

N° 2 Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

**Dear Members,
Partners and Friends,**

It is a great pleasure to present to you the EASE newsletter number 2. Since the publication of the first newsletter, EASE has been developing and involved in different European projects. It is certain that all the work EASE members have done until now has helped strengthen EASE credibility at European Level.

With the edition of the White Paper on Sport, the European Commission seems to have an increased interest in social dialogue in sport, and EASE is ideally placed to become an important social player at European level.

In this letter, you will find news update about the European Commission's actions, information about the project on social dialogue led by EASE (the “Row the Boat” project, RBT project), an overview of EASE involvement in different European researches such as projects which aim at testing the European Qualifications Framework in the sport sector (EQF-Sports and EQFOA projects), and news about the partnerships EASE is having with other organisations involved in the sport sector at European level.

Many steps need to be taken before we can request the European Commission to establish a Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee. We need to work on the identity of sport and also on the creation of national employer organisations in order to develop our representativeness. The White Paper, and more generally the European Reform Treaty which includes an article on sport, are encouraging but the real work lies ahead.

I hope to see you at the RBT project Final Conference in Arnhem (Netherlands) on the 7th and 8th of February 2008 to celebrate together the development of social dialogue in the sport sector at European level.

Kind regards,

Marie LEROUX
EASE President Delegate



“ **The Commission encourages** and welcomes all efforts leading to the establishment of European Social Dialogue Committees in the sport sector. It will continue to give support to both employers and employees and it will pursue its open dialogue with all sport organisations on this issue.” (5.3 social dialogue - White Paper on Sport)

1 The White Paper on Sport

The White Paper on Sport was published in July this year. Even though the European Commission (EC) has no direct legal competencies in issues related to sport, this publication shows the growing interest the EC has on sport. The White Paper is really broad and covers the following subjects: the societal role of sport, the economic dimension of sport and the organisation of sport.

Social dialogue is mentioned in it and even if EASE is not namely mentioned, the work we are doing is recognised and welcomed by the EC. The EC is financing several projects dealing with social dialogue in the sport sector (RBT project, football project, European Elite Athlete Association one). All these projects have different approaches and outcomes. Once the projects' results analysed, the Commission will decide in due course how to organise the European social dialogue in the sport sector.

In the current situation, the White Paper is only a set of directions the EC is willing to take in the sport sector. It will have to wait until the new Treaty comes out with the sport falling within the EC competencies. Regarding social dialogue, the White Paper stresses the EC support to the work being done by the social partners.

2 “Reinforce the representativeness of the social partners in the sport sector: RBT project”

Since December 2006, EASE is leading a European project entitled “Row

the Boat” project (RBT project). Mainly financed (80%) by the European Commission, the aim of the project is to develop the representativeness of the social partners in the sport sector at European level. In order to do so, EASE is associated with EURO-MEI the media and entertainment sector of UNI-Europa (European federation of trade-unions in the services sectors). The partnership is composed of 4 members of EASE, 4 members of EURO-MEI and EOSE (European Observatoire of Sport and Employment). Following the BSDSS project (“Building the Social Dialogue in the Sport Sector”, 2003), the RBT project represents a new step forward to the creation of a Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (SSDC) in the sport sector. The project will last until February 2008.

As social dialogue in the sport sector is at different stages depending on the countries and the sports sub-sectors, the project focuses on 3 different levels:

Level 1

Aim = to establish and maintain contacts with the European sport social partners.

Outcome = a feasibility study for a future application for the creation of a sports social dialogue committee.

Level 2

Aim = to organise round tables to present the national social partners with the benefits of being affiliated at European level. Targeted countries are Spain, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Germany & Portugal.

Level 3

Aim = to meet with local structures and authorities and bring expertise to

the creation of national employer and employee organisations. Targeted countries are Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland & the Czech Republic.

Outcome = a report on the feasibility of the creation of employer and employee organisations in those countries.

In order to reach a broad range of European sport stakeholders, the partnership has been developing a **database of sport social partners in the 27 Member States available online** (<http://ease.franceolympique.com/ease/rbt-db/>). That database is essential for the project development and is updated by the partners along the project execution. That tool will be used for the strategic development of EASE and EURO-MEI, long after the end of the project.

