diplomacy – outside of Australia, that is – must surely go to France. Their journey began in 2012 while watching London host the Olympic Games, a tournament they lost out on holding by a mere four votes at the IOC. A long period of consultations within government then crystalized into a sport diplomacy strategy which was launched by Laurent Fabius, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Valérie Fourneyron, then Minister of Sports, in 2014.

Acknowledging that "*sport plays a major role in attracting visitors to France and showcasing the country's international outreach*", the Quai D'Orsay[94] also established a working group consisting of government departments, sporting federations, major sporting businesses and the national Olympic committee.[95] The sports industry was then mapped and measured, and several more innovations followed: the world's first Ambassador for Sport (Philippe Vinogradoff),[96] an Office for the Economics of Sport, and a new French Olympic Committee, which aims to

[91] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 105.
[92] Rich, K. and Misener, L. (2017) *From Canada with Love: Human Rights, Soft Power and the Pride House Movement*, in Craig Esherick, Robert E. Baker, Steven Jackson, Michael Sam (eds), Case Studies in Sport Diplomacy, 155-170, FiT Publishing.
[93] In English, the Team Who Wins.
[94] The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
[95] France Diplomatic 2018. 'Sports Diplomacy.' *Quai D'orsay*. Accessed at: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/ (17 Sep 2019).
[96] A seasoned diplomat whose career has taken him from Panama to Mexico, through Chile, Brazil, El Salvador (where he was ambassador), and the United States, where he served as Consul General in Miami and Deputy Consul General in Los Angeles.

promote French sport internationally, increase French presence in international bodies, and ensure French continues as the official language of the Olympic Games.

French sport diplomacy is founded on three pillars that seek to: develop French influence through sport; make sport a priority for all ministries and relevant networks; and integrate sport into economic diplomacy.[97] So far, much French sport diplomacy activity has centered on building enhanced capacity for bidding, winning and hosting major sporting tournaments. Stung by the loss of the 2012 Olympics by the English, France simply 'learned to lobby', in the words of Marc Ventouillac, a journalist for *L'Equipe.*[98] As figure 1 illustrate the investment has certainly paid off.

Figure 1. Major sporting events in France 2015- 2024

- 2015 World Rowing Championships
- UEFA EUROPE 2016 Football Championship
- 2017 Ice Hockey World Championships
- 2017 Canoe Slalom WC
- 2017 Men's handball
- 2018 Ryder Cup
- 2019 FIFA Women's World
- 2024 Summer Olympic Games

In short, France has matched success in sport – for example, a marvelous French football team sailed through the 2018 Russia World Cup, eventually beating Croatia 4-2 in the final. France looks set to innovate further, especially in the hosting of major events. The 2018 Ryder Cup[99] symbolized the French culture of innovation, being different, and the new strategic direction. Played at the Golf National in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, a course purpose built for the unique atmosphere the match generates, over 300,000 fans turned out to watch the underdog Europeans comfortably beat the American team 17½ - 10½….and there was not even a Frenchman playing in the European team. It should come as no surprise that France understands the power of an esoteric sport diplomacy attitude. The annual Tour de France race

[97] *Grassroots Sport Diplomacy, Overview, Mapping and Definitions*, at 8. Accessed at: http://isca-web.org/files/Grassroots_Sport_Diplomacy/Grassroots_Sport_Diplomacy_-_Overview_mapping_definitions[1].pdf (10 Mar 2020).

[98] Lebrun, C., (2018) Le « soft-power » du sport: un potentiel encore trop peu exploité ?, *Open Diplomacy*. Accessed at: http://www.open-diplomacy.eu/blog/le-soft-power-du-sport-un-potentiel-encore-trop-peu-exploite, (17 Sep 2019).

[99] The world's third most-watched sporting event after the football World Cup and the Olympic Games.

endures as one of the world's most successful, most watched[100] examples of sport, culture and tourism.

3.2. UK

In the UK, sport is also extremely important, but football and rugby, as world-wide selling products, have been taken as a tool for promoting British values. The British sport diplomacy consists of partnerships between the British Council and major sports associations, like the Premier League and Premiership Rugby.

One very good example of promoting UK values and English language in the world is the *Premier Skills,* the British Council's international partnership with the football Premier League operating in 19 countries across Asia, Africa and the Americas from Afghanistan to Zambia.[101] Through *Premier Skills*, young people, including the most vulnerable in society, are given opportunities to become better integrated into their local communities, to develop their skills for employability and raise their self-esteem. Premier Skills English helps teachers and learners of English with free, compelling learning materials, drawing on football-based content from the most exciting football league in the world. In this regard, *Football English* is also an interesting platform with teaching materials that teach general English through football and the words and phrases a person needs to talk about football on and off the pitch.[102]

The British Council has also teamed up with Premiership Rugby in a project called *Try Rugby* and with the partnership with Brazilian partners Social Service for Industry (SESI) they try to bring an innovative rugby project to Sao Paulo State in Brazil.[103] Try Rugby SP is using the sport of rugby to engage with children and young people in schools and communities, delivering educational, social and health benefits, as well as helping to raise the number of young people playing the game in Brazil. Premiership Rugby coaches are embedded within

[100] According to the organizers, 3.5 billion people in 190 countries tune in to watch the Tour de France each year and it is one of the best-attended annual sporting event on the planet, with 12 million roadside spectators cheering on cyclists.
[101] Since Premier Skills began in 2007, 20.027 coaches and referees have been trained in 29 countries, who in turn have reached over 1.6 million young people. 6,000 teachers have received training in the use of the Premier Skills English materials, with 6.5 million views of the materials online.
[102] Premier Skills English. Accessed at: https://premierskillsenglish.britishcouncil.org/ (10 Apr 2020).
[103] Since September 2012, over 15.000 participants have been involved in rugby-based activity in Brazil every week as the coaches have worked with rugby clubs and other community based social inclusion projects. This includes 300 teachers and volunteers who have been trained to coach the sport.

secondary schools in five states across Brazil, coaching young people in the schools and their local community. As well as getting more young Brazilians to play the sport, the programme is designed to help them develop valuable skills in areas such as teamwork, leadership and self-discipline. It also tackles some of the social issues affecting the young people in their school or local community, for example lack of inclusion or juvenile crime.[104]

As a 2012 London Summer Olympic Games legacy, UK Sport, UNICEF and the British Council deliver the *International Inspiration Programme*. The Premier League, the British Council, UNICEF and a range of other public and private funders assured the programme's funding.[105] Key actors are policymakers since they are made aware of the importance of physical education.[106]

We must note also one more important project of the British Council and the English Football Premier League called *Addressing Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) through football*, which uses football to tackle issues of violence against women and girls in Kenya. The project aims to address harmful behaviour and attitudes which perpetuate VAWG through football, by working with young people in Mount Elgon and Kisumu (Kenya). This three-year project was set up in 2014 and is funded by the UK Department for International Development (€1.8m).[107]

As for the use of Mega Sports Events, in 2002, the UK hosted the Commonwealth Games in Manchester and in 2014 in Glasgow which made a significant contribution to the rejuvenation of the cities and the regions as they struggled with a range of socio-economic challenges and industrial decline. In an attempt to secure the legacy of the 2012 London Summer Olympic

[104] Try Rugby. Accessed at: https://www.britishcouncil.org/society/sport/current-programmes/try-rugby (10 Apr 2020).
[105] From the beginning in 2007 the target was to take International Inspiration to 20 countries and inspire the lives of 12 million children. The programme far exceeded that target, with over 25 million children and young people enriched through the programme. 55 national policies, strategies and legislative changes were influenced and over 250,000 practitioners (teachers, coaches and leaders) trained.
[106] *Grassroots Sport Diplomacy, Overview, Mapping and Definitions*, at 9. Accessed at: http://isca-web.org/files/Grassroots_Sport_Diplomacy/Grassroots_Sport_Diplomacy_-_Overview_mapping_definitions[1].pdf (10 Mar 2020).
[107] ECORYS (2017), *Sport Diplomacy. Identifying Good Practices, a final report to the European Commission*, at 17. Accessed at: https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0efc09a6-025e-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-65111809 (10 Jun 2019).

Games, it was aimed to secure seventy world-class events for the period 2013-2019, but the target was secured within a year.[108]

3.3. Spain

The importance of Barcelona's Summer Olympic Games of 1992 for the improvement of the external image of Spain seems unquestionable.[109] This Mega Sports Event tends to be considered an inflexion point in the evolution of the Spanish sport system.[110] In fact, it was by the mid 90's that the establishment of organizational structures and sporting infrastructures in Spain was completed.[111] However, awareness of the potential role sport can play in the international sphere is more recent. From an institutional point of view, the start of the "Marca España" (*Brand Spain*) project in 2000 marks the beginning of this initiative aimed to strengthen the image of the nation abroad. Being a governmental project,[112] it was created in partnership with some of the most important Spanish companies through the "Foro de Marcas Renombradas" (*Forum of the Leading Brands*), created in 1999. LaLiga, Real Madrid, FC Barcelona and Atletico de Madrid are part of this Forum.[113] Marca España project has gained political and public and private financial support through the years and sport has played an important role in its implementation. In 2018, the Office of the High Minister for Marca España was substituted by the Spanish Secretariat for Global Spain aimed to defend and project the international reputation of Spain. Again, sport plays a key role.

The Spanish Secretariat for Global Spain recently published a Report on sport diplomacy titled "*Sports Diplomacy as an actor for Global Spain. The need of a model for Spain*" (hereinafter:

[108] Beacom, A. and Rofe, J. S. (2018) *Post-match recovery and analysis: concluding thoughts on sport and diplomacy*, in Rofe J. S. (ed.) Sport and Diplomacy: Games within games, 243-262, Manchester University Press. at. 254.
[109] Rius Ulldemolins, J. and Zamorano, M. (2015) Spain's nation branding project Marca España and its cultural policy: the economic and political instrumentalization of a homogeneous and simplified cultural image, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 21(1), 20-40, at 23.
[110] Puig, N. et al (2010) Sport Policy in Spain, *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 2(3), 381-390, at 381.
[111] *Ibid.*
[112] An Office of the High Commissioner for the Marca España was established in 2012. The High Commissioner was directly appointed by the Prime Minister, although it was functionally dependent of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
[113] The Forum is a public-private strategic alliance of the main Spanish companies with leading brands and international projection in their respective sectors and the competent government departments. Acessed at: https://www.marcasrenombradas.com/ (15 May 2020).

Spanish Report).[114] It has been elaborated in consultation with other governmental departments, in particular, the Higher Council for Sports and sporting organizations. The aim of the Spanish Report is to reflect on the role of sport as a diplomatic tool and on the importance of building a Spanish policy in this field. In this regard, it can be considered the first pillar of a more ambitious plan aiming to build a Spanish strategy on sport diplomacy which should be achieved in five phases.

Phase 1	**Phase 2**	**Phase 3**	**Phase 4**	**Phase 5**
Political consensus about the competent authority for driving and coordinating the process	Analysis of the political and legal framework	Elaboration and approval of the Spanish Strategy on Sport Diplomacy	Implementation of the Spanish Strategy on Sport Diplomacy	Follow-up, monitoring and assessment of the Spanish Strategy on Sport Diplomacy

Along with this central initiative, it has to been considered that some regions (*Comunidades Autónomas* - Self-governing Communities - in Spanish) are also trying to develop their own models on sport diplomacy. These attempts are clearly connected with traditional claims of more political autonomy coming from some regions. From a legal point of view, the question deserves some explanation. According to Spanish Law, the competence on sporting matters is shared among local, regional and central authorities. Thus, local authorities are responsible, for instance, of planning sport facilities and implementing research programmes. They are competent for making sport accessible to all. As to the Self-Governing Communities, it has to be considered that according to article 148.1.19 of the Spanish Constitution they can assume competences on the promotion of sport and the proper use of leisure. Based on this

[114] La Diplomacia Deportiva como actor de la España global diego calatayud soriano la necesidad de un modelo para España. The report is available in Spanish at http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/SalaDePrensa/Multimedia/Publicaciones/Documents/Area%20publicaciones/Diplomacia%20Deportiva_L.pdf, (15 May 2020).
The main elements of the Report are the following:
(1) It analyses the different ways a State can resort to sport as an instrument of Public Diplomacy in order to improve its image and to achieve its foreign policy objectives,
(2) Carries out a study on the interaction between Diplomacy and sport throughout history,
(3) Examines the importance of the moral, ethical, political, economic and social influence of sport in contemporary societies,
(4) Includes a study of several national models of Sport Diplomacy,
(5) Concludes how these other models could inspire a Sport Diplomacy model for Spain.

constitutional provision, all the Spanish self-governing Communities have legally assumed competences on sport issues. Finally, article 149 establishes that the central government will have an exclusive competence over international relations. Being aware of the political power of sport and its potential to project the image of the region abroad, some Self-Governing Communities have tried to explore the possibility of resort to sport to gain presence in the international arena. The Basque Country[115] and Catalonia[116] are two interesting examples in this regard.

3.4. Croatia

As Croatia is mostly known in the world because of its athletes and sporting results, developing a national sport diplomacy strategy certainly makes sense. As a country of just around 4 million inhabitants, Croatian sporting results are a winning card. Winning the tennis Davis Cup twice in 2005 and 2018, being third in the FIFA World Cup in France in 1998 and second at the last FIFA World Cup in Russia and having Luka Modrić as the France Football, FIFA and UEFA best football player in the world for 2018, or in the past having Janica and Ivica Kostelić winning gold Olympic medals and Ski World Cup titles although coming from a country without a proper skiing centre, meant a lot. To have a proper picture of how sport may serve as an outstanding promotion and political – diplomatic tool, first it should be noted that the final match of the FIFA World Cup in Russia between France and Croatia had a global audience of 1.12 billion,[117] meaning that every sixth person in the world heard about Croatia. On the other hand, for such a small country, this kind of sporting event was an excellent opportunity for the Croatian President and Prime Minister to spend a lot of time doing, not just sport entertainment, but also politics, during the football games with Russian, British and French heads of state and governments. This is the reason why sport, and sport diplomacy, is getting much bigger attention for the governmental point of view.

[115] García, C. (2012) The Use of Sports as a Tool of Public Diplomacy in Regions or "Stateless Nations": The Case of the Basque Country in Contemporary Spain, *Journal of Sport Media*, 7(2), 115-128.
[116] Information about Catalonia and its sport diplomacy is available at https://diplocat.cat/en/about-us/ (15 May 2020).
[117] Around half the world's population tuned in to this year's soccer World Cup. Accessed at: https://www.cnbc.com/2018/12/21/world-cup-2018-half-the-worlds-population-tuned-in-to-this-years-soccer-tournament.html (29 Sep 2019).

In January 2019, the first ever draft of the National Sports Programme (a national sports strategy) was released for public consultation. This bold move was backed by the Parliament on 12th July 2019 when the National Sports Programme was adopted.[118] In this document, *Sports Diplomacy* is regarded as an important initiative to be developed, implemented and evaluated over a seven-year period (2019-2026). The Croatian Central State Office for Sport at the time, and now the Croatian Ministry of Tourism and Sport and the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs are tasked to form a special state nominated body whose competence is to work on sport diplomacy issues. Using sport as a tool to enhance international engagement, brand and connections is a logical step for Croatia, such is the power, success and visibility of its world-famous sports stars and teams. The government felt that it made sense to ally national interests and policy outcomes with sport. Just to have a picture of the impact of the Russian FIFA World Cup success, we must note that during the 8th summit of Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) and China and the 9th Business Forum of CEEC and China held on 12 April 2019 in Dubrovnik there were signed two memorandums of understanding for building two stadiums, one in Rijeka[119] and one in Velika Gorica[120] meaning the Chinese project on "stadium diplomacy" is still going on (see *supra*).

Sport diplomacy also makes good, economic sense. For instance, the representatives of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce and Croatian Tourist Board regularly follow national teams around the globe to build relationships, promote Croatian brands, attract new investments, and foster new cooperation with host economic partners. Sporting events, for a small country like Croatia, serve as productive, informal settings that can create win-win opportunities for both sport and the economy. Here we may add that tourism, as the biggest Croatian industry sector, uses sport stars as promoters of the country and its natural and historical beauties in their promo videos.[121]

[118] National Sports Programme (*Nacionalni program sporta*), Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia, No. 69/2019. Accessed at: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2019_07_69_1394.html (15 Jul 2019).
[119] Record Number of Participants at 16 + 1 Initiative Summit. Accessed at: https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/35265-16-1 (10 Feb 2020).
[120] Kineski investitori iskazali interes za stadion. Accessed at: http://www.gorica.hr/2019/04/kineski-investitori-iskazali-interes-za-stadion/ (16 Feb 2020).
[121] Croatian tourism promo video named best in the world in Madrid. Accessed at: https://www.croatiaweek.com/croatian-tourism-promo-video-named-best-in-the-world-in-madrid/ (29 Sep 2019).

4. Sport diplomacy and the non-state sector

As highlighted in chapter one, it is not only states that are beginning to practice sport diplomacy. The MSE in Zagreb presented many examples of non-state sporting actors using sport for traditional and innovative diplomatic purposes.

A good example is the European Parliament and International Federation of Professionals Footballers (FIFPro Europe) Agreement to mobilise voters for the 2019 European Parliament elections.[122] FIFPro Europe members participating were Italy, Spain, Croatia, Austria, Slovenia, Cyprus, Sweden, Finland, Portugal, and Czech Republic. Football players from those countries acted as sport ambassadors, using their star power, as well as social media platforms, to encourage voters to participate in the 2019 elections. Much of this agreement was driven by a handful of footballers such as Croatian Dario Šimić, working in tandem with government, the EU and sports federations.

One further example from Croatia is the Youth Sports Games (*Sportske igre mladih*). Organized in three countries (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia), and often involving up to 160,000 future athletes, leaders and diplomats, this program uses sport as a tool for reconciliation, as well as promoting "*a way of life founded in understanding, friendship, solidarity and fair play while educating about all aspects of Sustainability*".[123] The Games enjoyed strong political support in Croatia and it benefitted financially from numerous sponsors and among them even Croatian state owned companies. The Games are now the biggest amateur sports event for children and youth in Europe.[124] They bring together young athletes from primary and secondary schools who compete across ten sporting disciplines. In its twenty-two years of existence, the Youth Sport Games have included more than 1.5 million participants. The importance of such an event in a region still recovering from the devastating wars of the 1990s is incredible. Sporting activity and friendship helps build relationships between future leaders, sports stars, and diplomats. Many prominent names from the world of sports, politics, arts and economics support the Games. Johannes Hahn, the EU Commissioner

[122] European Parliament and professional footballers team up. Accessed at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20190212IPR26008/european-parliament-and-professional-footballers-team-up (10 Jun 2019).
[123] Youth Sports Games. Vision&Mission. Available at: https://www.igremladih.org/bs/o-nama/organizacioni-odbor (10 Jun 2019).
[124] Youth Sports Games. About Youth Sports Games. Available at: https://www.igremladih.org/bs/o-nama/o-sportskim-igrama-mladih (10 Jun 2019).

for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Sir Dave Richards, Chairman of the Premier League is an Honorary President of the Youth Sports Games, and David Beckham, Luka Modrić, Jose Mourinho, Franz Beckenbauer and many others also offer their time, support and endorsement.

5. Conclusions

Traditional sport diplomacy, where sporting events are employed by governments to complement, boost or augment traditional diplomacy, continues to dominate both the theory and practice of this growing field of studies and practice. However, as this chapter has revealed, it is not just states playing the sport diplomacy game. The monopoly of the foreign affairs and its diplomats is no longer so strong and there are many non-state diplomatic actors and "*gates to international relations*".[125] Innovation in the use of sport as a diplomatic tool is, these days, driven from the academic, sports and civil society sectors. Savvy government, and supra-national organisations like the European Commission, are – to use a wrestling term – tapping in, forming partnerships, and, where possible, trying to create win-win, mutually reciprocal outcomes for all concerned: states, sports, fans, players, and so on. As Jarvie noted "*there is nothing like sport for breaking down barriers*".[126]

In terms of international practice, Australia continues to lead the world in both the theory and practice of sport diplomacy. As yet, the 'Lucky Country' is the only nation to consider a networked approached, that is, building fluid, sustainable partnerships with industry partners, allied and bound by not only sport but also common, collaborative strategies. France and small countries like Croatia also stand out for their innovative spirit, collaborative approaches, and well-thought out strategies.

In its short existence, both the theory and practice of sport diplomacy have achieved much. From a relatively obscure, marginalized position, the field has grown rapidly over the past decade, thanks to some innovative theory and policy. The fact that sport remains one of the success stories of the globalized era has also helped, as has the growing will, capacity and expertise of 'new', non-state actors to do more on and off the pitch.

[125] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 139.
[126] Jarvie, cited in Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 257.

