

EASE TALKS

The voice of European Sport Employers



1st edition

The consequences of the covid-19 crisis on the sport sector

Context

The European Association of sport Employers gathered the sport employers' representative of France, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, and the Netherlands as well as the think tank Sport and Citizenship for a time of exchange around the role of sport employers in the Covid 19 crisis and the consequences of this crisis on the sector. The sport employers shared information about the way to deal with this crisis at national level.

The role of sports employers the consequences on the sport sector

On the way to lead social dialogue

The Covid-19 crisis has shown the importance of social dialogue as the consultation of stakeholders is necessary to adjust the social laws to the economic reality. Sport employers' representatives were unanimously consulted by national authorities for addressing the economic consequences of the crisis on the sector. The importance to have an organised sector to efficiently address the impact of the interruption of activity has been highlighted. It has allowed for the voice of the economic actors of the sector to be heard, and to contribute to policymaking in time of crisis and address the impact of the interruption of activity.

On the policies led at national level

In all the represented countries, the government adopted partial unemployment measures. The sport employers present were unanimously agreeing that the state subsidies have allowed avoiding a catastrophe for the sport sector by maintaining the clubs, associations, and businesses. However new aids will still be necessary in order to repair the damages of the extended period of inactivity and to restart the economic activity of the sector.

The need for more structuration

The crisis has also shown the importance for more professionalization and structuration of the sector which are the way forward to have a sector resilient to crisis. The sport employers' representatives highlighted that it has been easier to efficiently compensate the consequences for the work done under employment contracts rather than voluntary engagements. Indeed, state aid only covered employment contracts and not volunteer work which is yet highly used in the sport sector and then necessary to maintain sport activities. Additionally, the sport sector is attractive for young workers and more professionalization would help maintain the interest of youth in this sector.

On the future of the sport sector

The crisis has put forward the necessity of sport and physical activity, especially for global health. It has also enhanced the shift towards less organised activity and more individual physical activity. Furthermore, since the youth practice of sport is essentially made through clubs in most European countries, it has affected the practice of young Europeans. Finally, the overall practice of sport has increased in Europe during the past year and a half but the sport sector is shifting from an organised competitive model to a broader range of activities more concentrated on what could be defined as "movement". These changes of practices will impact the sport sector with new forms of sport employers, more needs for structuration, new opportunities for professionalization and new challenges of representation.