What have been done so far

At level 1, a meeting with social partners for professional sports was organised in Brussels on the 30th of October. This meeting gathered representatives of national social partners for team sports (rugby, basketball, handball) coming from different EU countries and the European social partners for football (FIFPro, the Association of European Professional Leagues - EPFL, and the Union of European Football Associations - UEFA). This meeting was the opportunity for the EASE and EURO-MEI representatives to present their organisations and the RBT project. Representatives of the EC actively participated in this meeting. Andrew Chapman, Deputy Head of Unit of the Directorate-General for Employment, presented the European social dialogue framework and Pedro Velazquez, Deputy Head of the Sport Unit (DG Education and Culture), made a presentation on the White Paper on Sport. The football representatives presented their work on building a European social dialogue for professional football. This meeting gave the participants a good overview of the social dialogue stakeholders at European level in the sport sector and confirmed that social dialogue is an instrument which would allow social partners to contribute to the shaping of employment relations in an active and participative way.

At level 2, the first round table was held in Madrid on the 5th of June. Lots of participants came from all sport sub-sectors (voluntary sport, professional sport, fitness and outdoors). By presenting our project and explaining the organisation of a SSDC, we were able to stress the interest and importance of being affiliated at European level. Madrid was a great place of debate helping us understand the general situation of the Spanish sport sector and the vision guests have about European social dialogue.

Shortly after was organised the Danish round table in Copenhagen (June, 20th). Despite a lighter attendance, we were able to understand the situation of the Danish sport sector and were pleased to see the great interest of the participants in our project. Issues related to professional sport were mainly debated, mostly turning around players transfer, post pro-life training, youth protection...

A round table was held in Helsinki on the 17th of September. It gathered representatives of all Finnish sport sub-sectors. Interesting exchanges were made about the different European projects on social dialogue in the sport sector. The high level and efficiency of the Finnish social dialogue could be an example to follow at European level. The Italian round table was organised in Rome on the 7th of November. It gathered mainly representatives of social partners operating in the commercial sport sub-sector.

At level 3, representatives of the project management group (EASE and EURO-MEI) travelled in Bulgaria (Sofia) and Hungary (Budapest) at the end of June to meet with national sport stakeholders and social partners. They were meeting with sport organisations such as National Olympic Committees, sport federations, employer and employee organisations, representatives of Ministries (Employment, Sports & Youth), sports lawyers and university teachers. Those encounters gave us a good overview of the sport sector and comforted us in our thoughts that the social dialogue in sport is at an early stage. These Eastern European journeys allowed EASE and EURO-MEI to

propose their expertise in the creation of formal employer and employee organisations aiming to develop national social dialogue. Even though it is a long process, a successful first step has been done.

What is coming ahead

At level 1, the next meeting, which will be organised on the 17th of January 2008 in Brussels, will be a kind of "informal social dialogue meeting". It will be a preliminary meeting of the sports social dialogue committee.

At level 2, round table will take place in Germany and Portugal in January 2008. Using the same framework as the other round tables, we expect the same outcomes.

At level 3, the management group will go in Poland (Warsaw) on the 12th and 13th of December, and in the Czech Republic (Prague) on the 17th and 18th of December to meet with sport stakeholders. We hope to get together with similar institutions met in Hungary and Bulgaria.

Expected overall results

- Create a general overview of the social dialogue in sport at European level, understanding the different stages of social dialogue development.
- Create links and contacts between each other building a network of the European sport stakeholders able to work together in order to set common concerns and goals about social dialogue.
- Establish a first draft of the SSDC agenda, defining the first subjects that are consensual enough to be treated easily. Those subjects are for example: health and safety, vocational education and training.

“ **The Final Conference, to be organised in the Netherlands on the 7th and 8th of February 2008, will represent the achievement of the project, gathering all the project partners around EASE**

and EURO-MEI, all the actors of social dialogue in the sport sector that have been contacted along the project development and the EC representatives. The goal is to expose to the participants the results we have achieved and bring the debate to new research fields, getting one step closer to the creation of a SSDC for sport.”