Chapter Three

Towards an EU Organizational Culture of Sport Diplomacy

1. Introduction

The second Multi Sport Event (MSE2), held in Madrid on 20th September 2019, dealt with the challenging issue of how, if the EU was to develop a sport diplomacy strategy, it should develop an organizational culture of sport diplomacy so that the issue becomes mainstreamed and a routine part of the EU's work. In line with this idea, the starting point of this analysis is the need for the EU to develop a set of principles and rules that will serve as the basis for making decisions and implementing measures and initiatives in the field of sport diplomacy. A sport diplomacy framework is then conceived as a condition for a successful and efficient action in this realm, and the concept of organizational culture will structure the analysis and will be used in this chapter as a prerequisite for the design of such strategy.

An EU sport diplomacy framework has to be built within the context of the external relations policy and developed through both binding agreements adopted between the EU and third countries and soft law instruments which are typical of the political dialogue the EU maintains with third countries and organizations. A variety of EU institutions will participate in its implementation. The role of the Council of the EU, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European External Action Service (EEAS) will be considered. The aim of this chapter is fourfold:[127]

1. It will outline a theoretical framework for the implementation of an EU sport diplomacy strategy.

[127] The author would like to thank Dr. J. Simon Rofe, from SOAS London, for his contribution and advice on various issues examined in this chapter.

2. It will propose a definition of the notion of organizational culture, which should structure EU's action in this field.

3. It will also explore the challenges that the EU faces in order to introduce a successful organizational culture in the sport diplomacy domain.

4. Concrete proposals will be formulated to help the EU and its Member States shape their own sport diplomacy policy from a practical perspective.

2. Towards an EU organizational culture in the sport diplomacy domain: Traits and key challenges

2.1. Reviewing past and recent literature: What's in a name?

First, it is necessary to conceptualize what we understand by 'organizational culture'. Whilst several authors have attempted definitions, at the time of writing there is still no generally accepted consensus. As has been said, "*a glance at just a few works that use the concept of 'organizational culture' will reveal enormous variation in the definition of this term and even more in the use of the term 'culture*'".[128] Despite this lack of definition, there seems to be a universal consensus that it plays a crucial role in the proper execution of the strategies, actions and measures adopted by an organization as well as on its effects on performance efficiency.[129]

A very well-known definition is the one proposed by Eldridge and Crombie in 1974. According to these authors, it refers "*to the unique configuration of norms, values, beliefs and ways of behaving that characterize the manner in which groups and individuals combine to get things done*".[130] In general, definitions proposed by culture theorists range "*from notions of accepted behavioral rules, norms and rituals (…) to shared values, ideologies and beliefs (…), and, at an underlying level, shared patterns of meaning or understanding (…)*".[131]

[128] Alvesson, M. (2012), *Understanding Organizational Culture*, Sage, at 3.
[129] Bluedorn, A. C. and Lundgren, E. F. (1993) A culture-match perspective for strategic change, *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, 7 (5), 137-179.
[130] Eldridge, J. and Crombie, A. (1974) *The Sociology of Organizations*, Allen and Unwin, at 89.
[131] Linnenluecke, M. K. and Griffiths, A. (2010) Corporate sustainability and organizational culture, *Journal of World Business*, 45(4), 357-366, at 358.

When we unpack this quotation, a number of issues emerge, each of which impacts on the ways the work of an organization is structured. First, there is the suggestion that this is not a fixed concept, but one that changes over the time and that is dependent on the type of organization. Second, there is the idea that, as said, organizational culture has something to do with the behavior of the organization. Third, shared values and beliefs inform a particular organization's culture. Nevertheless, apprehending the essence of the concept is not an easy task. This is mainly due to its multidimensional character.

Organizational culture is, therefore, an evasive concept which has gained weight in the corpus of knowledge typical of strategic and managerial studies. Rather than establishing a strict definition, both academics and practitioners are more prone to decompose the main elements of the concept, as values, managerial practices, internal communication, and non-formal interactions. These decomposed elements are usually studied in the framework of organisational performance and effectiveness, as recent studies have done.[132] In this line, Hofstede's seminal work draws our attention to six independent dimensions to describe the variety in organizations practices that can be used as a framework to give an account of organizational cultures:[133]

- Process orientation cultures, dominated by technical and bureaucratic routines *vs*. results orientation determined by a common concern of outcomes cultures.

- Employee orientation *vs*. job orientation cultures. The former tends to assume responsibility only for employees' job performance, while employee-oriented cultures accept also broad responsibility for the organization members' wellbeing.

- Parochialism, when the members of the organization derive their identity from the organization they work for *vs*. professionalism, when they identify primarily with their professions.[134]

[132] Shahzad, F. et al (2012) Impact of Organizational Culture on Organizational Performance: An Overview, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 3(9), 975-985.
[133] Hofstede, G. (2011), *Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context*, Online readings in psychology and culture, 2 (1), 2307-0919. The author warns about that his research is based in organizations from different countries. For this reason, additional dimensions may be necessary or some of these six may be less useful for, for example, defining an organizational culture within the EU.
[134] As Christensen and Yesilkagit remind us "*the influence of international civil servants depends on various aspects of the structure, competence, legitimacy and culture of the organization*" Christensen, J. and Yesilkagit,

- Open system *vs*. closed system cultures, related to the style of internal and external communication, and to the ease with which outsiders and newcomers are admitted.

- Loose control *vs*. tight control cultures, referring to the degree of formality of the organization.

- Normative *vs*. pragmatic cultures, describing the way of dealing with the environment.

Despite the importance of organizational culture to explain the performance of any organization, recent developments have stated that it is even more determinant in the case of non-market strategies.[135] On this matter, both governments and public administrations have been the subject of a continuous research on this field during the last decades,[136] since the values, leadership style and internal relationship framework have been identified as part of the main elements to assess public administration performance and effectiveness. The role of organisational culture in the public sector was accentuated in the aftermath of the New Public Management revolution, when private sector management practices were adopted by public sector reformers. Starting from these points, several authors have defined different ways to improve public administration and government performance through a change in the organizational culture, through changes in leadership positions or specific training for civil servants.[137]

Organizational culture has not only been identified as a key element for public service performance, but also as part of the success in the implementation of new public policies. Therefore, the successful implementation of new policies needs a careful matching between the established policy goals and the organisational beliefs, as well as the establishment of

K. (2019) International public administrations: a critique, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26 (6), 946-961, at 951.

[135] Joseph, O. O. and Kibera, F. (2019) Organizational Culture and Performance: Evidence From Microfinance Institutions in Kenya, *SAGE Open*, 9 (1) at 1.

[136] Molina, A.D. (2009) Values in public administration: the role of organizational culture, *International Journal of Organization Theory & Behaviour*, 12 (2), 266-279.

[137] Schraeder, M., et al. (2005) Organizational culture in public sector organizations. Promoting change through training and leading by example, *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 26(6), 492-502.

specific management practices, the latter based on performance more than on the process-oriented nature of classical bureaucratic management practice.[138]

In this context, research has tended to focus on local and regional governments. Thus, a key problem with much of the literature in relation to the role to be played by a certain organizational culture in implementing successful EU policies and strategies is that EU institutions have been relatively absent from the analysis. There is still considerable ambiguity and uncertainty with regard to this question. The diversity of public administrations within the EU, their different organizational and managerial cultures, and the different conceptions of 'public sector performance' make it difficult to conclude that the organization has managed to develop its own organizational culture.[139] As might have been expected, EU institutions functioning and behaviour cannot be considered but the result of the diversity of the dominant administrative cultures in the EU countries.

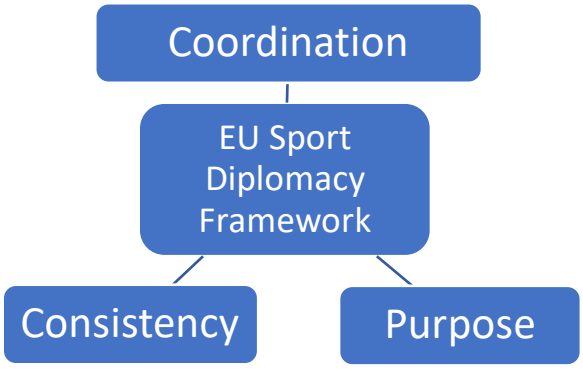
However, this lack of definition does not only affect the EU. The study of the role of organisational culture within international organizations is still to be fully developed. Only a few studies have been focused on the role of organisational culture as a factor to explain the behaviour of international organisations, even if some authors declare, without enough evidence, the key role to be played by vocabulary, internal power relations, common values and socialization processes of international civil servants in the decision making process of such institutions.[140] In other words, while the behaviour of international organisations has been studied in the context of international relations from different perspectives, i.e. rational choice models or game theory, the potential role of internal cultural determinants have not been yet fully explored. This opens a new field for further research and practice.

Having this in mind, the implementation of an organizational culture of sport diplomacy within the EU requires a reflection about its potential role in the fulfilment of the planned objectives, which obviously requires a previous agreement on which those objectives are. Once goals are

[138] Brunetto, Y. and Farr-Wharton, R. (2005) The role of management post-NPM in the implementation of new policies affecting police officers' practices, *Policing: An International Journal*, 28 (2), 221-241.
[139] See the papers included in Gravier, M. and Triga,V. (eds) (2005), Organisational Culture in the Institutions of the EU, *EUI Working Paper 2005/4*, accessed at https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/3337/sps2005-04.pdf (23 June 2021).
[140] Sarfaty, G. (2009) Why Culture Matters in International Institutions: The Marginality of Human Rights at the World Bank, *American Journal of International Law*, 103(4), 647-683.

defined, it is needed to address the type of culture that the advancement of these goals and objectives would require.

Later in this section we will analyse how the EU can develop its own organizational culture in the field of sport diplomacy. For doing so, we will first refer to the traits that we consider essential for the definition of an organizational culture in this domain. Then, we will examine the key challenges the EU and its Member States face in the implementation of those traits in the sport diplomacy domain. The notion of organization culture offers greater opportunities to promote the advancement of a sport diplomacy EU agenda since it incorporates a number of key elements which are relevant to turn the EU into a distinct and perceptible actor in this field. In our case, these key elements are coordination, consistency and purpose.



2.2. Three traits defining EU Sport Diplomacy organizational culture

A. Coordination

The role of coordination in organization efficient performance has been documented for some time now. Its importance seems obvious. Working together in an efficient and organized way helps to achieve objectives previously defined. Coordination is needed in order to minimize eventual conflicts, smooth rivalries, and avoid delays and other typical organizational problems. Coordination requires the integration of activities and tasks, and the centrality of this culture concept follows from the profound importance of shared meanings for any coordinated action.[141]

[141] Alvesson, M. (2012), *Understanding Organizational Culture*, Sage at 2.

As we will see below, EU coordination within the field of sport diplomacy must be ensured:

a) *Ad intra*: Within the EU. This should include:

- Coordination among Member States. It is a key element. Sports falls within the competence of Member States, having the EU competence as a supportive character. As a number of EU Member States have developed their own national sport diplomacy strategies,[142] coordination becomes important in order to avoid conflict between the national and supranational level and ensure complementarity.

- Coordination between Member States and EU institutions. In a similar vein, coordination between national sport diplomacy strategies and the EU's strategy in this field has to be safeguarded. The Council becomes a key actor in this regard. As known, this institution adopts EU policy frameworks and work plans in the area of sport with the priorities for cooperation between Member States and the European Commission.[143]

- Coordination among EU institutions. As will be detailed below, different EU institutions have played a role in the definition of a sport diplomacy strategy. Since sport diplomacy is connected with the implementation and consolidation of European values, both within and outside the EU, we can consider it has a 'constitutional' dimension and all European institutions should be involved in its definition and implementation.

b) *Ad extra*: Between the EU and non-EU actors, being these:

- Third countries and other international organizations. As said, Article 165(3) TFEU provides a legal basis for EU action in this regard. Also, the third and fourth EU Work

[142] See chapter two.
[143] The third EU Work Plan for Sport acknowledged 'the need to cooperate with third countries, in particular candidate countries and potential candidates to the EU, to promote European values through sport diplomacy', and agrees that sport diplomacy should be given priority by Member States and the Commission for the period covered by the Work Plan. See the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the EU Work Plan for Sport (1 July 2017-31 December 2020), OJ C 189, 15 June 2017. Sport Diplomacy has been also conceived as a key topic in the fourth EU Work Plan for Sport (1 January 2021-30 June 2024), OJ C 419, 4 December 2020.

Plans for Sport identify sport diplomacy as a tool in the cooperation with third countries. Other international organizations have been working in the definition of their own strategies and policies in this field. The Council of Europe and UNESCO are among them. Coordination between these international organizations and the EU is essential in order to identify EU's strategy added value. This is an issue explored later in the study.

- Sporting organizations. With self-regulation being a traditional claim of the sport movement, national and supranational institutions have encountered serious difficulties when intervening in the sector. Sports authorities have traditionally called both for independence and normative and organizational autonomy. They also play a role in the Sport Diplomacy domain.[144]

B. Consistency

Consistency plays a critical role in providing clear direction in the achievement of an organization's plans. It can be defined as "*the quality of always behaving in the same way or of having the same opinions, standard, etc*.",[145] and it is therefore linked to the behavior of the organization. From a legal perspective, consistency is understood as a requirement of no contradictions.[146]

At EU level, consistency is currently enshrined in Article 13(1) of the EU Treaty. This article establishes that "*the Union shall have an institutional framework which shall aim to promote its values, advance its objectives, serve its interests, those of its citizens and those of the*

[144] As Pigman has affirmed, "*a basic taxonomy devised to understand how international sport and diplomacy interact in the broad sense proves equally useful for understanding relationships between sport and public diplomacy. At the broadest level, one can distinguish between international sport used as a tool of diplomacy by governments, on the one hand, and international sport-as diplomacy, the diplomacy that takes place between a range of different types of actors when international sporting competition is organized and hosted, on the other. The former category tends to be better known to scholars of diplomacy than the latter, but international sport is playing a significant part in public diplomacy in both categories*": Pigman, G. A. (2014) International Sport and Diplomacy's Public Dimension: Governments, Sporting Federations and the Global Audience, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 25(1), 94-114, at 97.

[145] Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, retrieved from https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/consistency?q=consistency (accessed 23 June 2021).

[146] Langer, J. and Saute, W. (2017) The Consistency Requirement in EU Law, *Columbia Journal of European Law*, 20(3), 39-74, at 43.

Member States, and ensure the consistency,[147] *effectiveness and continuity of its policies and actions*".[148] It is not a new principle. On the contrary, "*the first mention of consistency at Treaty level was made more than 25 years ago, as an instrument seeking to regulate the conduct of the various actors involved in the European Community's (EC) external relations*".[149] This mention is now contained in article 21(3) of the EU Treaty, establishing that the EU "*shall ensure consistency between the different areas of its external action and between these and its other policies*".[150] Nevertheless, we can find also "*provisions at Treaty level providing for consistency to be achieved both more generally as between all EU policies (both internal and external) as well as more specifically in the field of external relations*".[151]

As sport diplomacy is an area of EU policy operating both at internal and external levels, consistency guarantees a coherent policy approach and is therefore connected to the idea of good governance.[152]

C. Purpose

Coordination and consistency should result in the determination of both the general and specific aims that EU sport diplomacy policy is supposed to achieve, the reasons for which an EU sport diplomacy policy is designed and implemented. Being a political exercise, the participation of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council seems desirable.

In a broad sense, the EU has the opportunity to enhance a new role for sport diplomacy, conceiving it as a tool for the dissemination of its values worldwide, the democratization of international relations and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as a central axis in

[147] Emphasis added.
[148] OJ C 326, 26 October 2012.
[149] Franklin, C.N.K. (2011) The Burgeoning Principle of Consistency in EU Law, *Yearbook of European Law*, 30 (1), 42–85, at 42.
[150] An additional mention is made in article 26.2: 'The Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy shall ensure the unity, consistency and effectiveness of action by the Union'.
[151] Franklin, C.N.K. (2011) The Burgeoning Principle of Consistency in EU Law, *Yearbook of European Law*, 30 (1), 42–85, at 83.
[152] 'Coherence requires political leadership and a strong responsibility on the part of the Institutions to ensure a consistent approach within a complex system': European Commission (2001), *European Governance: A White Paper*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/DOC_01_10 (23 June 2021).

global governance. A goal-oriented and strategic action should underpin the EU efforts in this field. This long-lasting purpose dimension should be consistent with a periodic determination of the specific goals of this EU policy area.

2.3. Addressing key challenges: The configuration of an EU organizational culture in the field of sport diplomacy

The EU and its Member States face specific challenges regarding coordination, consistency and purpose. The aim of this section is to highlight those challenges while making recommendations for effectively addressing them.

A. Coordination challenges

As known, a specific EU competence on sport only was set up in Lisbon Treaty in 2009. At that moment Articles 6 and 165 TFEU shaped the limits of the competence conferred upon the EU by the Member States in the sport domain. Thus, Article (6.e) of the TFEU confers on the EU the competence to carry out actions to support or supplement the actions of the Member States in the field of sport, while Article 165(1) sets out the details of a sport policy, stating that the Union "*shall contribute to 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*". Thus, sport is a relatively new competence of the EU which concerns both EU's internal and external functioning.

Nevertheless, EU action in the field of sport predates the Lisbon Treaty. Two interconnected aspects should be taken into consideration in this regard. First, the European Court of Justice located sport within the scope of EU law whenever the sporting activity in question constitutes an economic activity, in particular, within Treaty provisions related to the free movement of workers and the right of establishment and the freedom to provide services.[153] But sport is much more than an economic activity. The ECJ's case law has also taken into account the socio-cultural values of sport, in particular, non-discrimination.[154] Both dimensions of sport

[153] See Parrish, R. (2012) Lex sportiva and EU sports law?, *European Law Review*, 37 (6), 716-733.
[154] Case C-81/12, *Asociația Accept v Consiliul Național pentru Combaterea Discriminării* [2013] ECLI:EU:C:2013:275

had been developed by the other EU institutions before the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon.

Taken into account that autonomy has been a traditional and constant claim of the sporting movement in its relationship with the EU,[155] the truth is that even in the absence of an express sport competence, the European institutions have been addressing sporting questions from different perspectives for decades. Thus, the European Commission reflected on the role of sport in the context of the European integration process long before laying the underpinning of an EU policy for sport in the 2007 White Paper on Sport.[156] The Helsinki Report on Sport is an example in this regard.[157] And we find examples also from the European Parliament[158] and the Council.[159]

A consequence of this activity is that different aspects of sport were developed by the EU institutions before the Treaty of Lisbon, although certainly not in a coordinated way. As Parrish put it, even before the *Bosman* ruling "*the EU operated a highly polarized and fragmented sports policy characterized by two conflicting policy approaches to sport. First, the EU took a fleeting regulatory interest in sport. The ECJ and the Competition Policy Directorate intervened in sport to correct free movement and competition restrictions and distortions within the Single Market. These interventions were not however informed by the EU's other main policy strand and as a consequence EU sporting actions were not co-ordinated. The second strand of policy involvement in sport involved the EU pursuing a political interest in sport. In particular, sport was identified as a tool through which the EU could strengthen its image in the minds of Europe's citizens*".[160]

[155] The independence of sports organizations and their right to organise themselves through appropriate associative structures was recognized by the Nice Declaration in 2000. European Council, Nice, 7–10 Dec. 2000, Conclusions of the Presidency. Annex IV, Declaration on the specific characteristics of sport and its social function in Europe, *of which account should be taken in implementing common policies* (2000). The Declaration is available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/nice2_en.htm (accessed 23 June 2021).
[156] COM(2007) 391 final, available at : https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52007DC0391 (accessed 23 June 2021).
[157] Report from the Commission to the European Council with a view to safeguarding current sports structures and maintaining the social function of sport within the Community framework, COM/99/0644 final, available at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:51999DC0644 (accessed 23 June 2021).
[158] See for instance the Resolution on women and sport (2002/2280(INI) adopted on 5 June 2003, available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P5-TA-2003-0269+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN (accessed 23 June 2021).
[159] See its Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of the Ministers for Youth meeting within the Council of 17 December 1999 on the non-formal education dimension of sporting activities in the European Community youth programmes, OJ C 8, 12 January 2000.
[160] Parrish, R. (2003) *Sports law and policy in the European Union*, Manchester University Press, at 5.

Regarding sport diplomacy, previous attempts to enhance EU action in this field can also be identified before the delivery of the Report of the HLG.[161] Thus, the Sport Intergroup of the European Parliament met in Brussels on 30 June 2015 for the first time and addressed different topics relevant to sport, including sport diplomacy. Also, the European Parliament Resolution of 2 February 2012 on the European Dimension of Sport affirmed that sport can play a part in various areas of the EU's external relations, among other ways by means of diplomacy.[162]

Consequently, the EU built an institutional knowledge and expertise in the area of sport, in general, and sport diplomacy in particular. Even if in an uncoordinated and fragmented way, European institutions developed the main elements of the European sports policy before the conferral of an express competence in this field. The entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon marked the beginning of a new period, but the foundations of this policy can be identified much earlier. Even so, given the nature of the EU competence on sports, the organization has a weak legal basis to act, which makes it more complex to claim for its own role in this field.

