



11th edition

Shaping Sport the European Way: Institutions and Values

EASE

European Association of Sport Employers

With the participation of our members



This document was produced with contributions from [Glenn Micallef](#), European Commissioner for Sport, [Nikola Minchev](#), Member of the European Parliament, and [Sophie Kwasny](#), Head of the Sport Division at the Council of Europe

“I am preparing a strategy on strengthening the European Sport Model and I welcome EASE’s insights and experience as part of this process”

Glenn Micallef, European Commissioner for Sport



The European Sport Model is a value-based framework for organising sport in Europe. The model emerged in post-WWII and it was influenced by public service principles, amateur ideals, and national federations promoting universal access to sport.

Gained political recognition in European Council resolutions and EU declarations (starting in the 1970s). Formally acknowledged in the **2007 White Paper on Sport** and the **2011 EU Communication on Sport**.



**BOSMAN
CASE
(1995)**



**MECA-
MEDINA
CASE
(2006)**



Bosman case (1995): Liberalised the transfer system but acknowledged that sport has special features.

Meca-Medina (2006): Established that sporting rules are subject to EU law but may be justified if they pursue legitimate objectives

Directions taken by the European Commissioner for Sport



Rolling out a plan to reinforce the European Sport Model as a tool for inclusion, public health, and cohesion. Includes updating recommendations on health-enhancing physical activity



Consulted with FIFPRO Europe on improving labour conditions for professional athletes—focusing on collective bargaining, occupational safety, governance, and fair play across men's and women's football



Took a stance on ensuring sports events reflect EU values, notably through his comment on potentially boycotting war-responsible countries, emphasizing human rights and integrity in sport

WHICH PRINCIPLES CURRENTLY UNDERPIN THE EUROPEAN SPORTS MODEL?

The European Sports Model is rooted in solidarity, inclusion, and integrity. It emphasizes access to sport for all, regardless of age, gender, or background, and recognises the role of sport as a public good with educational and health benefits. It supports a non-profit logic where revenues are reinvested into the development of sport at all levels. The model values the autonomy of sport organisations, while requiring them to operate under the rule of law and democratic governance.

MEP Nikola Minchev highlights certain key elements that will enable the European sports model to be built on stable foundations that are consistent with the core values of the European Union:



A Solidarity-Based Pyramid

Elite sport stands on grassroots. Revenue sharing and volunteer commitment are the lifeblood of our system.



Open and Merit-Based Competitions

Sport must reward merit. Promotion and relegation are non-negotiable – closed leagues threaten fair play.



Responsible Event Hosting

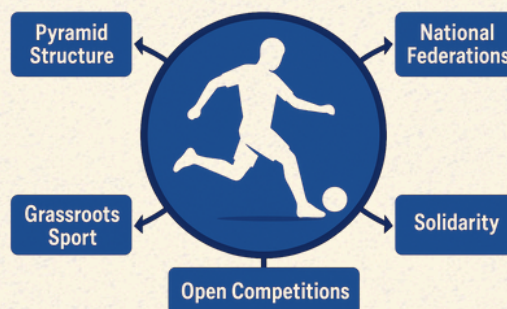
Event rights must go beyond money and politics. Legacy, values, and local impact matter.



Balanced Club Ownership

Clubs are not just businesses – they are social and cultural institutions. Ownership must respect this dual role.

EUROPEAN SPORT MODEL



Athlete Health Comes First

The overloaded calendar, especially in football, puts players at risk. Enforce recovery time. Protect athletes.



Protect National Teams

Every athlete must have the right to represent their country. National teams are the soul of international sport.



Regulate Agents and Intermediaries

Young athletes need protection. The growing power of agents must be transparent and accountable.



Fair Governance Under EU Law

The Super League ruling showed it clearly: UEFA and FIFA must operate with transparency and under EU competition law.

Institutional Point of View: Focus on the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is not part of the European Union. It is an **intergovernmental organisation** founded in 1949 and currently includes 46 member states, covering a much wider geographical area than the EU. Its mission is to promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law across the European continent.



The **Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)** is the Council of Europe's main mechanism for sport policy coordination. Established in 2007, EPAS brings together governmental and non-governmental actors to promote ethical, inclusive, and safe sport across Europe. EPAS is unique in the European institutional landscape: it provides a **formal intergovernmental platform** for cooperation on sport matters outside the EU framework, while being fully aligned with European values of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.



Article 2 refers to what the sporting movement calls the European Sport Model, but without providing a strict definition. The Charter does not codify the model as a **'pyramid system'** or similar structure; rather, its different sections reflect the intangible dimension of values which are at the heart of the European approach to sport. The notions of **solidarity, open competitions, and the role of local sport clubs** are elements often associated with this model and included in the Charter.

EPAS is a cornerstone of pan-European sport governance. It strengthens the role of values, rights, and ethics in sport policy and offers a structured, collaborative platform for dialogue between states and sport actors. For organisations like EASE, EPAS represents both a **source of influence and a valuable space** for cooperation, reinforcing a vision of sport that is inclusive, democratic, and socially responsible.