3 EASE involvement in European projects

EQFOA project

The objective of the European Qualifications Framework for Outdoor Animators project (EQFOA project), led by SkillsActive (employer organisation in the UK), is to develop some European standards to organise the outdoor sector in terms of vocational training, regarding the needs of employers in terms of positions to be held and of employees' qualifications and competences.

The role of EASE in that project is to mobilise its outdoor commission to validate the products developed but also to ensure the dissemination of the results to its network.

EQF-Sports project

The EQF-Sports project, led by the European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE), is part of an ongoing process, lasting more than ten years intending to link all stakeholders of the sports sector to specific European networks collaborating with each other in the field of vocational education and training. Three principal areas of activities, related to the EQF process, have been considered as priorities by the sports sector stakeholders:

- develop a European industry framework of activities, standard occupations and related competencies for the sports sector based on the EQF levels and descriptors;





- establish and strengthen relationships between National Qualification Authorities and the sports sector representatives at national and European level;
- develop and disseminate the principles and mechanisms supporting the implementation of the EQF/Copenhagen process in our sector.

The role of EASE in that project is to represent the employers' voice and to be active in the dissemination process.

4 EASE collaborations

The "European Sport Workforce Development Alliance" ("the Alliance")

EOSE has gathered the key stakeholders of the European sport sector to provide solutions for the development of qualifications and training in the sector.

Mission statement: *"The mission of the Alliance is to provide a mechanism to coordinate the development of the European sport's workforce to ensure a workforce with the right skills at the right time in the right place and to develop an active partnership between the major decision makers of the sector. The role of the Alliance is to continue contributing to the implementation of EU policies but also guarantee that the sport sector can present itself at the*

European level in a coherent way in demonstrating its positive and growing contribution to the social, health, economic and cultural development of the European Union."

EASE is a member of the Alliance together with EOSE, EURO-MEI, the European Olympic Committees (EOC), the European Non-Governmental Sport Organisation (ENGSO), the European Network of Sport Science, Education and Employment (ENSSEE) and the European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA). The implication of EASE in the Alliance shows once again the importance it has gained.

“ *The mission of the Alliance is to provide a mechanism to coordinate the development of the European sport's workforce”*

ENGSO & EASE

EASE has been working for some time now with ENGSO and intends to strengthen that valuable partnership. ENGSO is a not for profit organisation gathering 40 national umbrella organisations from continental Europe. Its aim is to represent the sport as a whole (elite sport, youth, voluntary, etc.) defending the interest of the sport sector at European level, being in permanent contact with European

public institutions. ENGSO is the only European sports organisation having been granted consultative status by the Council of Europe.

ENGSO gives great support to the RBT project. The local ENGSO members have been really helpful in the organisations of meetings with important local sport stakeholders.

On the other hand, EASE is glad to offer its experience on sport social matters and is looking forward for a long term fruitful partnership.

TAIEX & EASE

TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) is an instrument of the DG Enlargement of the European Commission. It helps countries with regard to the application and enforcement of EU legislation. The TAIEX targeted countries are, among others, the new Member States and the Candidate States.

EASE has been selected as one of TAIEX experts providing its knowledge in the field of European social dialogue in the sport sector. EASE representatives were guest speakers at the latest TAIEX seminars in Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia dealing with *"The Regulatory impact of Community legislation on sport"*. That cooperation with TAIEX gives European exposure to EASE activities and especially to the social dialogue project it is currently leading. Becoming a TAIEX expert, EASE is now recognised for its credibility in the European sport social matters.

BECOME A MEMBER...

Annual subscriptions: € 200 per organisation + € 50 for sub-sector you represent.
Contact the Secretariat to find out how your

organisation can get involved and help build EASE to create an effective employer network across the EU.

EASE SECRETARIAT

The Bureau of the Association, based in Paris, provides services and information to current and potential members, keeps and develops contacts with sport organisations in Europe and manages and develops relationships with international organisations.

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