Incoordination and fragmentation should be addressed when it comes to shape and implement an EU sport diplomacy strategy. Acting in a coordinated way, both *ad intra* and *ad extra*, will result in a more efficient common action. As said, diverse EU institutions have shaped until now an emerging sport diplomacy policy and have played an active role in boosting EU action. The Report to Commissioner Tibor Navracsics delivered in June 2016 can be identified as the starting point of this process. From that moment, the European Council, the Council and the European Commission have been working on a sustained basis in this field.

a) Addressing coordination *ad intra*

Sport diplomacy is part of the sport/external policy of an increasing number of EU Member States. At the same time, thanks to the supportive competence in the area of sport, the EU can shape its own sport diplomacy policy by coordinating Member States policies and supplementing them. The White Paper on Sport acknowledged the importance of cooperation among Member States. According to this instrument, this cooperation "*takes place in informal*

[161] Parrish, R. (2003) *Sports law and policy in the European Union*, Manchester University Press, at 2.
[162] 2011/2087(INI), accessed at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2012-0025 (23 June 2021).

ministerial meetings, as well as at the administrative level by Sport Directors"[163]. Besides that, a Rolling Agenda for sport was adopted by EU Sport Ministers in 2004 to define priority themes for discussions on sport among the Member States.[164]

In this context, the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), conceived as an instrument by the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, could be a useful tool. As known, it takes place in areas that, as sport, fall within the competence of Member States. Conceived as an intergovernmental method of policy-making, its shape "*varies according to policy area*".[165] Therefore, it is a flexible method[166] that is aimed to spread "*best practice, to be a learning process for all players that participate in the process*". At the same time, "*by seeping into domestic discourses and arrangements, it is supposed to alter the beliefs and expectations of domestic actors (…), thus leading to convergence in the long run. It is also meant to improve transparency and deepen democratic participation, one of the key objectives of the European Union*".[167] The reference to convergence is an interesting one, since it connects coordination and consistency challenges. Besides that, it offers the possibility of ensuring coordination beyond EU Member States and institutions, since "*in theory, OMC should involve all relevant stakeholders: the Union, the Member States, the local and regional collectivities, as well as the social partners and civil society*".[168]

In particular, the OMC would be principally aimed to:

1. Deciding a set of rules and guidelines for the EU in order to identify and achieve the sport diplomacy goals in the medium and long terms. Once decided, these goals would be endorsed by the Council.

2. Exchanging best practices in the field of sport diplomacy.

[163] European Commission, *White Paper on Sport*, COM(2007), 391 final (2007), at 49.
[164] *Ibid*.
[165] De la Porte, C. (2003) Is the Open Method of Coordination Appropriate for Organising Activities at European Level in Sensitive Policy Areas?, *European Law Journal*, 8 (1), 38-58, at 39.
[166] According to some authors, OMC differences depending on the policy area makes more accurate to talk about 'OMCs', rather than a single OMC: Hatzopoulos, V. (2007) Why the open method of coordination is bad for you: a letter to the EU, *European Law Journal*, 13 (3), 309-342, at 312.
[167] De la Porte, C. (2003) Is the Open Method of Coordination Appropriate for Organising Activities at European Level in Sensitive Policy Areas?, *European Law Journal*, 8 (1), 38-58, at 39.
[168] *Ibid*, at 44.

3. Transposing the European guidelines into Member States' sport diplomacy policies. This could encourage alignment between the EU sport diplomacy strategy and the domestic ones, thus avoiding contradictions and, consequently, ensuring consistency at different levels.

4. Measuring the effect of EU action in this field, by jointly establishing indicators and periodically monitor and evaluate it.

In short, the creation of a sport diplomacy OMC group could help to smooth eventual contradictions between European and national sport diplomacy policies and strategies. Nevertheless, it has to be taken into account that, while both the European Commission and the Council have a strong role to play within the OMC policy-making process, the role of other European institutions have to be defined. In particular, the participation of the European Parliament would need to be ensured. Both the fact that the European Parliament is "*completely left out of the procedure*",[169] along with the criticism of this method could make it problematic to adopt the OMC in this area. The formal involvement of the European Parliament would ensure more democratic OMC's outcomes. A re-defined OMC in the field of sport diplomacy could let the collective action of EU institutions in this domain.

On a different note, it has to be taken into account that the institutional responsibility for running sports policy at EU level rests with the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.[170] However, sport is a multidimensional policy, also in the diplomatic context. For this reason, sport has to be mainstreamed into the work of other European Commission services and EU institutions. In particular, those dealing with responsibilities in the implementation of external relations' goals and including the Foreign Affairs Council and the General Affairs Council.[171] Their involvement would also benefit a more coordinated action in this regard.[172] Nevertheless, it has to be highlighted that, despite the international consensus

[169] Hatzopoulos, V. (2007) Why the open method of coordination is bad for you: a letter to the EU, *European Law Journal*, 13 (3), 309-342, at 320.
[170] Including the word 'sport' in the name of the Unit has contributed, on the one hand, to draw attention to the work of the European Commission in this field and to send a clearer message that sport is a priority at EU level, on the other.
[171] The General Affairs Council is responsible for coordinating a number of cross-cutting policy areas and for ensuring consistency in the work of the rest of Council configurations.
[172] In 2018, the Council adopted its Conclusions on Promoting the Common Values of the EU Through Sport in which it invited the Commission to include sport as part of external relations and to promote the common values of the EU. The Conclusions encourages the promotion, where appropriate, of common European values outside

about the importance of sport as a soft diplomatic tool, it is not mentioned in the strategic agenda 2019-2024 agreed by the European Council in June 2019. This new agenda identifies as a priority for this period the promotion of European interests and values on the global stage.[173]

b) Addressing coordination *ad extra*

Coordination *ad extra* refers first to the need of working with other competent international organizations in the field of sport. The EU is not the first international organization in resorting to sport diplomacy in order to meet its goals. At the universal level, both the UN and the UNESCO have trusted in sport as a useful tool to foster development, social inclusion, gender equality, and peace-building.[174] At regional level, also the Council of Europe has played a role is this regard.[175] EU action needs, on the one hand, to prove an added value in this field, and to avoid overlapping with the action of these other international actors, on the other. Therefore, coordination between the EU and other international organizations should be ensured.

This is not a new problem. As it has been said, "*the coordination of organizations working in the same field or towards the same goal is a classic theoretical problem of organizations as much as it is a practical requirement*".[176] In this sense, international organizations are conceived as actors required to offer "*integrated solutions as well as the practices that may help in managing [global] challenges*", which "*requires overcoming fragmentation and siloed thinking (…) through coordination or the alignment of interdependent activities to accomplish a collective organizational task (…) in order to create more consistency among decisions horizontally as well as vertically*".[177]

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the EU and invites the European Commission to take further action in this field. The Conclusions are available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/eycs/2018/05/22-23/(accessed 23 June 2021).

[173] It is available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/eu-strategic-agenda-2019-2024/ (accessed 23 June 2021).

[174] In 2013, the UN General Assembly resolution A/67/L.77 proclaimed 6 April as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. The resolution is available at: https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/L.77&Lang=E (accessed 23 June 2021).

[175] As known, the Council of Europe is the only international organization expressly mentioned in article 165.3 of the TFEU.

[176] Boussard, H. (2008) The coordination of international organizations: the example of the United Nations Inter Agency Committee on Bioethics, *Revue Française D'Administration Publique*, 126, at 37.

[177] Mele, V. and Cappellaro, G. (2018) Cross-level coordination among international organizations: Dilemmas and practices, *Public Administration*, 96 (4), 736-752, at 736-737.

At the same time, successful EU sport diplomacy action requires the participation of sporting organizations.[178] The EU has a long history of cooperation with them,[179] the importance of which was most clearly highlighted in the White Paper on Sport and the successive EU Work Plans on Sport. Regarding sport diplomacy in particular, it is central the opportunity for the EU in this realm to recognise that sporting organizations are increasingly relevant diplomatic actors.[180]

Again, the White Paper on Sport must be taken into account. Due to the "*complex and diverse sport cultures in Europe*", the European Commission highlighted the need to strengthen its structured dialogue on sport by involving in it:[181]

1. The European Sport Federations.

2. European umbrella organizations for sport, notably the European Olympic Committees, the European Paralympic Committee and European non-governmental sport organizations.

3. National umbrella organizations for sport and national Olympic and Paralympic Committees.

4. Other actors in the field of sport represented at European level, including social partners.

5. Other European and international organizations, in particular the Council of Europe's structures for sport and UN organizations such as UNESCO and the World Health Organization.

[178] The abovementioned Council conclusions on Sport Diplomacy adopted in November 2016 recognized that Sport Diplomacy can be realized in close cooperation with the sports movement whilst respecting its autonomy.
[179] A recent example in this regard is the cooperation agreement adopted in February 2018 by the Commission and UEFA including the goal of promoting values and principles common to both parties: Parrish, R. (2020), Developing an EU Sport Diplomacy, *Sport and EU Blog*, available at https://www.sportandeu.com/post/developing-an-eu-sport-diplomacy (accessed 23 June 2021).
[180] As it has been said, 'sport in diplomacy' and 'diplomacy in sport' processes can be distinguished: Murray, S. and Pigman, G.A. (2014), Mapping the Relationship between International Sport and Diplomacy, *Sport in Society*, 17 (9), 1098-1118, at 1099.
[181] European Commission, *White Paper on Sport*, COM(2007), 391 final (2007) at 48. On 21 November 2017 the Council of the European Union adopted its Resolution on further developing the EU Structured Dialogue on Sport, which underlined the importance to invite the highest representatives of sports movement, European institutions and other relevant sport stakeholders to Sport Directors' meetings. The resolution is available at: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13432-2017-INIT/en/pdf (accessed 23 June 2021).

The EU should take full advantage of the main structures of the structured dialogue on sport[182] to ensure participation and cooperation on sport diplomacy issues with external stakeholders.[183] It is also noteworthy that other international organizations have created more formal mechanisms for institutionalized cooperation with external stakeholders. UN and UNESCO, at the universal level, or the Council of Europe, at the regional level, are relevant examples in this regard.

The following table summarizes this point:

UN	UNESCO	Council of Europe
The United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) partially illustrates the point above. It was introduced by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2001. Its mandate was to coordinate the efforts undertaken by the UN in promoting sport in a systematic and coherent way as a means to contribute to the achievement of development and peace in cooperation with relevant stakeholder. Nevertheless, on 4 May 2017, Secretary-General António Guterres announced the closure of the UNOSDP along with a new partnership with the IOC in this field.[184]	In 1978, an Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS) was established to promote the role of sport. CIGEPS is comprised of expert representatives in the field of physical education and sport from 18 UNESCO Member States, each elected for a four-year term. The Permanent Consultative Council (PCC), comprising key sport federations, UN agencies and NGOs, provides technical support and advice to the Committee.	EPAS is not only a forum where Member States of the Council of Europe cooperate in sporting issues. It also constitutes a useful platform for cooperation and dialogue between public authorities, sports federations and NGOs.

A specific and stable framework could be introduced in order to make possible a fluent dialogue and closer cooperation between public and private sporting authorities.

[182] Being these the EU Sport Forum, the EU high-level structured dialogue on sport in the margin of the meeting of the Council of the EU, and the EU operational-level structured dialogue on sport in the margin of the meeting of the EU Sports Directors or other informal Presidency events.
[183] In this regard, the Report of HLG on Sport Diplomacy recommended the maintenance of 'on-going good relations with relevant sports bodies, stakeholders and the Council of Europe through the EU structured dialogue on sport'.
[184] Some critical analysis of this decision can be found at https://www.sportanddev.org/en/news-and-views/call-articles/closure-unosdp (accessed 23 June 2021).

B. Consistency challenges: Mapping EU Sport Diplomacy within the External Relations Framework

In contrast with the political recognition of the prominent role sport can play in the EU's external relations agenda, sporting issues are underused in the vast typology of normative external relations instruments, both binding and non-binding, and programmes. Likewise, the EU's political dialogue with third countries and regions would benefit from a more congruous and structured role of sport. Also, although some of the actions carried out by the EEAS are directly linked to sport, these actions have not yet been systematically conceived.

The purpose of this section is to examine the role sport actually plays in the EU's external relations framework, while trying to identify consistency shortcomings and to explore the possibilities of reaching a more coherent approach of EU action in this field. A vast typology of international instruments is used to carry out the EU external action objectives.[185] Among them, we can distinguish between 'autonomous' and 'conventional' instruments. Both can be legally binding (agreements) or soft law instruments (for instance, Joint Letters, Joint Statements and Memorandums of Understanding).

a) Sport issues within international agreements

Sport is an area of cooperation considered in a variety of binding international agreements concluded between the EU and third countries or international organizations.[186]

First, we have to consider international agreements on the economic and trade domains. For example, Economic Partnership and Free Trade Agreements seek to liberalize the trade in goods and services. Partnership and Cooperation Agreements are aimed at providing a general

[185] See Wessel, R. A. (2018) *'Soft' International Agreements in EU External Relations*, Paper presented at the ECPR SGEU Conference, accessed at https://ecpr.eu/Events/PaperDetails.aspx?PaperID=38907&EventID=124 (23 June 2021).

[186] As known, sport has played an important role in this framework due to the ECJ case law concerning cases of discrimination on grounds of nationality against players from third countries that have concluded an international agreement with the EU and its Member States containing a non-discrimination clause.

framework for bilateral economic relations. These agreements may contain specific references relating to trade in sporting goods and/or services originating from the parties.[187]

Despite the fact that they basically regulate economic questions, it is interesting to highlight that some of these agreements are supplemented by a Protocol on Cultural Cooperation.[188] For example, the Free Trade Agreements with CARIFORUM (the 15 Caribbean Community States and the Dominican Republic),[189] and with the Republic of Korea[190] include this kind of instrument. The Protocols set up the framework within which the parties shall cooperate in the facilitation of the exchanges of cultural activities, good and services, and expressly refers to the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions adopted in Paris in 2005.[191] Protocols on Cultural Cooperation can also be applicable to the promotion of traditional sports and games, considered by UNESCO part of the intangible cultural heritage.[192] Also, this practice could be extended to cooperation in the field of sport by signing specific Protocols on sporting cooperation with third countries which are Parties to such agreements.

Second, we will refer to Association and Stabilization Agreements. This kind of international agreements constitutes the framework of relations between the EU and the potential candidate Western Balkan countries. These agreements establish a free trade area between the EU and the country concerned, while identifying common political and economic objectives and encouraging regional co-operation. They serve as the basis for the implementation of the accession process and involve Western Balkan countries in a dynamic partnership aimed at stabilizing the region and creating a free-trade area. Even if the third EU Plan for Sport (2017-2020) acknowledged the need to cooperate with third countries, in particular candidate

[187] See the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada, of the one part, and the EU and its Member States, of the other part, OJ L 11, 14 January 2017.
[188] For a critical analysis of this practice see: Loisen, J. and de Ville, F. (2011) The EU-Korea Protocol on Cultural Cooperation: Toward Cultural Diversity or Cultural Deficit?, *International Journal of Communication*, 5, 254-271.
[189] OJ L 289, 30 October 2008.
[190] OJ L 127, 14 May 2011.
[191] The text of the Convention is available at http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (accessed 23 June 2021). The EU accessed the Convention on 18 December 2006.
[192] Recent UNESCO initiatives in this regard can be found at http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/physical-education-and-sport/traditional-sports-and-games/ (accessed 23 June 2021).

countries and potential candidates to the EU, to promote European values through sport, the role it can play in this framework remains unexplored and should be boosted.[193]

Third, Association Agreements are aimed at fostering close relationships between the EU and third countries on a variety of topics. A specific article regarding cooperation in the field of sport and physical activity has been included in recent Association Agreements concluded by the EU:

- The Association Agreement between the EU and its Member States, one the one hand, and Ukraine, on the other,[194] refers to cooperation in sporting issues in Article 441.[195]

- The Association Agreement between the EU European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, and Georgia,[196] refers to cooperation in sporting issues in article 368.[197]

These provisions should place a strong emphasis on the role sport can play to support democracy and economic development in third countries, paying particular attention to its potential benefits in the context of social inclusion and non-discrimination. Given the potential of sport in smoothing political dialogue, such a provision could also be included in Partnership and Cooperation Agreements.

[193] The White Paper on Sport only encourages the European Commission to pay particular attention to the sport sector when implementing the Communication on circular migration and mobility partnerships with third countries, and when elaborating harmonized schemes for the admission of various categories of third country nationals for economic purposes on the basis of the 2005 Policy Plan on Legal Migration.
[194] OJ L 161, 29 May 2014.
[195] According to paragraph 1 of the art. "the Parties shall cooperate in the field of sport and physical activity in order to help develop a healthy lifestyle among all age groups, to promote the social functions and educational values of sport and to fight against threats to sport such as doping, match-fixing, racism and violence". Paragraph 2 details the areas where such cooperation will be implemented: it "shall, in particular, include the exchange of information and good practices in the following areas: (a) promotion of physical activity and sport through the educational system, in cooperation with public institutions and non-governmental organisations; (b) sports participation and physical activity as a means to contribute to a healthy lifestyle and general well-being; (c) development of national competence and qualifications systems in the sport sector; (d) integration of disadvantaged groups through sport; (e) the fight against doping; (f) the fight against match-fixing; (g) security during major international sporting events".
[196] OJ L 261, 30 August 2014.
[197] According to it, "the Parties shall promote cooperation in the field of sport and physical activity through the exchange of information and good practices in order to promote a healthy lifestyle and the social and educational values of sport, mobility in sport and in order to fight global threats to sport such as doping, racism and violence".

b) Sport within soft law instruments adopted in the framework of political dialogue

The expression 'political dialogue' is used in a broad sense. In the case of the EU, it has its origin in the European Political Cooperation which was introduced in 1970 as "*a separate and additional framework of cooperation between the nine Member States of the Communities under which the nine agree to consult on, and so far as possible, to coordinate and act in common on foreign policy matters*".[198] At present, the EU maintains an important number of political dialogues with third countries or groups of countries. They take place by means of contacts, information exchanges and consultations. In particular, regular meetings at different levels.

Taking place at different levels, political dialogue allows the EU to maintain stable and periodical contact with third countries and regions on a variety of issues. Human rights, security, peacebuilding or democracy are among them. This process is complementary to other processes implemented by the EU at the international level.[199] Resulting in non-binding, soft law final declarations or statements, political dialogue puts less pressure on the parties to achieve concrete results.

Only recently, sport has starting to play a role in this framework. In November 2017, EU sport diplomacy took the practical step of integrating sport into EU-China High Level People to People Dialogue (HPPD) which has been taking place since 2012. Similarly, and allowing for knowledge exchange, the first EU-Japan Policy Dialogue on Education, Culture and Sport was held in Budapest in July 2018. The Joint Statement that followed the meeting affirms that "*sport offers an interesting opportunity for peer-learning, particularly with regard to measures to preserve the integrity of sport and to promote mutual understanding*".[200] Sport diplomacy is also mentioned in the Joint Statement made public after the Second EU-Japan Dialogue on Education, Culture and Sport, held online in May 2021.[201]

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[198] Fitzgerald, G. (1976) *European Political Cooperation*, in AH Robertson (ed), European Yearbook/Annuaire Européen, XXII. 18–39, Springer Netherlands, at 18.

[199] Sometimes, political dialogue is conceived as part of a formal agreement concluded by the EU and a third country. See, for instance, the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Cuba, of the other part, concluded on 12 December 2016, OJ L 337, 13 December 2016.

[200] See at https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/japan/48106/joint-eu-japan-statement-following-first-eu-japan-policy-dialogue-education-culture-and-sport_en (accessed 23 June 2021).

[201] 'Sports diplomacy and the opportunities that it provides for international cooperation were also highlighted, demonstrating Japan's and the EU's common interest in the field of sport': the Joint Statement is available at

Sport should become widespread in the framework of the political dialogues the EU maintains with third countries and regions by including it as a specific issue in:

1. The regular summits between the Heads of State of the third countries and the highest authorities of the EU.
2. The meetings of Ministers responsible for matters of mutual interests.
3. The periodic meetings of senior officials from the parties.

c) European Commission Programmes

The EU also integrates sport as a part of its external relations policies through the Commission support of sport-related projects in developing countries by means of a variety of programmes. Interesting examples in this regard are:

- Development cooperation programmes focused on young people:

1. Youth Development through Football programme in South Africa,[202] ended in March 2014.

2. EY4Youth Project in the field of culture and sport in Tunisia.[203] The project is aimed to improve the inclusion of the most vulnerable young people through cultural and sporting initiatives, considered as development driving forces.

- As mentioned above, in 2018, the Erasmus+ funding criteria were amended with the purpose of making possible the participation of individuals and organizations from third countries. This change had been recommended by the HLG on Sport Diplomacy in 2016.

https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/eu-japan-joint-press-statement-education-culture-sport_en (accessed 23 June 2021).

[202] Youth Development through Football, accessed at http://www.za-ydf.org/pages/home/ (23 June 2021).

