

INFORMATION



MOVE YOUR BODY
STRETCH YOUR MIND

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A Eurobarometer survey shows that Europeans want sport which is cleaner and more citizen-focused

At the European Sports Forum which starts today in Verona⁽¹⁾, just a few weeks before the start of the European Year of Education through Sport 2004 (see note IP/03/1481), the European Commission has published the preliminary results of a Eurobarometer survey conducted last September among 16 000 people in the 15 Member States. The survey shows that nearly two-thirds of Europeans place team spirit at the top of sporting values and over 70% of the persons approached expressed their concern over the problem of doping. The vast majority of Europeans would like to see closer links between education and sport, and particularly a more prominent place for sport on the school syllabus.

"The people of Europe like sport and associate it with positive values. This is reflected in their desire for greater use to be made of sport as an educational and social instrument and for resolute action to be taken on doping, which is the negation of the spirit of sport and which is a danger to public health. The aim of the European Year of Education through Sport 2004 is to emphasise the values of sport" said Mrs Viviane Reding, Member of the European Commission with responsibility for education and sport.

This survey was conducted between 1 and 30 September in the 15 Member States and involved 16 000 people, aged 15 or over, who were interviewed personally in their homes.

Practising sport: differences between northern and southern Europe, in a context of individualisation of activities.

- Nearly half (**46%**) the people of Europe say they practice a sport or take some form of exercise at least once a week. There are significant differences between northern and southern Europe, e.g. while nearly 70% of Finns and Swedes, 53% of Danes, 47% of Irish people and 43% of Dutch people say yes to this question, the same figures stand at 19% for Greece, 22% for Portugal, 31% for Italy and 32% for Spain;



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- **47%** of those interviewed say they do not practise their sport in a club, a fitness centre, a sports centre or at school or university. Less than a quarter (23%) of the persons interviewed having stated that they practise an activity do so in a club, with
- the Netherlands emerging (with 43%) as the country in which clubs take in most sportsmen and sportswomen. 20% of those interviewed stated their preference for fitness centres, with Spain (38%) and Greece (31%) being the countries in which these centres are the most frequented.

Sport makes a positive contribution to personal development.

- **Eight out of ten Europeans** say that sport essentially brings improvements to physical and psychological wellbeing; for 47% of them sport is an opportunity for enjoyment and to develop their physical prowess.
- Among the values sport develops, the persons asked rank team spirit first (61%), followed by discipline (47%), the sense of endeavour (43%) and friendship (42%).
- 81% of the respondents claim that sport encourages dialogue between cultures. 59% feel it is a way of countering all forms of discrimination, an opinion widespread mainly in Greece (90%), Spain (75%), Portugal (74%) and Italy (70%).

Concern continues to mount over the problem of doping.

- Three quarters of Europeans say they are worried about doping, the most concerned being the Swedes (91%), the Finns (85%), the Belgians (83%), the Danes (82%) and the French (81%);
- A substantial majority (87%) of Europeans would like the European Union to be more closely involved in the fight against doping. This is a position supported in particular by Greece (92%), France and Sweden (91%), Italy (90%) and Luxembourg (88%);



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- The important role of money in sport is also a source of misgivings for nearly six respondents out of ten, Germany being the country where this concern is highest (70% of the persons interviewed), followed by France (68%), Sweden and Finland (65%).

High expectations for the development of links between education and sport and for the role of the European Union in promoting such links.

- Nearly 80% of Europeans would like to see closer cooperation between the education systems and sports organisations in their country;
- Three quarters of the people interviewed feel that more time should be devoted to sport at school, this percentage reaching even 95% in Greece where the forthcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games are to be held;
- 2004 will be the European Year of Education through Sport and just over two thirds of those interviewed (68%) feel that the European Union should be more active in promoting education through sport. This position is particularly supported by Greece (90%), Portugal (85%), Spain and Ireland (82% each).

For further information and particularly the preliminary results of this survey, consult:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/

On sport and the European Union, consult:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/sport/index_en.html

(1) The European Sports Forum is taking place this year in Verona. In particular, it brings together those holding positions of responsibility in the sports world (European and international federations), representatives of the European institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council), the public authorities of the Member States, and of the acceding countries, and all the stakeholders from the world of sport. The Forum's working parties will this year be devoted to the use of sport as an instrument of social integration, to the international dimension of European sport and to theme of "sport and education in the visual image".



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