[203] AECID and Catalan Development Cooperation Agency sign action protocol for young people in Tunisia, accessed at: http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/en/SalaDePrensa/NotasdePrensa/Paginas/2020_NOTAS_P/20200629_NOTA100.aspx (23 June 2021)

- Relevant changes affected also the European Week of Sport programme. From 2018, participation was extended to permit participation from Western Balkan countries and regions (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro), Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgina, Moldova and Ukraine), and other Erasmus+ Programme countries (Iceland, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, and the United Kingdom).

- In 2019 and 2020, the EU calls for proposals on exchanges and mobility in sport have supported learning mobility initiatives in the field of sport with the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership and with countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Through these initiatives, the European Commission has promoted the cultivation of relationships with third countries and regions in the field of sport. This tendency should continue in the future.

d) The Role of the European External Action Service

In its Conclusions on Sport Diplomacy, the Council of the EU "*raise awareness within Member States and in the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) (including EU Delegations) on the potential of sport to contribute to public diplomacy*".[204] Being the diplomatic service par excellence, its importance in the implementation of an EU sport diplomacy strategy seems obvious.
The following examples show that some of the actions carried out by EU Delegations are directly linked to sport:[205]

a) In October 2017, the EU Delegation to Armenia organized the European Sport Festivals and Tournaments aiming to promote healthy and active lifestyle.
b) Also in October 2017, the EU Delegation to the UAE becomes a patron of the *Ecole Francaise de Football* (EFF)

204 Council of the European Union (2016), *Council Conclusions on Sport Diplomacy*, 14279/16, Brussels, 23/11/16. Accessed at: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14279-2016-INIT/en/pdf (17 December 2021).
205 The information about the examples listed here is available at EEAS website: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en (accessed 23 June 2021).

c) In December 2017, the EU Delegation to Liberia donated sporting materials to the Amputee Football Association.
d) In August 2018, the EU Delegation to the Pacific Islands participated in the launching of an initiative aiming to use rugby to prevent violence against girls and women.
e) In November 2018, the EU Delegation to Philippines organized the first Euro-Filipino football festival.

Although important, these actions are not yet systematic in action or conception. A more consistent action should include:

a) The incorporation of sport related initiatives in the tasks carried out by the EU Special Representatives in troubled regions and countries. As they try to play an active role in promoting peace, stability and the rule of law in those areas, they could take advantage of the possibilities that sport offers in this regard.
b) The creation of an EU Office/Unit of Sport for development peace and stability[206] to coordinate EU action in this field.
c) The appointment of Delegation officers responsible for sporting relations.

C. Purpose Challenges: Time to take sport seriously within the EU External Relations domain

Neither coordination nor consistency will accomplish their goals without an overarching EU sport diplomacy strategy, which requires political consensus about priorities. As known, in practice, EU foreign policy relies on the competences and capabilities of its individual Member States. Any joint action within this field depends on their consensus about priorities and objectives. This consensus is often difficult to achieve, being these difficulties a direct result of the lack of a single voice with regard to international policy. The creation of the figure of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy through the Treaty of Amsterdam and of the EEAS by the Treaty of Lisbon has served only partially to address these challenges. These difficulties have often caused problems and frustrated the possibility

[206] This was the role played by the above-mentioned UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace.

of perceiving the EU as a single actor and may also have consequences in the sport diplomacy domain.

Nevertheless, as mentioned, there is a growing consensus in considering sport a useful tool in the areas of external relations and diplomacy. The EU has joined this consensus and the organization is facing now a main challenge: designing a consistent strategy in this domain. The above-mentioned Council Conclusions on Sport Diplomacy acknowledged that sport diplomacy "*helps to achieve foreign policy goals in a way that is visible and comprehensible for the general public*".[207] But, what are these goals?

In the context of EU Foreign Policy, Article 3(5) of the Treaty on EU identifies the EU's objectives. According to it, "*in its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter*".

The pairing formed by sport and diplomacy has proved to be a valuable one in all these areas. States, but also international organizations, and non-state actors such as NGOs and sport associations have utilised sport as a tool for development and peace, for achieving social change or for the promotion of human rights. There are notable parallels between the values of sport and the objectives of EU foreign policy, which provide opportunity to preserve peace, promote international cooperation, develop and consolidate democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.[208] As a diplomatic actor, sport can help the EU to "*engage authoritatively in the core processes of negotiation, representation and communication in order to influence third parties*". This is what diplomacy is about.[209]

[207] Council of the European Union (2016), *Council Conclusions on Sport Diplomacy*, 14279/16, http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14279-2016-INIT/en/pdf 23 Nov. 2016 (accessed 8 Apr. 2020).
[208] Murray warns also about the existence of a sports anti-diplomacy, that is, "the abuse of sport for immoral, unethical or intentionally divisive end": Murray, S. (2018) *Sport Diplomacy. Origins, theory and practice*, Routledge, at 6.
[209] Koops, J. A. and Macaj, G. (2015) *Introduction: The European Union as a Diplomatic Actor*, in Koops, J.A. and Macaj, G. (eds), The European Union as a Diplomatic Actor, 1-10, Palgrave Macmillan, at 2.

Furthermore, sport can play a major role in addressing the EU's need to improve both its image among its citizens and worldwide, and its capacity to respond to global crisis.

Once the potential for sport has been identified, it has to be taken into account in EU instruments defining external policies, priorities and goals. However, as said, is not mentioned in the strategic agenda 2019-2024 recently agreed by the European Council. The organization should correct its ways by reflecting on the concrete role sport can play in this regard and adopting specific related measures. Sport should help shape EU external relations strategies. Two concrete examples will be examined here.

First, the strong connection between sport and the promotion and protection of human rights has to be taken into account.[210] Regarding EU policy in this field, since the adoption of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy in 2012,[211] two EU Action Plans have been adopted covering the periods 2012-2015 and 2015-2019. No mention of sport is contained in the documents. This might not be surprising, if we consider that the reflection on the role of sport in this field was taking place at the time the EU was coming up with them. Nevertheless, sport is not mentioned in the EU Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 adopted in December 2020 either.[212] Being one of the five lines of action defined in the plan 'Protecting and empowering individuals', it seems clear that sport may have an enormous potential and can develop into a powerful tool during the implementation of the plan.

Second, sport can also effectively contribute to the achievement of the SDGs adopted in 2015 as part of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[213] In its 2016 Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and the European Commission announced steps to be made without

[210] Donnelly, P. (2008) Sport and human rights, *Sport in Society*, 11 (4), 381-394. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights of the European Union has mainly focused on the question of sport, racism and discrimination of minorities in Europe. Its work is available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/tags/sport (accessed 23 June 2021).
[211] Council of the European Union (2012), EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, 11855/12 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf (accessed 23 June 2021).
[212] It is available at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020JC0005 (accessed 23 June 2021).
[213] UN (2018), *The Contribution of Sport to the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: A Toolkit for Action*, available at https://www.sdgfund.org/sites/default/files/report-sdg_fund_sports_and_sdgs_web_0.pdf (accessed 23 June 2021).

mentioning the possibilities offered by sport.[214] Again, this absence is both regrettable and an evidence that the EU's certainty on the possibilities of sport is far from being fully developed. Recently, the Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Sport Innovation, adopted in May 2021, make explicit the link by affirming that "*Sport, in its diverse contexts, such as activities and events, can contribute to the European Green Deal and to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*".[215]

3. Conclusion

Coexistence between 'old', 'new' and evolving diplomatic actors defines contemporary diplomacy, and sport diplomacy can be considered a prime example of this. Both 'public' and 'private' actors can utilise sport as a diplomatic tool and equally will be shaped by sports' role in the lives of many citizens and the economies in which they live. The diplomatic troika of representation, negotiation and communication is as relevant in sport as it is in any other realm of 21st Century life. Public actors are international organizations and states and they seem to be fully aware of the possibilities of sport in the diplomatic domain.

Sport diplomacy is a multidimensional policy and diverse EU institutions have shaped until now an emerging sport diplomacy policy and have played an active role in boosting EU action in this domain. In addition to the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council's action have been mentioned in this report.

At EU level, in contrast with the political recognition of the prominent role sport can play in the external relations agenda, sporting issues are underused in the vast typology of normative external relations instruments, both binding and non-binding, and programmes. In like manner, the EU's political dialogue with third countries and regions would benefit from a more congruous and structured role of sport. Also, although some of the actions carried out by the EEAS are directly linked to sport, they have not yet been systematically conceived.

[214] COM (2016) 739 final.
[215] Available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/49705/st08770-en21.pdf (accessed 23 June 2021).

Finally, EU sport diplomacy should be oriented to the achievement of certain global purposes on the importance of which there is universal consensus: enhancing democracy, creating prosperity, building peace, promoting human rights or implementing the 2030 Agenda are among them.

Over the years, sport diplomacy has seeped into the mainstream. Now, it is time for the EU to become a leading actor in this field. This chapter has highlighted that the notion of organizational culture seems an adequate tool in this regard. Only a coordinated, consistent and purpose-oriented action will make possible the real impact EU action can have in the international arena.

Chapter Four

Transnational Actors in Sport Diplomacy: Perspectives of Cooperation

Introduction

"From antiquity to modernity, sport has been used in the international arena to initiate or feed exchanges, to project prestige, to serve as factor of influence." (Laurent Thieule (Sport and Citizenship), Strasbourg, Council of Europe, November 2019).

Speeches, publications, and reflections on sport diplomacy tend to start with a justification of the topic's timeliness and relevance, as if they needed to apologise to both sportspeople and diplomats for straying from their well-trodden paths. They generally do so by referring to Nelson Mandela's oft-quoted words about the "power" of sport to "change the world", or by recalling the "Olympic Truce" of ancient Greece as evidence for the age-old, inevitable, interrelation between sport and politics.

This perceived need for justification reveals that sport diplomacy, as a field of academic research, is still a very young sub-discipline, bringing together a variety of different approaches and perspectives. The recent attempts to provide a conceptual framework for the field[216] attest to this view, and simultaneously confirm that as the 21st century unfolds, there is a growing awareness on all sides that sport's relevance in international relations can no longer be ignored.

Sportspeople have become more aware of the political implications of their public statements and activities beyond the arena, while diplomats are increasingly interested in sport's added value for their own efforts in public diplomacy. Both draw on academic expertise to help them make sense of what their intuition suggests with increasing clarity: sport does play a role in

[216] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, and Rofe, J.S. (ed.) (2018), *Sport and Diplomacy: Games within games*, Manchester University Press.

how different actors around the globe perceive each other, present themselves, and try to influence each other.

When the author of these lines conducted, twenty years ago, numerous interviews with the organisers of the 1998 and 2006 World Cup respectively, including political decision-makers in France and Germany who had provided their support to these mega-events, not a single interlocutor was familiar with the term "soft power".[217] Today, the concept has made it into the mainstream vocabulary and has become a cliché of speeches about Europe's role in the world.

Nation-states (and their ministries of foreign affairs) are, however, no longer the only actors to seek to take advantage of sport's potential in international or intercultural relations. There has been a proliferation of sport actors, both on sub-national and supra-national level. In his recent theory of sport diplomacy, Murray devotes three chapters to the very diverse typology of "*non-state sporting actors*", ranging from small NGOs to the global governance bodies like FIFA or the IOC, and forming what he calls the "*international society of sport*".[218] Even more recently, a consortium of civil society organisations set out to conceptualise what may be referred to as "*grassroots sport diplomacy*", giving testimony to a new self-perception and self-confidence of grassroots actors.[219]

The global landscape of sport diplomacy is a complicated one, and a quickly evolving one with that. It is so far characterised by organic empirical evolution rather than full conceptual clarity. There are, however, increasing attempts by different actors to address the field with a strategic approach, an observation reflected in the name of the international project to which this report contributes.

As a new actor on the world stage of sport diplomacy, which has only just been granted a competence in the field of sport by the Lisbon Treaty, the EU adds one more layer to an already

[217] Sonntag, A. (2018) *Les identités du football européen.* Presses Universitaires de Grenoble.
[218] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 135.
[219] *Grassroots Sport Diplomacy, Overview, Mapping and Definitions.* Accessed at: http://isca-web.org/files/Grassroots_Sport_Diplomacy/Grassroots_Sport_Diplomacy_-_Overview_mapping_definitions[1].pdf, (10 Mar 2020).

complex environment. Although some of its foreign policy objectives may resemble those of major nation-states engaging in sport diplomacy, it is clearly not a state in the classical sense. Its tools, activities, and possibilities are necessarily different. At the same time, it is not the first international organisation of intergovernmental and/or supranational nature to venture into sport-related diplomatic activities.

The European Union's entry into the field of sport diplomacy

To put it bluntly, there is little doubt that the EU is perceived by traditional sport actors as an unexperienced newcomer at best, a kind of 'legal alien' in this territory at worst. Sport was traditionally considered a preserve of the nation-state, and the international governing bodies of sport were composed in principle by national federations, with the constraint of upholding the narrative of the 'apolitical' nature of sport and entire independence of the national governing bodies from political interference.

There are, however, several other international organisations that are already engaged in interaction with the global sport community. These are UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth, and the Francophonie. Section 2 of this chapter will provide an overview on the different approaches of these four organisations, while section 3 will formulate some recommendations for potentially meaningful cooperation perspectives (presented in the conclusion to this study).

Within the European institutions themselves, awareness of sport's potential in external policy is slowly increasing. Chapter one retrieves how the topic made it onto the European agenda in recent years.

The most visible sport-related activity of the EU is the flurry of sport projects mainly conducted by civil society actors that have been supported by the Erasmus+ Programme over recent years. For long-standing promotors of sport as educational tool in intercultural relations, conflict resolution and peace building, the slowly growing consideration for sport on a European level

is a logical evolution. After all, the EU's very reason of being is perfectly aligned on the humanistic objectives pursued by most not-for-profit sport actors.

Erasmus+ grants high visibility. According to one of the experts interviewed for this report, it remains "*the single most appreciated sub-brand of the community, even in the United Kingdom*". The EU thus "*has done an important step in including sport with culture and education, and adding it very explicitly to Erasmus+*". [220]

Among the members of the High-Level Group on Sport Diplomacy set up in 2015, there was a strong consensus that sport should not be confined within Erasmus+, but become the object of transversal cooperation between different Directorates-General (DGs) of the European Commission. Recently, there has been some encouraging evidence in this direction, especially in sports-related projects in the Western Balkans outside the Erasmus+ funding, jointly supported by the Commission's DG EAC (responsible for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture) and DG NEAR (in charge of European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations).

This chapter and its recommendations are grounded on the assumption that awareness of the potential benefits of sport diplomacy for the pursuit of EU foreign policy objectives will continue to increase among EU institutions. To quote the above-mentioned expert again, "*sport diplomacy is a concept that has come of age*", acknowledging that both scholars and diplomats may have been "*blasé about sport being something rather light*". Today, "*it would be foolish to overlook the feelings of cohesion that sport can generate. Sport can connect citizens, break down barriers and serve post-conflict dialogue.*"[221] In other words: "*It needs to be taken seriously.*"[222] One way of taking sport seriously on a European level is making it the object of cooperation with international organisations.

[220] Interview with a foreign policy scholar, June 2000.
[221] *Ibid.*
[222] *Ibid.*

Methodology

This chapter is based on a review of key documents relating to activities of sport diplomacy by transnational actors. It also integrates findings from research in sport diplomacy, although, unsurprisingly and understandably, the field is dominated by analyses centred on the actorness of the nation-state or major sports governing bodies (SGBs). The intervention of transnational political organisations has not yet been investigated by academic literature.

In addition to the document research, five in-depth expert interviews – both with diplomacy scholars and officials from different institutions – were carried out between January and June 2020. Given the relatively sensitive character of the report's topic – transnational, institutional cooperation in the making – these interviews were conducted in a fully confidential setting.

Transnational actors in sport diplomacy

The following section sheds light on the sports-related activities of four different actors of transnational dimension,[223] whose reason of being and explicit mandate may be considered of diplomatic nature.

UNESCO

As one of the best-known intergovernmental organisations of global reach, with the mandate "*to build peace through international cooperation*", UNESCO may be considered a 'natural' actor in worldwide sport diplomacy. The full name of UNESCO includes the key adjectives "educational, scientific and cultural". Although all three terms may be perceived to be somehow connected to sport, the latter is not explicitly mentioned. In the institution's organisational structure, rather than under "Education" or "Culture", sport is, somewhat revealingly, listed under the "Social and Human Sciences" programme, where the two themes

[223] In the context of this report, we use the term "transnational" as an umbrella term, encompassing both supranational institutions (such as the European Commission) and more traditional, intergovernmental institutions (the Council of Europe, or the United Nations, to name but two examples).

"Anti-doping" as well as "Physical education and sport" figure at the bottom of a list of nineteen areas of work.

Without wanting to belittle the attention paid to sport within UNESCO's very broad range of mandates and activities, it is clear that it cannot be considered a priority. To be fair, some sport-related publications cut across the different work programmes and are flagged on various pages of the UNESCO website, such as the 2015 report on the fight against racism and discrimination in international football.[224]

While some date the United Nations' consideration for sport as educational tool to the 1959 "*Declaration on the Rights of the Child*",[225] documentary evidence suggests that it is mainly in the 1970s that UNESCO started to view sport as a suitable tool for its purposes. It organised its first "*International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport in the Education of Youth*" in April 1976 in Paris. This conference is better known today under the acronym "MINEPS", one of UNESCO's principal organs in shaping its sport policy. The first MINEPS was instrumental in the development of what became two years later the "International Charter of Physical Education and Sport"[226] and the simultaneous establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport, generally referred to as CIGEPS.

The "International Charter" was adopted at UNESCO's 20th General Conference, as the first document to establish, in the first of its twelve articles, sport and physical education as a "fundamental right for all". Between 2013 and 2015, it was revised and updated following a large consultation among the member governments and beyond, including sport practitioners, experts from academia and activists from NGOs. It was adopted under its new name "*International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport*" on 18 November,

[224] Sonntag, A. and Ranc, D. (2015) *Colour? What Colour? Report on the fight against discrimination and racism in football*, Paris: UNESCO, accessed at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000235721.
[225] Beutler, I. (2008) Sport serving development and peace: Achieving the goals of the United Nations through sport, *Sport in Society*, 11(4), 359-369.
[226] UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, accessed at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000216489 (17 December 2021).

2015 at the 38th General Conference. According to UNESCO, the Charter has the vocation to orient and support policy- and decision-making in sport.

The Kazan Action Plan

The most significant recent document that currently inspires UNESCO's actions in the field of sports is the Kazan Action Plan,[227] named after the city who hosted the sixth MINEPS conference in 2017. The Kazan Action Plan (KAP) is an important profession of faith in sport's capacity to be an 'enabler' of sustainable development and peace and a commitment to go beyond declarations on sport policy toward measurable implementation of concrete actions. The KAP is based on twenty specific policy areas identified by the so-called "*MINEPS Sport Policy Follow-up Framework*" (pp. 5-15) grouped under three main objectives:

1. Developing a comprehensive vision of inclusive access for all to sport;
2. Maximizing the contributions of sport to sustainable development and peace;
3. Protecting the integrity of sport.

The five major actions identified by the KAP are the following

1. Elaborate an advocacy tool presenting evidence-based arguments for investments in physical education, physical activity and sport.
2. Develop common indicators for measuring the contribution of physical education, physical activity and sport to prioritized SDGs and targets.
3. Unify and further develop international standards supporting sports ministers' interventions in the field of sport integrity.
4. Conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a Global Observatory for women, sport, physical education and physical activity.

[227] UNESCO Kazan Action Plan (2017) available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000252725?posInSet=1&queryId=1e3c907a-5bbd-4459-b507-c5a3cfeac514 (accessed 17 December 2021); summary graph here: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368777 (Accessed 17 December 2021).

5. Develop a clearinghouse for sharing information according to the sport policy follow-up framework developed for MINEPS VI.

For each of these actions, developed in detail on pages 17 to 26 of the KAP, "*potential key partners*" are identified. The EU is explicitly listed for actions 1 and 5 (which, of course, does not mean that it would not be welcome as partner in the other three actions).

Cooperation with the European Union

Avenues of possible cooperation between UNESCO and the EU were officially agreed upon in a Memorandum of Understanding[228] signed as early as October 2012, shortly after the coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and the opening of a UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels.[229] In January 2019, the document was completed by an update of a "*Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA)*" aligned with the current EU Financial Regulation. The document, very general in tone by definition, emphasizes the extent to which the two organisations share fundamental values and the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (now called "SDGs"). While some areas of enhanced dialogue and strengthened cooperation are identified in the third section of the memorandum (education and culture, media, science and innovation, human rights, ethics of science and even an "integrated maritime policy"), sport is, to little surprise, not explicitly mentioned.

In the meantime, however, the liaison office has included sport in the scope of activities of the officer(s) entrusted with cooperation in the field of "culture". It also noteworthy that the Kazan Action Plan recalls that "*the responsibility for [its] implementation cannot rest with UNESCO of the CIGEPS alone*", but can only be successfully implemented if, in addition to UNESCO member states, "*other intergovernmental, government and non-government stakeholders share this responsibility*" (p. 16). This statement may definitely be considered a call for more and

[228] Memorandum of Understanding between the UNESCO and the European Union (2012) accessible at: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/unesco-eu_mou_8_october_2012.pdf (Last accessed 24 September 2021)
[229] About UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels, accessed at https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/brussels/about (17 December 2021)

close cooperation between transnational actors of different nature and scope, in priority the European Union and the Council of Europe.

Beyond such declarations of intentions, cooperation between the EU and UNESCO is likely to be project-based. The first significant sports-related joint project is named "Culture and Sports for Social Cohesion and Sustainable Reintegration of Afghan Returnees and IDPs (Hamdeli)".[230] Its implementation may be considered a genuine step forward but also leaves a series of questions open. These will be dealt with below.

The Council of Europe

Created in 1949, the Council of Europe was the first intergovernmental organisation to include sport in its realm of activities, implicitly at first, in the European Cultural Convention adopted in 1954, more explicitly in a second stage, in 1963, when the "*European sport certificate*" was established, aimed at simultaneously promoting the participation of youth in sporting activity and the values of European solidarity. [231]

As Gasparini sums it up, "*the primary objective of Council of Europe policy in the field of sport was not to replace national policies, but to defend certain common principles, and to combat certain phenomena deemed contrary to the 'values of Europe' (doping, spectator violence, discrimination in sport, homophobia)*."[232]

In 1972, the European Sport Charter (updated since, most recently 2021), was adopted as a framework for governmental policies allowing citizens to exercise their right to sporting activities. In 1977, a specific Committee for the Development of Sport was created, giving

[230] Culture and Sports for Social Cohesion and Sustainable Reintegration of Afghan Returnees and IDPs (Hamdeli), Accessed at: https://en.unesco.org/eu-partnership/sustainable_reintegration_afghan_returnees (17 December 2021).
[231] Gasparini, W. (2019) The Council of Europe and sport: origin and circulation of a European sporting model, *Encyclopédie pour une Histoire Nouvelle de l'Europe*, accessed at: https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/material-civilization/european-sports-circulations/council-europe-and-sport-origin-and-circulation-a-european-sporting-model (15 December 2021).
[232] See also the 2004 brochure "50 years of the European Cultural Convention", accessed at: https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/CulturalConvention/Source/Bilan50_EN.pdf (17 December 2021).

testimony to the increasing relevance of sport in the Council's activities. In 2007, the Committee was replaced by a full-fledged intergovernmental agreement named the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sports (EPAS),[233] which today includes 38 signatory states.

For one of the experts interviewed for this chapter, EPAS sees itself as a "*facilitator for member states, a provider of conceptual support, and a coordinator of national initiatives*".[234] This perception is very much in line with the official self-definition as "*platform for intergovernmental sports co-operation between the public authorities of its member states*", with the aim to "*encourage dialogue between public authorities, sports federations and NGOs*."[235]

The most tangible results of EPAS's mission are the major conventions in favour of sport's integrity that it has managed to adopt in recent years, namely the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competition (2014, also known as the Macolin Convention),[236] and the Convention on Integrated Safety, Security, and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (2016).[237] They follow in their intent the previous two conventions adopted in 1985 and 1989 respectively. The first of them, on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events,[238] was prompted by the tragedy at the Heysel stadium in 1985;[239] the second one was the Anti-Doping Convention.[240]

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[233] For more information on the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sports (EPAS), see https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/epas (accessed 17 December 2021).
[234] Interview with an official, January 2020.
[235] "EPAS: Factsheet" (February 2020), https://rm.coe.int/10-factsheet-en-epas-2019/16809398bc (accessed 17 December 2021).
[236] Council of Europe Convention on Manipulation of Sports Competition, The Macolin Convention, accessed at https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/t-mc. For an analysis of the Convention, see Serby, T. (2015) The Council of Europe Convention on Manipulation of Sports Competitions: the best bet for the global fight against match-fixing?, *The International Sports Law Journal*, 15, 83–100.
[237] Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (3 July 2016),), accessed at https://rm.coe.int/1680666d0b (17 December 2021).
[238] "European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches" (19 August 1985), accessed at https://rm.coe.int/168007a086 (17 December 2021).
[239] Sonntag, A. (2015) 30 years ago – European football's major lieu de mémoire, *FREE Football Research in an Enlarged Europe*, accessed at https://free.ideasoneurope.eu/2015/05/29/30-years-ago-european-footballs-major-lieu-de-memoire-2/ (17 December 2021).
[240] "Anti-Doping Convention" (16 November 1989) accessed at https://rm.coe.int/168007b0e0, completed by the "Additional Protocol to the Anti-Doping Convention" (12 September 2002), accessed at https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016800815 69 (17 December 2021).

EPAS declares itself explicitly open for project-based cooperation with other international actors, especially the EU. As the institution's current factsheet states, "*since 2014, EPAS has strengthened its operational co-operation capacity by developing joint projects with the European Union and the sports movement, for example on the topics of gender equality, child protection (in particular the fight against sexual abuse in sport), and on good governance standards*."[241]

While there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of this declaration, some observers would tend to put it into perspective. As was highlighted in one of the expert interviews, the efforts made by EPAS are highly commendable, but "*sport remains a secondary issue at the Council of Europe, including in budgetary terms. Despite a higher awareness of sport's potential in international relations and visible progress over the last five years, they seem to be permanently under the burden of proof for their relevance*".[242]

Beyond these considerations, the Council of Europe is known to have been navigating through uncertain budgetary waters in recent years, especially with regard to the part of the budget contributed by Russia. The interruption of the Russian contribution between 2017 and 2019 has forced the Council to establish contingency plans.[243] It seems obvious that the ongoing debate on Russian membership[244] will affect the Council's sport-related activities in two harmful ways. First, in a period of severe budgetary measures, available funds for sports projects are highly likely to be reduced (as are human resources in this area). Furthermore, in the light of the pending four-year ban of Russia from the Olympics and other major sporting

[241] "EPAS: Factsheet" (February 2020), https://rm.coe.int/10-factsheet-en-epas-2019/16809398bc (17 December 2021).
[242] Interview with an official (external to the CoE), March 2020.
[243] See for instance the Declaration of the Council's Parliamentary Assembly of June 2019: http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=27992&lang=en. (17 December 2021).
[244] See for instance reports by Deutsche Welle, Russia in the Council of Europe: What does it mean for human rights?, 26 June 2019, accessed at https://www.dw.com/en/russia-in-the-council-of-europe-what-does-it-mean-for-human-rights/a-49368822 (17 December 2021), France24, Russia's undiplomatic return to the Council of Europe, 28 June 2019, accessed at: https://www.france24.com/en/20190628-russia-undiplomatic-return-council-europe-ukraine (17 December 2021) or The New York Times, Council of Europe restores Russia's voting rights, 25 June 2019, accessed at: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/25/world/europe/council-of-europe-russia-crimea.html (17 December 2021).

events,[245] the credibility of one of the Council of Europe's major fields of action may also be significantly damaged.

Against this backdrop, it may be expected that EPAS will undergo some changes over the next years, in organisation, focus, and capability. These will no doubt affect inter-institutional cooperation.

The Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is an intergovernmental organisation of currently 71 nations and territories that sees itself as "*a family of peoples*", bound by a common heritage in language, culture, law, education and democratic traditions.[246] The most recent version of its charter, dated 2012, does not mention sport explicitly. But one of the most concrete embodiments of the Commonwealth today are certainly the Commonwealth Games, launched as early as 1930 under the name "*British Empire Games*" and organised every four years by the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF). Since 2000, this well-known sporting mega-event has been completed by the Commonwealth Youth Games of more modest scope.

According to is current strategic plan called "*Transformation 2022*",[247] the CGF's vision is to "*to build peaceful, sustainable and prosperous communities globally by inspiring Commonwealth Athletes to drive the impact and ambition of all Commonwealth Citizens through Sport*".

As an object of academic scrutiny, the Commonwealth Games have produced a flurry of impact studies relating to urban regeneration, tourism, and general issues of 'legacy', but relatively

[245] The ban was imposed by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in December 2019; see BBC, Russia banned for four years to include 2020 Olympics and 2022 World Cup, 09 December 2019, accessed at: https://www.bbc.com/sport/olympics/50710598 (17 December 2021). Upon Appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), the ban was halved. See Inside the Game, Russian flag banned from Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022 but CAS halves suspension period, 17 December 2020, accessed at https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1102113/russia-banned-two-years-cas (17 December 2021).
[246] For more information, see the Commonwealth Network, the Commonwealth, at http://www.commonwealthofnations.org/commonwealth/ (17 December 2021).
[247] Commonwealth Games Fedearation, Strategic Plan, accessed at: https://thecgf.com/sites/default/files/2018-03/Transformation-2022_updateJul15_0.pdf (9 February 2020).

little consideration is given to their role as sport diplomacy tool other than for the respective host city or nation. Discussing the Commonwealth Games as nation branding opportunity for the host, as Jarvie, Murray and Macdonald do in the case of the Glasgow edition in 2014,[248] which coincided with the Scottish independence referendum campaign,[249] does not say much about the community spirit within a transnational organisation that this event is meant to project.

Beyond the Commonwealth Games, "*The Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport (CABOS)*" was created in 2005 as an independent body providing advice on sport policy issues, "*particularly as it relates to Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), and protecting the integrity of sport*".[250] Once per year, CABOS produces a detailed, publicly available statement taking a position on the most pressing concerns and issues of the Commonwealth sport environment, especially with regard to integrity and alignment of sport activities with the SDGs. While its existence can only be viewed in positive terms, it seems to have neither the means nor the vocation to act as a sport diplomacy tool outside the structure of the Commonwealth itself.

The Francophonie

The *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) is an intergovernmental institution based on a shared language and cultural values. Under the current leadership of Louise Mushikiwabo (from Rwanda), the organisation, which counts 54 member-states, 7 associated members and 27 so-called "observers", celebrates its 50 years of existence all over the year 2020. Its proclaimed aim is to work for the "*political, educational, economic and cultural cooperation among its member countries, in the service of their populations*".[251]

[248] Jarvie, G. et al (2017) Promoting Scotland, diplomacy and influence through sport, *Scottish Affairs*, 26(1), 1-22.
[249] See also Jarvie, G. (2017) *Sport, the 2014 Commonwealth Games and the Scottish referendum*, in Bairner, A. et al (eds) The Routledge Handbook of Sport and Politics, 209-221, Routledge.
[250] Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport, accessed https://thecommonwealth.org/commonwealth-advisory-body-sport (9 February 2020).
[251] La Francophonie en bref, accessed at https://www.francophonie.org/la-francophonie-en-bref-754 (9 February 2020).

The most visible sports-related tool of the OIF's global diplomacy are the Francophonie Games *(Les Jeux de la Francophonie)*, which bring together, every four years, young people from the member countries. The *Jeux de la Francophonie* are much younger than the Commonwealth Games: their first edition took place in Morocco in 1989; the next one will be hosted in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo) in 2022.

Like the Commonwealth Games – albeit on an altogether smaller scale – the *Jeux de la Francophonie* provide an opportunity of gathering around sport for both ordinary sport fans and high-level actors of politics and business. And they give, of course, an occasion to the host country to step up their touristic capacities. Yet, beyond sport, they also explicitly wish to promote artistic and cultural exchange as well as sustainable development.

Another diplomatic tool of the *Francophonie* is the so-called *Grand Témoin*, a kind of cultural ambassador, generally a personality of international reputation, whose mission is basically to lobby in favour of the place of the French language within the International Olympic Committee. For the forthcoming Tokyo Games, the famous chef Thierry Marx was appointed.[252] The very existence of the *Grand Témoin* highlights of course the outstanding importance given to the language issue within *la Francophonie*, a notable difference to the Commonwealth's ambition and self-perception.

Less visible, but more important than the showcase of the *Jeux de la Francophonie*, is the standing Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and Sports *(Conférence des ministres de la Jeunesse et des Sports – CONFEJES)*, created in 1969, i.e. eighteen years before the idea of the mega-event was floated. It is revealing that the OIF's most recent fundamental Charter (2005),[253] only mentions sport once, in article 2, when referring to the CONFEJES as one of its permanent institutions. Scheduled every two years, the CONFEJES is a space of high-level,

[252]France Olympique International, Thierry Marx – Ep. 1:"Je ne m'inscris pas seulement dans une reflexion Franco-Française", accessed at https://international.franceolympique.com/international/actus/8108-thierry-marx---ep.-1---je-ne-minscris-pas-seulement-dans-une-rflexion-franco-franaise--.html (17 December 2021).

[253]Charte de la Francophonie, accessed at https://www.francophonie.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/charte_francophonie_antananarivo_2005.pdf (17 December 2021).

ministerial dialogue for the governments of its 43 members.[254] Its mission is very explicitly focused on "promoting the participation and social integration of young people within society", which positions sports very clearly as a tool rather than an end in itself.

The CONFEJES has no equivalent within the Commonwealth. Its intergovernmental activities are richer than its low public name recognition suggests. Its relative financial dependence on the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs is, however, not a particularly encouraging prospect, since, in the words of an expert interviewed for this report, the latter no longer has the means to sustain everything that happens in francophone Africa.

On a more general note, the comparison between Commonwealth and *Francophonie* suggest that the latter, while its work is more inward-looking, seems to be, by its very existence, more of a diplomatic tool in the (indirect) service of the leading member,[255] whose name already rings in the name of the organisation itself. And while the Commonwealth, when it comes to sport, seems to count on the organisation of its landmark mega-event as resource of prestige and worldwide recognition, the OIF is more modest, both in the size of its activities and the tone of its communication.

Conclusions

Beyond the myriad of private non-state actors of transnational reach and ambition, especially NGOs of different type and scope, there is only a handful of public organisations that are both transnational in nature and engaged in significant activities or programmes that may be classified as belonging to the field of sport diplomacy. Four of them have been briefly reviewed in this section of the report. The fifth, and most recent player in this field, is the EU.

[254] la Conférence des Ministres de la Jeunesse et des Sports de la Francophonie (CONFEJES), Les Missions, accessed at https://e-confejes.org/cfj2/les-missions-de-la-confejes/ (17 December 2021).
[255] Massart-Piérard, F. (2007) La Francophonie, un nouvel intervenant sur la scène internationale, *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, (14)1, 69-93. Gazeau-Secret, A (2003) Soft power: l'influence par la langue et la culture, *Revue Internationale et Stratégique*, 1, 103-110. Gazeau-Secret, A. (2010) Francophonie et diplomatie d'influence, *Géoéconomie*, 55, 39-56.

Does it make sense for the EU to develop more systematic relations or partnerships with one or more of the four players? As has been seen, punctual or more regular cooperation's are already engaged with both the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

The value statements made by any of the four actors referred to in this section demonstrate a wide overlap with both the EU's proclaimed values and the perception of sport's positive and constructive role in projecting and promoting these values.

There is, however, a significant difference between, on the one hand, UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and, on the other hand, the Commonwealth and the *Francophonie*.

The former two have been set up by a community of equals, formulating and defending the common interest of their members. They have a fundamentally inclusive purpose, even if in the case of the Council of Europe, this is limited by the geographical boundaries of Europe (as flexible as these might be at times).

The latter two are, despite their international and even intercontinental dimension, which sometimes reaches out beyond the boundaries of the linguistic and cultural community they claim to represent, fundamentally based on an exclusive premise. And the historically grown dominant position of the former colonial power within the respective community inevitably leads both organisations, at least implicitly, to serve as enhancer of national prestige or amplifier of national soft power resources.

Against this backdrop, while there is no reason to rule out punctual, jointly organised, sports-related activities between the EU and the Commonwealth or the *Francophonie* in certain geographical areas, UNESCO and the Council of Europe appear to be more natural partners in cooperation for the EU.

Relations with UNESCO:

On its website, the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels considers UNESCO and the European Union "*close and natural partners*", pointing to shared values and objectives and reminding the reader in passing that "*the EU is currently the third largest donor to the Organization*".[256] In the context of the very serious financing and organisational crisis that UNESCO has been undergoing since 2011,[257] following the decision of the United States to stop paying their membership dues (a sudden budget cut of approximately 25 per cent), this reminder of the EU's financial contribution to the functioning of UNESCO is not anecdotal.

It is therefore hardly surprising that one of the experts interviewed for this report sees "*growing interest in cooperation from both parts*" and a significant potential for "*synergies*".[258] For both organisations, cooperation could be a win-win situation, both in general terms and in ear-marked project funding. While European funding represents a reliable resource, UNESCO's global dimension can extend the EU's territorial outreach. This is exemplified in the first significant sport-related project already briefly mentioned in section 2.1 above: "Culture and Sports for Social Cohesion and Sustainable Reintegration of Afghan Returnees and IDPs (Hamdeli)".[259]

This large project of important societal impact (with a budget of several million €) is financed by DG International Partnerships.[260] What may look at first sight like an implementation of one of the recommendations from the Sport Diplomacy High-Level Group in 2016 – the mainstreaming of sports projects in development policies and programmes – turns out to be a project where sport is simply considered one tool among others. It is also a project on which the European Commission does not communicate through its own channels, but which seems

[256] For more information about the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels and Representation to the European Union, see https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/brussels (17 December 2021).
[257] Hüfner, K. (2017) The Financial Crisis of UNESCO after 2011: Political Reactions and Organizational Consequences, *Global Policy*, 8 (5), 96-101.
[258] Interview with an official, February 2020.
[259] Culture and Sports for Social Cohesion and Sustainable Reintegration of Afghan Returnees and IDPs (Hamdeli), accessed at https://en.unesco.org/eu-partnership/sustainable_reintegration_afghan_returnees (17 December 2021). "IDPs" stands for "Internally Displaced People".
[260] Formerly DEVCO, the Directorate-General (DG) International Cooperation and Development has become DG International Partnerships on 16 January 2021

to be implemented by UNESCO alone. At closer scrutiny, it appears as a random one-off project rather than the beginning of a more structured approach.

Moreover, according to another expert interviewed for this report, DG International Partnerships would be in a position to conduct sports-related TAIEX[261] activities in countries concerned by the European Neighbourhood Policy, but seems to persist in considering sport as mainly national competence rather than a priority on the European level.[262] Clearly, the link between sports and value promotion has not yet reached the level of transversality that the High-Level Group called for.

In one of the expert interviews, it was suggested that the EU should be both "*more sensitive and more assertive on the role of sport*" in its external policy, ideally showing commitment to the objectives of the Kazan Action Plan (KAP) and getting engaged with KAP working groups. It was considered that the KAP, rather than be perceived in a "*competitive*" manner, could serve as "*a common denominator*" or "*useful road map*".[263]

If the current European Commission wishes to give flesh to its claim to develop a "*geopolitical*" dimension and impact,[264] it should seek partnerships with organisations that already have global outreach and credibility, like UNESCO, and acknowledge sport, across all relevant services (EEAS, DG International Partnerships, NEAR, etc.) as an appropriate thematic for such partnerships. The EU should step up project-based cooperation with UNESCO, explicitly linked to sports through strong reference to the Kazan Action Plan and the Social Development Goals. It should do so especially through engagement with the MINEPS and CIGEPS instruments. Finally, the EU should include sports-related issues of geopolitical and diplomatic

[261] TAIEX stands for "Technical Assistance and Information Exchange". It is a development instrument aimed at aspiring candidate or neighbouring countries.
[262] Interview with an official, March 2020.
[263] Interview with an official, January 2020.
[264] As announced by President Von der Leyen in November 2019. See the analyses by Subotić, S. (2019) A "Geopolitical" Commission – What's in the Name?, *CEP Blog*, accessed at https://cep.org.rs/en/blogs/a-geopolitical-commission/ (17 December 2021), Leonard, M. (2019) The makings of a "geopolitical" European Commission, *ECR.eu*, accessed at: https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary the makings of a geopolitical european commission (17 December 2021) or Biscop, S. (2019) A geopolitical European Commission: a powerful strategy?, *Egmont Institute*, accessed at: http://www.egmontinstitute.be/a-geopolitical-european-commission-a-powerful-strategy/ (17 December 2021).

nature in its Horizon 2020 research programmes, asking applicants to seek avenues for cooperation with UNESCO as partner or associate project partner.

Relations with the Council of Europe:

As one of the experts interviewed for this report put it: the relations between the EU and the Council of Europe seem to be characterised by a certain "*power struggle*".[265] This does not mean that individuals on either side are moved by distrust or misgivings. Institutions are inevitably zealous guardians of their prerogatives and sharing what is perceived as a tool of influence does not come naturally to individual actors. It is no surprise that, according to another interviewee, the road to better cooperation is paved with "*memorandums that get stuck in the details*".[266]

The first step to overcome these hurdles is a stronger commitment to transparent communication and mutual consultation. First, the EU Member States should make sure the Commission is systematically invited to meetings working on sport-related conventions proposed by the Council of Europe, such as the Anti-Doping Convention, or other major sports-related documents. While Member States representatives change over time, the Commission could provide the necessary continuity in such collaborations. Second, cooperation between the EU and the Council of Europe on sports-related issues should be taken to a higher level. Once established as a desirable practice leading to mutually beneficial outcomes on the level of the general directors, cooperation is more likely to become a habit on all levels of the respective institutions. Finally, the EU should pro-actively approach the Council of Europe with the suggestion of joint funding activities, for projects or actions on major issues advocated by the CoE, which happen to overlap perfectly with values and standards promoted by the European Union itself.

[265] Interview with an official, February 2020.
[266] Interview with an official, March 2020.

Sport Diplomacy beyond the Nation-State

The national vs. the supranational agenda

The sport diplomacy literature remains, despite the widening of the concept to include the myriad of non-state sporting actors, firmly anchored in the (soft) power logic of the traditional nation-state. The vast majority of the case studies of successful sport diplomacy actions that are related and analysed by contemporary scholarship make sense on the national level and are hardly applicable beyond.

This predominance of the national perspective remains, as Murray observes with lucidity, "*one of the shortcomings of public sports diplomacy*".[267] As a matter of fact, "*soft power overtures built around sport diplomacy still, no matter how honeyed, or sweetly put, cannot hide the realist, hard power character of a nation state*."[268]

If sport is about sharing, national sport diplomacy initiatives are, at the end of the day, about obtaining and preserving one's own soft power resources. This may well be where a supra-national actor like the European Union has a competitive edge. Representing, by definition, a large number of Member States, and intervening on their behalf, rather than in competition with them, significantly reduces the 'self-interest component' and enhances credibility in the promotion of fundamental normative commitments to specific values.

As one of the diplomacy scholars interviewed for this report observed, EU diplomacy is already taking advantage from "*not being a state*": "*The EU can go places where Member States can't. It is easier for the EU, rather than a single state, to take the 'human rights blame'. The EU is less vulnerable, it does not have the same historical record, its initiatives are untainted by individual interest".* According to the expert, Member States recognise this*: "This is when the European Union brings them an added value*."[269] It is obvious that sport seems to fit perfectly into this pattern.

[267] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 118.
[268] *Ibid.*
[269] Interview with a diplomacy scholar, May 2020.

The emergence of sectoral diplomacy

This being said, in their need for justification, non-state sporting actors and academics of sport diplomacy have a tendency to oversell its potential. Some of them, eager to highlight its potential impact, find themselves in what Cooley calls a "*rhetorical entrapment*".[270] For the time being, it is no doubt more reasonable to agree with Beacom and Rofe, who reminds us to "*be careful not to over-emphasize the role of sport in international diplomacy*", which finds itself still "*on the margins of international relations*."[271]

According to several experts, one of the reasons for the gap between the enthusiasm of the sport diplomacy promoters in civil society or academia and the hesitation with which it is embraced by many professional diplomats may be found in the practice of diplomacy itself, shaped by a long tradition that has produced deeply anchored behaviour and perception patterns.

Such institutional inertia notwithstanding, the hour of the untapped potential of sport diplomacy may come sooner than many think. According to another foreign policy expert, it is important for all diplomatic actors to realise that "*the future of diplomacy will be characterised by specialisation rather than generalisation*".[272] In what Murray calls "*the digital, plural and public twenty-first century*",[273] actors will have to identify sectors in which to specialise, and for some of them, sport diplomacy is no doubt a very promising sectoral focus. [274]

Both UNESCO and the Council of Europe, which this report has identified as 'natural' partners of the EU in sport diplomacy, are likely to be under similar pressure to identify key sectors on which to concentrate their resources. Like all big institutions with a significant history, "*they*

[270] Cooley, L. (2018) *The governance of sport in deeply divided societies: actors and institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus and Northern Ireland*, in Rofe J.S. (ed.) Sport and Diplomacy: Games within games, 13-33, Manchester University Press.
[271] Beacom, A. and Rofe, S. (2018) *Post-match recovery and analysis: concluding thoughts on sport and diplomacy*, in Rofe S. (ed.) Sport and Diplomacy: Games within games, 243-262, Manchester University Press, at 257.
[272] Interview with a foreign policy expert, June 2020.
[273] Murray, S. (2018) *Sports Diplomacy, Origins, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, at 96.
[274] For the theorisation of "sectoral diplomacy", see Damro, C., et al (eds.) (2017) *The European Union's Evolving External Engagement: Towards New Sectoral Diplomacies?*, Routledge.

are trying to do too much, too widely, and have trouble getting rid of activities or themes", as one expert put it. In the future, "*each of their activities will need a unique selling point, which is currently not the case*".[275]

Cooperation with the EU in the field of sport diplomacy would have the potential to enable UNESCO and the Council of Europe to sharpen their profile. It would at the same time result in mutually beneficial outcomes for each organisation involved. While the geographical outreach and diplomatic constraints of these three organisations differ, there is a massive overlap both in terms of fundamental values and in the perception of the nature and social role of sport. To a neutral observer, this can only appear as a very promising starting point.

Making the best possible use of these opportunities does, however, require a certain change of organisational culture in two areas. On the one hand, there needs to be a more widespread recognition among diplomats of sport's potential in foreign policy; and on the other hand, there needs to be a clear commitment in the organisations concerned to an attitude of institutional complementarity rather than competition. The time is ripe for both.

What is required on the side of sports activists, think-tanks, and academics, is perhaps simply a good dose of patience. Institutional inertia is a powerful force, and changing attitudes takes time. The High-Level Group submitted its recommendation five years ago, and there have already been some modest, but notable advances. It will be important to keep sport diplomacy on the agenda. Even a modest momentum is a momentum.

[275] Interview with a foreign policy expert, June 2020.

Chapter Five

EU Sport Diplomacy, Mega Sporting Events and Human Rights

Introduction

The development of EU sport diplomacy has as one of its core aims the diffusion of the EU's core values beyond its territorial borders. It can do so by employing sport as a way to present the EU to the world. However, there is also a possibility, explored in this chapter, to develop a sort of 'Meta sport diplomacy' that would have as its purpose to influence the quasi-diplomatic activities of the Sports Governing Bodies (SGBs) themselves in order to harness their private power and transnational influence to spread the EU's values across the globe. These values are enshrined in Articles 3(5) and 21(1) TEU.[276] Thus, instead of directing diplomatic attention exclusively to states, the EU would also engage its diplomatic resources to shape the transnational activities of the SGBs. Such a 'Meta sport diplomacy' could find application, for example, in the context of the organisation of mega sporting events and in particular with regard to their human rights impacts. Indeed, as human rights feature prominently in the EU's proclaimed core values, it would seem coherent to integrate them in any future EU sport diplomacy that would be also directed at the SGBs as transnational diplomatic players. In fact, as will be discussed at greater length in the second section of this chapter, it would also be in line with the expectations expressed by Members of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, who have been regularly urging both the European Commission (EC) and the SGBs to exercise their diplomatic power and leverage to this end.

[276] Article 3(5) provides that in its relations with the wider world the EU "shall uphold and promote its values and interests" and contribute "to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child". Article 21(1) indicates that the "Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law."

This chapter will first discuss the role of the IOC and FIFA as diplomatic actors and map their existing commitments to integrate the respect for human rights in the context of their Mega Sporting Events. Before reflecting on the need for EU sport diplomacy to adopt also a Meta perspective aimed at harnessing and strengthening the diplomatic force of the SGBs in order to strengthen the respect for human rights during Mega Sporting Events.

1. Towards a Human Rights Diplomacy of Sports Governing Bodies

In recent years, international SGBs have faced a growing backlash over human rights violations related to their Mega Sporting Events. Civil society organisations (CSOs), such as Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW), have started to target Mega Sporting Events and to criticize the human rights record of the host countries and/or highlight the human rights toll extracted by the organisation of the Mega Sporting Events.[277] Their demands are also directed against the SGBs, which they consider as sufficiently powerful to impose human rights conditionality onto the host-countries of their competitions. Thus, they are expecting SGBs to become ambassadors for universal values and principles embodied by the internationally recognized human rights.

a. The IOC and FIFA as Diplomatic Actors

The study of sport diplomacy is often focused primarily on diplomatic relationships between states and their use of sports as another playground for high *inter-national* politics. Yet, an exclusive focus on the states is reductionist and occults the diplomatic practices of the SGBs themselves.[278] Indeed, they, and in particular the most powerful and better resourced organizations amongst them, have used their power and access to political decision makers

[277] See for recent example Amnesty's campaign 'World Cup of Shame' dedicated to the rights of migrant workers in Qatar, Amnesty International, World Cup of Shame, accessed at https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/03/qatar-world-cup-of-shame/ (17 December 2021), or Human Rights Watch, Qatar: Urgently Investigate Migrant Worker Deaths, accessed at https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/10/10/qatar-urgently-investigate-migrant-worker-deaths (17 December 2021).

[278] For a similar argument along this line, see Postlethwaite, V. and Grix, J. (2016) Beyond the Acronyms: Sport Diplomacy and the Classification of the International Olympic Committee, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 27(2), 295–313. See as well Rofe, J. S. (2016) Sport and diplomacy: a global diplomacy framework, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 7, 212-230 and Murray, S. and Pigman, G.A. (2014), Mapping the Relationship between International Sport and Diplomacy, *Sport in Society*, 17 (9), 1098-1118.

around the globe to engage in diplomacy. This type of diplomacy has been referred to in the literature as "*International-sport-as-diplomacy*"[279] or "*pseudo-diplomacy of non-state sporting institutions*",[280] and new approaches to diplomacy such as "*polylateralism*" or "*multi-stakeholder diplomacy*" have been invoked to capture the actions of FIFA or the IOC under diplomatic studies.[281]

The IOC for example has been recently portrayed as a diplomatic player that is engaging in intensive diplomatic relationships with international organisations and states to protect its autonomy and its core interests. Thus, Beacom finds that "*the IOC is constantly engaged in lobbying as a means of pursuing its interests within the international arena*".[282] In other words, it has become a "*diplomatic actor*", which engages in "*increasingly sophisticated ways" in "diplomatic discourse*".[283] The IOC has in particular the capacity to influence the policies of certain countries through the bidding process for the Olympic Games. More precisely, as Postlethwaite and Grix argued, it acts as a regulatory institution that shapes through its rules and administrative practices various local contexts around the world. For them, the IOC's "*influence on members and hosts of the Olympic movement is a key dimension to justify it as an active diplomatic actor*".[284] Hence, "*the IOC has constructed a parallel universe of global power […] that shadows the political realities of international diplomacy*."[285] Similarly, the diplomatic power of FIFA in its interaction with national states has also been the subject of studies by political scientists and IR scholars.[286]

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[279] Murray, S. and Pigman, G.A. (2014), Mapping the Relationship between International Sport and Diplomacy, *Sport in Society*, 17 (9), 1098-1118, at 1106.
[280] Pamment J. (2016), Rethinking Diplomatic and Development Outcomes through Sport: Toward a Participatory Paradigm of Multi-Stakeholder Diplomacy, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 27(2), 231-250, at 234.
[281] Rofe, J. S. (2016) Sport and diplomacy: a global diplomacy framework, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 7, 212-230, at 218.
[282] Beacom A (2012) *International Diplomacy and the Olympic Movement: The New Mediators*, Palgrave Macmillan, at 244.
[283] *Ibid*., at.40.
[284] Postlethwaite, V. and Grix, J. (2016) Beyond the Acronyms: Sport Diplomacy and the Classification of the International Olympic Committee, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 27(2), 295–313, at 304.
[285] Black, D. and Peacock, B. (2013) *Sport and Diplomacy*, in Andrew F. Cooper, Jorge Heine, and Ramesh Thakur, (eds) The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy, 708–14, Oxford University Press, at 710.
[286] See Meier, H. and Garcia, B. (2015) Protecting Private Transnational Authority Against Public Intervention: FIFA's Power over National Governments, *Public Administration*, 93(4), 890-906; Jerabek, M. et al. (2017) FIFA's Hegemony: Examples from World Cup Hosting Countries, *Global Society*, 31(3), 417-440; and Kobierecki, M. (2019) International sports organizations as diplomatic actors. The case of FIFA exerting influence on states, *Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne*, 2, 105-116.

A comprehensive understanding of the position of international SGBs as diplomatic actors, and not only as subject of diplomatic practices, is essential in the elaboration of a strategic approach to EU sport diplomacy. One fundamental question in the context of this chapter is whether this diplomatic clout of the IOC and FIFA, as well as other less powerful SGBs, can be harnessed to turn them into ambassadors for internationally recognised human rights. Thus, as well as corporations are being encouraged to use 'business diplomacy',[287] so could SGBs make use of sport diplomacy to ensure that certain international standards are respected in the context of their Mega Sporting Events.

b. The IOC and FIFA as Ambassadors for Human Rights around Mega Sporting Events

The human rights footprint of Mega Sporting Events has been critically scrutinized for some years now. At least since the Berlin Olympics in 1936, it became clear that Mega Sporting Events are sometimes being used to prop up authoritarian regimes and provide them with a world stage to broadcast their propaganda. Moreover, Mega Sporting Events have also often been linked with human rights violations directly connected to their organisation (such as disrespect for fundamental labour rights of migrant workers involved in the massive infrastructure build-up necessary to host the events). This heightened public sensitivity to human rights violations connected to Mega Sporting Events, in particular since the Sochi Olympics in Russia in 2014 and in anticipation of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar in 2022, has been the trigger for the progressive internalization by FIFA and the IOC of their human rights responsibilities.[288] To a different extent, both organizations have publicly committed to respecting human rights and have integrated human rights requirements in their bidding procedures for the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup.

[287] Saner, R and Lichia Yiu, L. (2014) Business Diplomacy Competence: A Requirement for Implementing the OECD's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 9, 311-333.
[288] For an overview of the recent developments on FIFA and human rights, see Duval, A. and Heerdt, D. (2020) FIFA and Human Rights – a Research Agenda, *Tilburg Law Review* 25(1), 1–11.

i. FIFA's Introduction of Human Rights commitments with regard to its Mega Sporting Events

FIFA has experienced a lot of criticism after awarding the 2022 World Cup to Qatar. It triggered its biggest corruption scandal to date, which caused the departure of almost all its executives, and has been attacked for the dire working conditions experienced by migrant workers toiling on Qatari building sites to prepare the many infrastructures necessitated by the expected influx of football fans in 2022. The backlash has been fierce and led to an internal reform process that led to the integration of human rights at the heart of FIFA's constitution: in Article 3 of the FIFA statutes.[289] This process was framed and guided by a report produced by John Ruggie, former U.N. Special Representative for Business and Human Rights.[290] As pointed out by Ruggie, FIFA's events-related risks are one of the main sources of human rights risks connected to its activities.[291] However, these risks can be addressed thanks to FIFA's leverage on local authorities and businesses. In other words, FIFA is expected to use its diplomatic clout to push towards greater respect for human rights by the actors connected to its Mega Sporting Events.

Concretely, FIFA's human rights turn led, in particular, to the introduction of human rights requirements in the bidding process for FIFA competitions.[292] FIFA has also created a Human Rights Advisory Board composed of independent personalities, and which produces human rights reports twice a year. The reports are identifying the human rights issues faced by FIFA and offering some recommendation to remedy them. Many of the outstanding human rights risks flagged are related to the organisation of Mega Sporting Events.[293] Interestingly, FIFA already used its diplomatic clout in other contexts, such as to urge the Thai authorities to release

[289] Article 3 FIFA Statutes now reads: 'FIFA is committed to respecting all internationally recognised human rights and shall strive to promote the protection of these rights.'
[290] Ruggie, J. (2016), *For the Game. For the World." FIFA and Human Rights, Corporate Responsibility Initiative Report No. 68*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School.
[291] *Ibid*, at 21-24.
[292] See Kirschner, F. (2019) Breakthrough or much ado about nothing? FIFA's new bidding process in the light of best practice examples of human rights assessments under UNGP Framework, *The International Sports Law Journal*, 19, 133-153.
[293] See for example the focus on Qatar in the 'Third Report by the FIFA Human Rights Advisory Board', May 2019, at 8-12. Accessed at https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/1f341f3aa3227cdc/original/sxdtbmx6wczrmwlk9rcr-pdf.pdf (17 December 2021).

the Bahraini football player Hakeem AlAraibi or to encourage the Iranian government to allow access of women to football stadiums.[294] These cases are concrete demonstrations of the potential of FIFA's diplomatic influence when used to alleviate certain human rights violations or mitigate specific human rights risks.

ii. IOCs' Human Rights Commitments with regard to Mega Sporting Events

The IOC has not been immune of human rights concerns and controversies either. In the early 2000s, the lead up to the 2008 Beijing Games was marred with attempts by civil society organizations to convince the IOC to pressure China to improve the human rights situation there.[295] Despite intense lobbying at the time, the IOC remained reluctant to intervene and relatively timid in the use of its potential leverage. Six years after, at the Sochi Winter Games, the IOC faced again strong scrutiny in light of the human rights record of Russia, be it with regard to gay rights, environmental rights or labour rights of workers active on the building sites of the Olympics.[296] This widespread criticism of the IOC's unwillingness to remediate human rights violations intimately related to the organisation of its flagship event led to changes to the Host City Contract, which currently includes a clause providing that "*the Host City, the Host NOC and the OCOG shall protect and respect human rights and ensure any violation of human rights is remedied in a manner consistent with international agreements, laws and regulations applicable in the Host Country and in a manner consistent with all internationally-recognised human rights standards and principles, including the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, applicable in the Host Country*".[297]

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[294] See FIFA, FIFA holds meeting on situation of player Al Araibi and calls for urgent solution, 29 January 2019, accessed at: https://www.fifa.com/about-fifa/organisation/news/fifa-holds-meeting-on-situation-of-player-al-araibi-and-calls-for-urgent-solutio (17 December 2021).

[295] See Kidd, B. (2010) Human rights and the Olympic Movement after Beijing, *Sport in Society*, 13(5), 901-910, and Brownell, S. (2012) Human rights and the Beijing Olympics: imagined global community and the transnational public sphere, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 63, 306-327.

[296] Human Rights Watch, Letter to the International Olympic Committee: Human Rights Concerns Related to Sochi Games, 1 October 2009, accessed at https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/10/01/letter-international-olympic-committee-human-rights-concerns-related-sochi-games (17 December 2021).

[297] IOC, Host City Contract: Games of the XXXIII Olympiad in 2024, para. 13.2, Accessed at: https://stillmed.olympic.org/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/Documents/Host-City-Elections/XXXIII-Olympiad-2024/Host-City-Contract-2024-Principles.pdf#_ga=2.232131103.1840861517.1502226150-1044322633.1501225876 (15 December 2021).

Thus, the IOC introduced the language of human rights as part of its contractual framework regulating the organisation of the Olympic Games, whether this language will lead to practical changes is still an open question.[298] The upcoming Beijing Winter Games will be an occasion to test these commitments in practice, as China's human rights record remains a highly controversial matter.[299] Furthermore, in December 2020, the IOC announced its intention to "*move forward with its human rights approach*".[300] In particular, it announced that it would "*complete the the development of an IOC human rights strategy and policy commitment*" and consider amending the Olympic Charter. On the institutional side, the IOC promised to work towards "*further embedding human rights in the good governance principles*" and the creation of a Human Rights Advisory Committee.

The IOC and FIFA dispose, through their monopolistic control over their global events, of considerable leverage to impose certain conditions on the countries (or cities) hosting their Mega Sporting Events. Undoubtedly, they are not in a position to require and obtain a fundamental transformation of the societies and governments concerned, but they can attached specific human rights conditions to the organisation of their Mega Sporting Events, such as the strict respect of the rights of the workers involved in the building of infrastructure linked to their events, the protection of freedom of speech on the premises of the event, the respect for equal access to the facilities of the competitions, or the provision of adequate compensation to those expropriated to construct the venues. The question at the heart of this paper is whether the EU should through its sport diplomacy exercise an influence on the SGBs to encourage them in that direction. Indeed, it is the premise of this paper that if human rights are at the heart of the proclaimed *raison d'être* of the EU, they should also be strongly reflected in its sport diplomacy.

[298] Grell, T. (2018) The International Olympic Committee and human rights reforms: game changer or mere window dressing?, *The International Sports Law Journal*, 17 (3–4), 160–169.
[299] See, New York Times, Minky Worden, Human Rights and the 2022 Olympics, 19 January 2015, accessed at: https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/19/opinion/human-rights-and-the-2022-olympics.html (15 December 2021).
[300] IOC, IOC moves forward with its human rights approach, 2 December 2020, https://olympics.com/ioc/news/ioc-moves-forward-with-its-human-rights-approach.

1. Integrating the protection of human rights at mega sporting events in the EU's strategic approach to sport diplomacy

The EU is often portrayed as an economic giant and a diplomatic dwarf. While the European integration process has been constructed around economic integration and the constitution of an internal market, it has taken some time for the EU to exist alongside its Member States on the diplomatic scene. The development of an EU sport diplomacy would seem to fit a broader shift toward the affirmation of the EU's influence on the diplomatic plane. Yet, such a sport diplomacy will make sense only if it is aligned with the EU's own core normative commitments with regard to human rights.[301] In the past, EU institutions have been keen to highlight the EU's commitment to human rights in the context of Mega Sporting Events. It is time to encode these declarations in a structured strategy for an EU sport diplomacy.

a. The European Parliament and Human Rights at Mega Sporting Events:

The EU has, as is well known, a limited competence on sports enshrined in Article 165 TFEU. In its White Paper on Sport from 2007, the European Commission failed to consider the human rights impact of Mega Sporting Events and focused primarily on the relationship between the private regulations of the SGBs and EU law. Yet, the EU institutions have not been entirely silent on the link between Mega Sporting Events and human rights. In fact, both the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union have produced soft pronouncements on the matter.

The European Parliament (EP) has certainly been the most active EU institution on these issues in the past as well as in the present.[302] There are numerous resolutions and other non-binding acts of the EP referencing the need to account for human rights in the context of Mega Sporting

[301] In other words: "Emphasis should be made on the role of sport in the Union's external relations, including the promotion of European values." Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on Sport Diplomacy*, 14279/16, accessed at http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14279-2016-INIT/en/pdf (17 December 2021).

[302] For a historical perspective, see Salm, C. (2018) Major sporting events versus human rights: Parliament's position on the 1978 FIFA World Cup in Argentina and the 1980 Moscow Olympics, Briefing, *European Parliament History Series*, PE 563.519.

Events. Moreover, MEPs have regularly used their power to ask critical questions to the EC with regard to alleged human rights violations linked to Mega Sporting Events. In recent years, much of the EP's attention was focused on the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. The EP has for example issued a Resolution in November 2013 on the situation of migrant workers in Qatar, in which it strongly reminded "*FIFA that its responsibility goes beyond the development of football and the organisation of competitions and calls on it, with the active support of its European members, to send a clear and strong message to Qatar to prevent the preparations for the 2022 Football World Cup being overshadowed by allegations of forced labour*".[303]

This amounts to a call for FIFA to engage in diplomatic actions to encourage Qatar to guarantee the respect of fundamental labour rights on building sites linked to the 2022 World Cup. The EP has also repeatedly voiced its concerns "*that some major sports events are being hosted by authoritarian states where human rights and fundamental freedoms violations occur*" and emphasised "*the need for awareness-raising campaigns among the general public concerning the need to ensure human rights provisions in regard to sports events*".[304] Interestingly, it has called on "*the EU and its Member States to engage with the UNHCR and other multilateral forums, as well as with national sports federations, corporate actors and civil society organisations to ensure full compliance with human rights in such events, including by being one of the determining awarding criteria for major international sports events*".[305] In another important resolution from 2016, the EP calls expressly "*for the development of an EU policy*

[303] European Parliament, Resolution of 21 November 2013 on Qatar: situation of migrant workers (2013/2952(RSP)), 2016/C 436/08, Para. 16

[304] European Parliament, Resolution of 17 December 2015 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2014 and the European Union's policy on the matter (2015/2229(INI)) (2017/C 399/19), para. 75. See similarly European Parliament, Resolution of 14 December 2016 on the Annual Report on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter 2015 (2016/2219(INI)) (2018/C 238/06), para. 97. European Parliament, Resolution of 13 March 2014 on EU priorities for the 25th session of the UN Human Rights Council (2014/2612(RSP))(2017/C 378/28) Para. 48.

[305] Ibid. For a similar call, see also European Parliament, Resolution of 12 March 2015 on the EU's priorities for the UN Human Rights Council in 2015 (2015/2572(RSP)) (2016/C 316/21), para. 51. ['[…]calls for the EU and its Member States to actively raise this issue, including at the UNHRC, and to engage with national sports federations, corporate actors and civil society organisations on the modalities of their participation in such events, including with regard to the first European Games in Baku in 2015 and the FIFA World Cup in Russia in 2018 and Qatar in 2022;'] and European Parliament, Resolution of 21 January 2016 on the EU's priorities for the UNHRC sessions in 2016 (2015/3035(RSP)) (2018/C 011/10), para. 58 [Is seriously concerned that some major sports events are being hosted by authoritarian states where human rights violations occur; calls for the UN and the EU Member States to raise this issue and engage with national sports federations, corporate actors and civil society organisations on the practicalities of their participation in such events, including with regard to the FIFA World Cup in Russia in 2018 and in Qatar 2022, and the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2022;]

framework on sport and human rights".[306] In 2017, MEPs recognised that sports should be "*considered an opportunity, to strengthen dialogue and solidarity with third countries, to promote the protection of basic human rights and freedoms worldwide and to support EU external policy*".[307] In its most recent resolution, the European Parliament urged "*public authorities, sports federations and organisations to uphold human rights and democratic principles in all of their actions, especially when awarding host status for major sporting events, as well as in the choice of sponsors*" and insisted "*that major sporting events should no longer be awarded to countries where these fundamental rights and values are repeatedly violated*".[308]

Based on these statements, it is plain that the EP is willing to support an EU sport diplomacy which would be directed at a multiplicity of actors (private and public, national and transnational) and would tackle head-on human rights issues connected with Mega Sporting Events.

b. *The Council of the European Union and Human Rights at Mega Sporting Events:*

The Council of the European Union has been less active on these questions. Nevertheless, its conclusions on 'Enhancing integrity, transparency and good governance in major sport events'[309] acknowledged that in the context of "*major sport events relevant integrity and governance issues are raised such as […]human rights, including children's rights and workers' rights and gender equality as well as the prevention of all forms of discrimination […]*".[310] In this regard, the Council invited the Member States to commit to requesting "*from all stakeholders involved as partners in major sports event to comply with recognized*

[306] European Parliament, Resolution of 14 December 2016 on the Annual Report on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter 2015 (2016/2219(INI)) (2018/C 238/06), para. 97.
[307] European Parliament, Resolution of 2 February 2017 on an integrated approach to Sport Policy: good governance, accessibility and integrity (2016/2143(INI))(2018/C 252/01), para. AJ.
[308] European Parliament (2021), Report on EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward (2021/2058(INI)), para. 19.
[309] Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council - Enhancing integrity, transparency and good governance in major sport events (31 May 2016) 9644/16 http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9644-2016-INIT/en/pdf (accessed 17 December 2021).
[310] *Ibid*., para.7.

international standards and participate in initiatives such as UN Global Compact, UN Guiding principles on Business and Human Rights […]" and of using "*transparent and relevant principles as the basis for providing public support of major sport events regarding specific integrity issues such as human rights, including children's rights and workers' rights and gender equality*".[311] It also urged the "*international sport movement*" to consider "*to comply with recognized international standards and participate in initiatives such as the UN Global Compact, the UN Guiding principles on Business and Human Rights and ISO 26000 and 2012*",[312] as well as to "*develop and publish a catalogue of realistic requirements in the bidding phase of major sport events including transparent selection procedures and relevant selection criteria for the awarding of major sport events, regarding specific integrity issues such as human rights, including children's rights and workers' rights and gender equality, as well as the prevention of all forms of discrimination […]"*.[313] Finally, in its recent 2021 Resolution on the key features of a European Sport Model, the Council of European Union invited the sport movement to respect "*fundamental and human rights and in this regard take accountable decisions on the hosts for major sporting events both within and outside the European Union*".[314] While these conclusions are not mandating specific actions, they might be seen as outlining the expectations of the Council with regard to human rights in the context of Mega Sporting Events. This supports the idea that ensuring the respect for human rights around Mega Sporting Events should become one of the core focus areas for a future EU sport diplomacy.

c. *The European Commission and the European External Action Service and Human Rights at Mega Sporting Events*

Finally, the European External Action Service (EEAS) has not developed any strong policy commitments on human rights and Mega Sporting Events. However, when pushed by MEPs through parliamentary questions the then High Representative Ashton replied that the "*EU*

[311] *Ibid*., para. 17.
[312] *Ibid*., para. 27.
[313] *Ibid*., para. 30.
[314] Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the key features of a European Sport Model (30 November 2021), para. 48.

considers that at this juncture, the FIFA World Cup could represent an opportunity not to be missed for the enhancement of the rights of migrant workers in Qatar, and will continue to liaise with local authorities as well as FIFA and other relevant sport stakeholders on the implementation of recent commitments in this field".[315] The EC did include a commitment to prepare "*guiding principles relating to democracy, human rights and labour rights, in particular in the context of the awarding procedure of major sport events*" in its European Union Work Plan for Sport (2014-2017).[316] The Guiding Principles in question were completed by an expert group in 2016,[317] but it remains unclear whether they have triggered any follow-up action inside or outside the EU. The main contribution of the EEAS to greater respect for human rights in the context of Mega Sporting Events came with its financial support for the Mega-Sporting Events Platform and the launch of the new Centre for Sport and Human Rights in Geneva in June 2018.[318] Hence, there is still a lot of room for a systematic approach to furthering human rights in the context of Mega Sporting Events through EU sport diplomacy.

Overall, the EU has shown a steady commitment to addressing human rights concerns raised by Mega Sporting Events. Yet, to date, this call has not been followed up by strong action on the side of the EC or the EEAS. It is in our view essential that a future EU sport diplomacy strategy entails a clear and effective commitment to the normative core of the European integration project: human rights. In this regard, a set of recommendations are presented in the conclusion of this study.

[315] Answer to Question E-001866/14.
[316] Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 21 May 2014 on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (2014-2017), Annex 1.
[317] Guiding Principles relating to democracy, human rights and labour rights, in particular in the context of the awarding procedure of major sport events, 13 January 2016, available at https://www.sportetcitoyennete.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Guiding-principles-relating-to-democracy-human-rights-and-labour-rights-in-particular-in-the-context-of-the-awarding-procedure-of-major-sport-events-possibly-followed-by-a-pledge-board.pdf (accessed 17 December 2021).
[318] EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2018, at 91.

Chapter Six

Grassroots Sport Diplomacy Initiatives

1. Introduction

For many countries, sport diplomacy is a means of strengthening diplomatic, social and political relations with other countries, as well as achieving various foreign policy objectives. Through sport, a country or a community can improve and refine its image, brand and influence on the international stage.

Despite the obvious notion that the majority of sport diplomacy initiatives are recognized and implemented on a national level involving high-profile diplomats and various political figures, it is fundamental to think of sport diplomacy beyond the state context. Diplomatic actions may be obvious at the elite sport level, with international sports events such as the Olympic Games, but what about the people-to-people dialogue, coalitions and cross-border exchanges that happen at the grassroots level on a regular base?

This type of sport diplomacy may be less familiar, but it tends to be more inclusive and involves a wider range of actors, including those not formally connected to the state. It is evident that in a colourful sporting landscape, beside the state apparatus, non-state actors have begun to play an increasingly important role in international relations. These non-state actors have attributes of modern international relations, and they focus on the security of individuals, their safeguarding and empowerment.

For many years, non-state actors have carried out projects covering a range of themes such as inclusion of disadvantaged young people, fighting gender inequality, supporting refugees, people with disability and more. They have understood that sport can be a particularly vigorous diplomatic tool for many marginalized nations and people.

This chapter presents an overview of the potential of grassroots sport diplomacy and all the informal pathways it can offer for generating diplomacy opportunities and uniting states and people via sport and physical activities. The chapter outlines examples of grassroots sport diplomacy projects that have increased social cohesion and encouraged reconciliation, both on inter-state and intra-state level. Moreover, it will shed light on 'exploiting' sport as an element of dialogue and collaboration by third countries, particularly in raising awareness of sport's potential in promoting external policies whilst in an accession process. The chapter will encompass the results and objectives achieved by the sport non-governmental organization TAKT, a partner in the current project.

2. What is Grassroots Sport Diplomacy (GSD)?

Since the concept of grassroots sport diplomacy is a new field of interest, it has not received much attention in the literature. Pioneers in this field are the International Association of Sport and Culture (ISCA) who defined GSD as: "*an inductive concept and can be considered as a new type of diplomacy, complementary to traditional and formal diplomacy, where individuals and civil society play a key role. GSD can be defined as a set of practices, methods and activities built on grassroots sport actions developed at a local scale and benefiting from a sectorial and cross-sectorial approach. GSD aims to strengthen intercultural relations between actors and where civil society and individuals have a strong commitment to carrying out sustainable and impacting effects of the initiatives (like exchanges between communities, transfer and sharing of good practices, events, network etc)*".[319]

Furthermore, grassroots sport diplomacy could be defined as a new qualitative, cost efficient and impactful approach aiming at:

- Bringing people together, without discrimination, thanks to grassroots sport;
- Creating or developing a lasting dialogue between communities and fostering cultural

[319] *Grassroots Sport Diplomacy, Overview, Mapping and Definitions*. Accessed at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/eed6587e-91c1-4ede-a5a5-a12756842120/Grassroots%20Sport%20Diplomacy%20Definition.pdf (17 December 2021).

understanding;

- Facilitating share and transfer of information, knowledge and good practices between the grassroots sport sector and relevant actors (other grassroots sport organisations, states, NGOs, civil society, individuals, etc.);
- Contributing to societal and individual development in the health, cultural, educational, sports or social fields.

The European Commission (DG EAC) established a High-Level Group (HLG) on Grassroots Sport, under the political leadership of Commissioner Tibor Navracsics. In its report, the HLG defined the concept of grassroots sport as "*physical leisure activity, organised and non-organised, practised regularly at non-professional level for health, educational or social purposes*."[320]

Among the general and specific recommendations delivered by the experts in this group, social inclusion and informal learning/skills development are enlisted as potential opportunities that should be amplified by the EU. Namely, the latter recommendation is in line with the Council Conclusions of May 2015 on maximising the role of grassroots sport in developing transversal skills, especially among young people, that outline the educational potential of grassroots sport.[321] The report highlights that grassroots sport could contribute by using its social and educational potential to promote tolerance, mutual understanding and European values.

According to the High-Level Group on Sport Diplomacy which was established at the same time as its grassroots sport equivalent, sport has the potential to contribute towards:

- Improvement of foreign policy and international relations;
- Reach external audiences more deeply, positively and effectively;
- Support external policies;

[320] Report to Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, "Grassroots Sport – Shaping Europe", High Level Group on Sport Diplomacy, 29/06/2016, accessed at https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/sport/library/policy_documents/hlg-grassroots-final_en.pdf (17 December 2021).

[321] Council of the European Union (2015) *Council conclusions on maximising the role of grassroots sport in developing transversal skills, especially among young people*, 2015/C 172/03, accessed at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52015XG0527%2802%29 (17 December 2021).

- Enhance external image and influence;
- Facilitate changes and/or increase momentum in diplomatic practices and more.

In addition, the High-Level Group on Sport Diplomacy considered sport diplomacy as a tool of 'soft power' to be used in three of the five approaches that define 'public diplomacy', namely advocacy, cultural diplomacy and exchange diplomacy. Sport should be an element of dialogue and cooperation with partner countries and third countries as a part of the EU's diplomacy.[322]

3. Why Grassroots Sport Diplomacy?

Grassroots sport diplomacy is about people-to-people value-based communication, exchanges and mobility which have been happening on a regular base outside of the governmental radars. More and more not-for-profit organizations are tapping into their potential, experience and good communication skills in promoting this concept and labelling their activities as grassroots sport diplomacy projects. Their work has always been built upon principles such as inclusion, solidarity, human rights and equality and they have successfully used soft power for civic engagement and development.

Being fundamentally a bottom-up and peer-oriented approach, and being focused on mutual development and benefit, grassroots sport diplomacy is growing both as a concept and practice in national and international relations. Diplomacy is no longer perceived through the 'embassy window' and it is not an exclusive domain of diplomats and government employees.

Grassroots sport diplomacy is becoming widely recognized and remains an open and accessible field for many diverse actors, ranging from highly influential international sport federations and non-governmental organizations to local sport clubs and community-based organizations.

[322] Report to Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, "Grassroots Sport – Shaping Europe", High Level Group on Sport Diplomacy, 29/06/2016, accessed at https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/sport/library/policy_documents/hlg-grassroots-final_en.pdf (17 December 2021).

4. Examples of good practices developed and supported by ISCA

ISCA is a leading sport organization in grassroots sport diplomacy and has been very vocal in promoting grassroots sport and physical education as an opportunity for sport diplomacy. They have developed a methodology and manuals which sport organizations and sport clubs can use if their purpose is to practice grassroots sport diplomacy.[323] Discussed below are GSD pilot actions which were supported, facilitated, monitored and evaluated by ISCA. All of the actions included specific interventions such as policy exchanges, new partnership approaches, and event-based collaboration. Each pilot action was an experimentation to enable small scale grassroots sport diplomacy activities and their development between two or more international stakeholders and they all adhered to one or more of the following principles:

- Transfer or sharing of successful practices through international technical cooperation;
- Transfer or sharing of successful practices through non-governmental partnerships;
- International campaigns or events as tools to promote grassroots sport values and specific agendas;
- Multi-sector networks for the exchange of successful practices and/or advocacy.

CASE 1: WE WELCOME YOUNG REFUGEES

Implementing agency: Krainem FC, Belgium

Stakeholders: FEDASIL, UEFA Foundation for Children, The Royal Belgian Football Association, The European Commission, Municipality of Krainem, King Baudouin Foundation, Engie Foundation and Levi Strauss & Co.

Description of the project: This GSD project was implemented under the pillar: Transfer or sharing of successful practices through non-governmental partnerships. With its Academy,

[323] ISCA, Grassroots Sport Diplomacy Online course, accessible at https://learn.isca.org/courses/grassroots-sport-diplomacy/ (Last accessed 17 December 2021).

based in Brussels, the club deployed all its experience and resources to welcome 20-30 young asylum seekers per week, in order to provide them with clothing, food, language courses and football practices.

Results: The club identified female refugees in order to start a team since women's football was gaining increasing relevance and although girls are not a majority among refugees, they are a sensitive group. The model has already been presented to other amateur football clubs and a network of clubs has been established. During the course of this project, this network has strengthened its capacities and links.

CASE 2: BUILDING RELATIONS BETWEEN HUNGARY AND COLOMBIA THROUGH GRASSROOTS SPORT

Implementing agencies: National School, University and Leisure Sport Federation Hungary (NSULF) and Colombia.

Stakeholders: Colombian Ministry for External Relations; Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Hungarian Ministry for Human Capacities; Colombian Embassy in Hungary; National School, University and Leisure Sport Federation; Hungarian Swimming Federation; Sport Department of Budapest Mayor's Office, Coldeportes Arauca, Budapest Association for International Sports and different grassroots sports clubs in Colombia.

Description of the project: This GSD project was implemented under the pillar: Transfer or sharing of successful practices through international technical cooperation. As stated in the project description, from 11-20 of November 2018, a Colombian delegation composed of young female swimmers and a Colombian coach and diplomat visited the Hungarian Capital. The initiative was a part of the Colombian Ministry for External Relations' sport diplomacy program and aimed to strengthen intercultural understanding, mutual dialogue and cooperation through supporting international mobility of young amateur athletes from disadvantaged background.

Results: (1) Establishing relations with the Colombian grassroots sport sector; (2) Exchanging best practices on how to increase participation in grassroots sports and how to boost levels of physical activity; (3) Providing opportunities to disadvantaged young people for personal development through engaging in sport-based cross-border mobility; (4) Incentivising high-level policy dialogue on good practices related to the grassroots sport sector.

Legacy: The project started a dialogue with Colombian organisations that might be potential partners for NSULF in the promotion of its good practices, such as the European School Sport Day. Profiting from the GSD concept, which has a people-to-people approach, it is possible to follow up with this initiative by keeping track of the participants both at personal and at institutional level, in order to increase the dialogue between countries and institutions for further collaboration. This further demonstrates that grassroots sport actions can contribute to public diplomacy further projects in the future.

CASE 3: TRAINING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEADERS IN MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Implementing agency: Fundació Unió Barcelonina d'Activitats Esportives (UBAE) and Associació Esportiva Ciutat Vella and Eurofitness Edu training centre, Eurofitness Perill sport club.

Project description: The pilot action took place in Barcelona as a part of a grassroots sport diplomacy project funded by Erasmus+. To test the concept of GSD, UBAE planned an intervention in the Ciutat Vella district, an underserved region of the city that hosts migrant families from different nationalities. The overall idea was to train a multicultural group into physical activity leaders. The training was free of charge, and conducted in accordance with the requirements set for courses to recognised by the sports department of Catalonia, meaning that the trainees will be able to work after the course.

Results: The pilot action has allowed for the training of 26 youth leaders from a district of Barcelonan on sport activities development and implementation. The trainees received 80 hours of physical education training distributed in different subjects (first aid, physical activity management, educational methods and games). These leaders came from a range of different countries (Morocco, Spain, Philippines, Ecuador, El Salvador, India, Guinea Conakry, Syria and Pakistan) and they lived together in the same district of Barcelona. The concept of sport diplomacy has been introduced to be used as a pathway to integrate members from different communities.

Legacy: The organisers aimed to ensure the sustainability of the project, by extending its implementation and sharing the experiences and achievements of the participants, especially in the work environment. The project promotes the sharing of their stories of success and problems encountered as a guide for future participants and organisations. For future implementation, the organising entity is searching for financial resources. Negotiations with the municipality have been set up, and thanks to its achievements, the entity received a grant from the municipality for the implementation of the course during the next year.

CASE 4: WOMEN ON THE FIELD/MULHERES EM CAMPO

Implementing agency: Social Service of Commerce (SESC) Brazil

Project description: This pilot action was an effort to set up an international network focused on women's football between Brazil, as a leading country, and neighbouring countries Argentina and Uruguay. The main achieved objectives were (1) To create a network of South American institutions that work with women football; (2) To enable the exchange of information among partners and best practices, considering their reality and culture and to better understand what challenges they face and what solutions they already have; (3) To deepen partners understanding on grassroots sport diplomacy; (4) To lead partners to discover their potential on doing GSD, to become a GS Diplomate and increase their actions on this matter.

Results: During the 9 months implementation period, the newly created network was able to provide (1) Sports equipment donations between partners; (2) Exchange of good practices in communications strategies, share of training methodologies for women; (3) Job opportunities for network members; (4) New partners for a new project "Love. Fútbol" with Perifeminas; (5) The creation of a calendar of local women's football activities to articulate and integrate more people inside and outside the network and (6) Collaborative work to set up the Forum.

5. Other examples of grassroots sport diplomacy initiatives

CASE: SPORT DIPLOMACY ACADEMY

Project description: The Sport Diplomacy Academy (SDA) project is the legacy of the first Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU 2018 and focusses on the Western Balkans (WB). The project involved 4 partners: EU Applicants – Bulgarian sports development association (BSDA) and the Croatian sport umbrella organization – Rijeka sport association, ENDAS - Italian grassroots sport organization and 1 WB NGO (BRAVO - Bosnian Youth and sport NGO). The project will ensure the educational mobility of coaches and other staff of sport organisations (including volunteers) linked to professional and grassroots sport. The 4 modules of mobility, held in each one of the partner countries with the same group of participants from the project target group will improve their competences, as well as their qualifications, and allow them to acquire new skills through learning mobility and spending a period of time in a foreign country (in and outside the EU). Learning mobility will be planned as an investment in human capital and a contribution to the capacity building of various sport organisations with clear focus on building a network of well-trained sport diplomats.[324]

Main project activities: (1) Prioritizing the EU perspective and connectivity of the WB,

[324] Bulgarian Sports Development Association, Sport Diplomacy Academy https://en.bulsport.bg/SDA_EN/view.html?nid=20465 (Last Accessed 17 December 2021).

referring to the Sofia Declaration and Sofia Priority Agenda[325]; (2) Both the EU and the WB partners should continue to invest efforts in strengthening the cooperation and good practices exchange, focused on democracy, security and fundamental rights.

6. Grassroots Sport Diplomacy Good Practices Initiatives on a global stage

The European Commission study on *Sport Diplomacy, Identifying Good Practices* published in 2018[326] carried out in the framework of the 2017-2020 *EU Work Plan for Sport* highlighted a specific good practice of how Member States have supported projects that use sport as a tool to foster social and economic development within partner countries outside of the EU. The study made four recommendations:

- Capacity building workshops be held.
- Sport for development should be identified as an explicit priority in relevant EU funding instruments.
- Larger scale research should be undertaken on the current state of play and
- Actions should be developed to support dissemination of and knowledge sharing on good practices.

The Study addressed the following themes and highlighted the following examples of good practice:

1 Disadvantaged young people:

1.a *Youth Development through Football (2007-2014)* – Germany for 10 African Countries - Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia.

[325] European Council (2018) EU Western Balkan Summit, Sofia Declaration, accessed at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/34776/sofia-declaration_en.pdf (17 December 2021).
[326] ECORYS (2017), *Sport Diplomacy. Identifying Good Practices, a final report to the European Commission*. Accessed at: https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0efc09a6-025e-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-65111809 (17 December 2021).

1.b *Rugby Social (2012-ongoing)* – France for Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Madagascar, Cuba.

1.c *Using sport to reduce school dropouts (2016-2019)* – France for Burundi.

2 Disability:

2.a *Developing sport for disabled people in Ghana (2005-2016)* – Denmark for Ghana.

3 Gender:

3.a *Addressing Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) through football (2014-2017)* – UK for Kenya

3.b *Empowering girls through football (2017-2019)* – Netherlands for Nicaragua and Brazil.

4 Health:

4.a *Use of sport to promote health awareness and gender equality (2013-2018)* – Germany for Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia and Togo, and individual measures on a smaller scale in other African countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, DR Congo).

5 Refugees:

5.a *East Africa Refugee Programme (2008 - ongoing)* – Sweden for Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti and South Sudan.

6 Projects linked to major events:

6.a *Leadership and Excellence in Athletics programme (LEAP) (2015-2017)* – UK for Argentina, Azerbaijan, Chile, Ethiopia, India, Kosovo, Mozambique, St Lucia, Senegal and Uganda

6.b *French Team for Sports (2015 - ongoing)* – France for Qatar.

All the above listed examples have used sport and physical activities to promote different development goals, either at local or national level.

7. Grassroots sport diplomacy projects implemented by non-governmental organization TAKT (Together Advancing Common Trust)

NGO TAKT (Together Advancing Common Trust) is a non-governmental organization whose work is built on three main strategic pillars: (1) the empowerment of girls and women; (2) strong advocacy agenda on advancing gender equality and (3) peacebuilding and social cohesion through sport.

TAKT has been involved in the ISCA's leading project on Grassroots Sport Diplomacy, and within the framework of this project they have implemented the initiative Building Bridges Through Grassroots Sport Diplomacy between North Macedonia and Kosovo.

CASE 1: BUILDING BRIDGES THROUHG GRASSROOTS SPORT DIPLOMACY BETWEEN NORTH MACEDONIA AND KOSOVO

Implementing partner: Non-governmental organization AKTI, Kosovo

Project Description: The project action "Building Bridges Through Grassroots Sport Diplomacy'' can be categorised as a GSD transfer or sharing of successful practices through non-governmental partnerships, meaning it is an initiative that seeks to share experiences and good practices implemented by civil society organizations with a view to promote the practice of sport and social development. The target group were girls aged 12-16, from rural areas and with different ethnic backgrounds. This particular group was selected because they are the most vulnerable and girls from marginalized areas have less opportunity to participate in tailored sports programs. The target group was from two selected municipalities, both rural and with little sport opportunities for girls and women. The target group has benefited the most and has

been empowered to further engage in peer-to peer transfer of knowledge and experience.

Project results: (1) Increased cooperation, peace building and exchange across borders between North Macedonia and Kosovo through grassroots sport cooperation in order to build upon good practices and the overcoming of migration crisis within the region; (2) Empowered young girls in North Macedonia and Kosovo through their mutual engagement in a common grassroots sport initiative connecting the region; (3) Raised awareness of sport diplomacy's power to connect people and nations in the region through mutual regional campaign: The Power of Grass Root Sport – Building Bridges.

Legacy: TAKT outlined the following recommendations: (1) creating strong, stable and community-based partnerships on GSD; (2) importance of solid governing principles and guidelines for grassroots sport interventions; (3) transparency and accountability of all relevant stakeholders as well as correct communication and solidarity between partner organisations.

CASE 2: BUILDING BRIDGES THROUHG GRASSROOTS SPORT DIPLOMACY BETWEEN NORTH MACEDONIA AND GREECE

Implementing partner: Greenways Social Cooperative Enterprise, Greece

Project Description: The project "Building Bridges Through Grassroots Sport Diplomacy Between North Macedonia and Greece" examines how sport diplomacy can play a role in encouraging dialogue and cultural understanding by engaging communities and strengthening people-to-people links between the youth of North Macedonia and Greece. By introducing grassroots sport-based mobility, this project fosters links between young people of two countries and fighting prejudices, thus building tolerance between people of different cultures and origins. The soft power of these exchanges opens more doors for people to participate and ultimately leads to more inclusion in sport and physical activity, while promoting international diplomatic relations and wider policy objectives.

Main project objectives: (1) Establishing and supporting relations with the Greek grassroots sport sector (2) Providing opportunities to young people for personal development through engaging in sport-based cross-border mobility (3) To enable the exchange of information among partners and best practices, considering their reality and culture and to allow participants to better understand what challenges they face and what solutions they already have (4) Building stronger links between North Macedonia and Greece and raise awareness on the potential of sport as a soft power / public diplomacy tool.

It is important to note that this project will be implemented in the Prespa region and for the first time it will enable collaboration on a grassroots level between the sport sector and youth from North Macedonia and Greece. This is an important region as the so called Prespa Agreement[327] was signed there. This Agreement was signed on 12 June 2018 between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia under the United Nations' auspices, resolving a long-standing dispute over the latter's name. The Agreement was signed beside Lake Prespa from which it took its name and was ratified by the Parliaments of both countries on 25 January 2019. The Agreement entered into force on 12 February 2019[328] when the two countries notified the UN of the deal's completion, following the ratification of the NATO accession protocol for North Macedonia on 8 of February.[329] It replaces the interim accord of 1995 and sees the country's constitutional name, then Republic of Macedonia, changed to Republic of North Macedonia erga omnes.

This project has the potential to be a great example of grassroots sport diplomacy between estranged nations that have experienced conflict and turbulent period. This one-of-a-kind

[327] Final Agreement for the Settlement of the Differences as Described in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 817 (1993) and 845 (1993), the Termination of the Interim Accord of 1995, and the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership between the Parties (Prespa, 17 June 2018), accessed at: https://www.mfa.gr/images/docs/eidikathemata/agreement.pdf (17 December 2021).
[328] United Nations, Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on Prespa Agreement, 13 February 2019, https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2019-02-13/statement-attributable-the-spokesman-for-the-secretary-general-prespa-agreement (Last Accessed September 2021).
[329] BBC, Macedonia and Greece: Vote settles 27-year name dispute, 25 January 2019 https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47002865 (Last Accessed September 2021).

project will seek partnership with organizations from both countries, by engaging numerous local sports clubs, associations and athletes in cross-border collaborative activities.

8. Grassroots sport diplomacy as part of the accession process

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between the Republic of North Macedonia and the EU entered into force in April 2004.[330] The passage to the second stage of the SAA, which the Commission had proposed in 2009, took place during the reporting period. Since 2009, the Commission recommended to the Council to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia, a candidate country since 2005.

In the summary of North Macedonia's 2019 Report, a total of 33 chapters have been outlined relevant to the progress achieved by the Macedonian Government.[331] Among the 33 chapters, the most challenging ones, such as the rule of law and fundamental rights, the fight against the corruption and organized crime, the chapter No 26 Education and Culture, includes sport with a short paragraph. Namely, the report reflects on the following "*The Law on sports has been amended to introduce tax relief measures for companies investing in sports. The governmental procedure on the law began in Q1 2019. The strategy on sports still needs to be developed. The annual budget for sports increased from 0.3% in 2017 to 1.4% in 2018, increasing young people's participation in sport activities. North Macedonia participated for the first time in the European Week of Sports by organising a large number of sport activities in the country. It adds that Public spending on education, training, youth and sport remained at 3.8% of GDP in 2018.*" Evidently, sport has been given very little time and attention within the report.

[330] Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, of the other part - Protocol 1 on textile and clothing products - Protocol 2 on steel products - Protocol 3 on trade between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Community in processed agricultural products - Protocol 4 concerning the definition of the concept of "originating products" and methods of administrative cooperation - Protocol 5 on mutual administrative assistance in customs matters - Final Act. OJ L 84, 20.3.2004

[331] European Commission (2019), Commission Staff Working Document: North Macedonia Report , COM(2019) 260 final. Accessed at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-north-macedonia-report.pdf (17 December 2021).

9. Funding opportunities for grassroots sport diplomacy

This section of the chapter highlights the funding support that North Macedonia has received as a candidate member for accession to the EU. Different aspects and topics were addressed. Sport and development were once again excluded from the list.

1. Instrument for Pre-Accession Program (IPA)

North Macedonia - financial assistance under IPA II

Indicative funding allocation 2014-2020: € 608.7 million

The priority sectors for funding in this period are: democracy and governance; rule of law and fundamental rights; environment and climate action; transport; competitiveness and innovation; social development; agriculture and rural development; regional and territorial cooperation. The latter would greatly resonate with grassroots sport diplomacy as it promotes and encourages good neighbourly relations as well as promoting socio-economic development in border areas.

2. Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of North Macedonia

With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU is represented in the Republic of North Macedonia by the Delegation of the European Union. Under Art. 221(2) TFEU "*Union delegations shall be placed under the authority of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. They shall act in close cooperation with Member States' diplomatic and consular missions*". The Delegations represent the European Union and serve the European Union's interests throughout the world.[332] As it is mentioned on the website, the Delegation of the European Union is a contracting authority for more than 250 past and ongoing projects. Sport diplomacy has not yet been listed within these projects and clear potential remains for this to occur.

[332] European External Action Service (EEAS), About the EU Delegation to the Republic of North Macedonia, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/republic-north-macedonia/1456/about-eu-delegation-republic-north-macedonia_en (Last Accessed 17 December 2021).

For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that the Council of Europe programme office in Skopje was established in 2012.[333] It currently implements projects in the framework of a joint cooperation programme with the European Union, Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey 2019 - 2022 (Horizontal Facility II), with a focus on justice (prisons and police reform; enhancing courts' compliance with human rights standards to combat ill-treatment and impunity); economic crimes; promoting anti-discrimination and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups (victims of trafficking of human beings for labour exploitation) and freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

10. Conclusion

Sport diplomacy is a complex landscape and many different actors are performing and engaging through their own arrangements and methodologies. Some of them are well-structured and some are vague and more unshapen. Nevertheless, they all have the same common goal: creating dialogue and connection through sport. Sport diplomacy is targeted to help promote social inclusion, peacebuilding or improving gender equality, improving inter-state and intra-state relations and collaboration are the mutual outcomes for all involved.

The EU is a new player in the field of sport diplomacy. Within the EU institutions, the connection of soft power, sport and diplomacy is becoming natural and a frequent commodity. Being a powerful and prominent player means that it can inspire and direct single Member States to acknowledge the opportunities and commitments by respective Governments. Setting up sport in general and sport diplomacy specifically as a priority and suitable possibility to expand one country's image and international relations will be undoubtedly reflected in national policies and strategies. This implies that sport will no longer sit in the margins and will be included in the communications, reports, strategies and national policies, alongside other pressing topics and sectorial themes. Furthermore, supporting the idea that sport diplomacy could be a great potential and possibility to promote and strengthen international relations within the accession process of third countries will be a vital signal for Governments

[333] North Macedonia, Council of Europe Programme Office in Skopje, https://www.coe.int/en/web/skopje/home (Last Accessed 17 December 2021)

of candidates' countries. Following that logic, funding and subsidizing initiatives for grassroots sport diplomacy should be further explored and made available to the interested parties.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Since the High-Level Group on Sport Diplomacy published its report in 2016, the EU has taken its first tentative steps at practicing sport diplomacy. However, these steps have been ad hoc and lacking strategic orientation. The arguments for becoming more strategic are now compelling:

- The EU and its Member States have an envious sporting heritage. As sport plays such an important role in European society, why does it not play a more prominent role in the EU's foreign policy? After all, EU diplomacy is meant to reflect what is best about European society.

- The EU has a maturing foreign policy and a Global Strategy. Lessons from Australia and the U.S. highlight that sport has a proven track record of reaching wide audiences and amplifying diplomatic messages. Sport can help the EU achieve its foreign policy goals in a rapidly changing and increasingly unstable international environment.

- The EU has existing expertise and capacity to develop and implement a sport diplomacy strategy. Article 165 TFEU equips the EU with the basis to act, the European Commission has acquired in-depth knowledge of sport and has built strong relations with the sports movement, the European External Action Service (EEAS) is well placed to assist with the delivery of such a strategy and the EU possesses a range of financing instruments, such as Erasmus+, that can support sport diplomacy initiatives. A sport diplomacy strategy can also build on knowledge acquired in the development of EU cultural and educational diplomacy.

- The Member States of the EU are increasingly turning to sport to amplify their own diplomatic messages. Where appropriate, the EU voice should be heard in these

strategies. EU action can complement national efforts by adding consistency and coherence. It can help with their formulation (through the sharing of best practice), and it can assist in securing better outcomes and impact (by assisting with implementation, providing a wider platform and sharing resources).

- The EU is being left behind by some of its partners and competitors who now routinely deploy sport as part of their diplomatic repertoire. Why would the EU not want to use all available means to help secure its goals?

In light of the above, this study recommends the following:

Recommendations

The Principles:

1. The Commission, Council and Parliament should adopt and implement a sport diplomacy strategy. In doing so, they should take note of best practice, notably the sport diplomacy strategies of Australia and the U.S.

2. A value-based networked sport diplomacy model should be considered, with a broad network of public and non-state actors involved in mostly people-to-people and grassroots engagements.

3. The EU's sport diplomacy strategy should seek to complement and add value to the established and emerging sport diplomacy strategies of the Member States. Member States have many valuable pre-existing social, political and economic links with various parts of the world, but collectively, there are many shared values, thematic interests and geographical priorities, and these should be clearly defined and acted upon in an EU sport diplomacy strategy.

EU Institutional Considerations:

4. As sport possesses a pronounced cross-cutting character and can be employed to advanced goals in a wide range of fields, including external relations, sport diplomacy should be mainstreamed into the work of all EU institutions and services, especially those with an external facing remit such as the EEAS, DG International Partnerships (INTPA), DG Climate Action (CLIMA), DG European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR), and Commission Service Department, Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI). A new specialist body (most likely located within the Sport Unit of DG Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (EAC) should play a central role in coordinating EU sport diplomacy activities and events and it should support and facilitate the training of those who are to be involved in the delivery of the EU's sport diplomacy strategy.

5. The EU should make further use of its experience of Structured Dialogue on Sport to ensure participation and cooperation on sport diplomacy issues with key stakeholders.

6. Sport diplomacy should be more systematically integrated into the work of the EEAS and a sport diplomacy portfolio should be established within it, with named individuals responsible for the co-ordination of sport diplomacy activities. The establishment of an EU Sport Diplomacy Platform, or equivalent, should be considered to provide training, support and advice to EU Delegations and to co-ordinate their activities. Sport related initiatives should be incorporated into the tasks carried out by the EU Special Representatives in troubled regions and countries.

Sport Diplomacy as an Expression of EU Values:

7. An EU sport diplomacy strategy should reflect the EU's core values (such as democracy, rule of law, human dignity), thematic interests (such as peace,

development, human rights, environmental protection, security) and geographical priorities (such as Western Balkans, Eastern and Southern Neighbours, China etc). The messaging should avoid the narrative of the exportation of 'superior' European values.

8. Bilateral relations between the EU and sports governing bodies (SGB), such as the signature of memoranda of understanding and the provision of financial support, should become conditional on the official commitment of the SGB in question to respecting human rights and the implementation of a human rights policy and human rights due diligence process in line with the UN Guiding Principles.

9. The EU should set up a working group including relevant stakeholders (such as SGBs, civil society organisations, labour unions) to exchange best practice on the safeguarding of human rights during Mega Sporting Events. Furthermore, the working group could also have the responsibility to independently assess the human rights risks of upcoming Mega Sporting Events and to advance concrete proposals to tackle them, which would then be endorsed by the EU.

Relations with International Organisations:

10. The EU should seek partnerships with organisations that already have considerable international outreach and credibility, such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and seek to complement actions being carried out by these organisations.

11. The EU should step up project-based cooperation with UNESCO, explicitly linked to sport through strong reference to the Kazan Action Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals. It should do so especially through engagement with the MINEPS and CIGEPS instruments.

12. EU Member States should ensure the Commission is systematically invited to meetings working on sport-related conventions proposed by the Council of Europe, such as the

Anti-Doping Convention, or other major sports-related documents. While Member States representatives change over time, the Commission could provide the necessary continuity in such collaborations.

13. The EU should pro-actively approach the Council of Europe with the suggestion of joint funding activities, for projects or actions on major issues advocated by the CoE, which happen to overlap with values and standards promoted by the EU itself.

Practical Considerations:

14. Athletes and former athletes (envoys) are a valued asset and should be trained and deployed in an EU sport diplomacy strategy as they can be effective messengers.

15. Sport related matters should be incorporated into the design and implementation of EU external relations strategies, including within the framework of Accession, Association, Co-operation and European Neighbourhood agreements. The Commission should monitor the implementation of such agreements and liaise with key actors, such as the EEAS, to ensure fulfilment of the sport related objectives.

16. The EU should financially support collaborative projects, research activities and knowledge dissemination on issues connected to sport diplomacy. This should include, inter alia, measuring the impact of sport diplomacy; financing collaborative partnerships, and assessing the human rights and environmental impacts of staging mega-sporting events. Under Erasmus+, the EU should consider designating Partner Countries as Programme Countries, so to ensure the full participation of key third states and to ensure sport diplomacy has the means to achieve desired external relations ends.

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